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Up to the end of March we have decided to make our goods move, if selling at cost will have the effect.

Some of the goods offered have just been opened, being a month on the road.

We have left of our winter Stock:

- A FEW OVERCOATS.
- A FEW PEAK JACKETS, HEAVY WEIGHT.
- A FEW READY-MADE SUITS.
- A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF TROUSERS.
- A LOT OF UNDERWEAR, SOME JUST ARRIVED.
- FLANNELLETTES AND PRINTS.

All these and some other lines will go at cost.

THE STROLLERS

By **FREDERIC S. ISHAM**,
Author of "Under the Rose"
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Words fell from his lips, unprepared, eloquent, voicing those desires



Soon they were chest to chest.

"I would cut a nice figure doing that! No; you shall stay here." He spoke angrily. Her disdain at his proposal not only injured his pride, but awoke his animosity. On the other hand, his words demonstrated she had not improved her own position. If he meant to keep her there he could do so, and opposition made him only more obstinate, more determined to press his advantage. Had she been more politic—Juliana off the stage as well as on—she, whose artifice was glossed by artlessness—

Her lashes drooped, her attitude became less aggressive, her eyes, from beneath their dark curtains, rested on him for a moment. What it was in that glance so effective is not susceptible to analysis. Was it the appeal that awakened the quixotic sense of honor, the irresistible arousing compassion, the helpless quality of a brimming eye so fatal to masculine calculation and positiveness? Whatever it was, it dispelled the contraction on the land baron's face, and—despite his threats, vows—he was swayed by a look.

"Forgive me," he said tenderly. "You will drive back?"

"Yes; I will win you in your own way, fairly and honestly! I will take you back, though the whole country laughs at me. Win or lose, back we go, for—I love you!" And impulsively he threw his arm around her waist.

Simulation could not stand the test. It was no longer acting, but reality; she had set herself to a role she could not perform. Hating him for that free touch, she forcibly extricated herself with an exclamation and an expression of countenance there was no mistaking. From Mauville's face the glad light died. He regarded her once more cruelly, vindictively.

"You dropped the mask too soon," he said coldly. "I was not prepared for rehearsal, although you were perfect. You are even a better actress than I thought you, than which"—mockingly—"I can pay you no better compliment."

She looked at him with such scorn he laughed, though his eyes flashed.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed.

While thus confronting each other a footfall sounded without, the door burst open, and the driver of the coach, with features drawn by fear, unceremoniously entered the room. The patron turned on him enraged, but the latter, without noticing his master's displeasure, exclaimed hurriedly:

"The antirenters are coming!"

The actress uttered a slight cry and stepped toward the window, when she was drawn back by an irresistible force.

"Pardon me," said a hard voice, from which all passing compunction had vanished. "Be kind enough to come with me."

"I will follow you, but"—Her face expressed the rest.

"This way then!"

He released her, and together they mounted the stairway. For a long time a gentle footfall had not passed those various landings; not since the ladies in hoops, with powdered hair, had ascended or descended with attendant cavaliers bewigged, bedizened. The land baron conducted his companion to a distant room upstairs, the door of which he threw open.

"Go in there," he said curtly.

She hesitated on the threshold. So remote was it from the main part of the great manor the apartment had all the requirements of a prison.

"You needn't fear," he continued reading her thoughts. "I'm not going to be separated from you—yet! But we can see what is going on here."

Again she mutely obeyed him and entered the room. It was a commodious apartment, where an excellent view was offered of the surrounding country on three sides.

From the narrow, dark crimson ribbon, left behind by the flapping sun, a faint reflection entered the great open windows of the chamber and revealed Mauville gazing without, pistol in hand; Constance leaning against the curtains and the driver of the coach standing in the center of the room, quaking inwardly and shaking outwardly. This last named had found an old blunderbuss somewhere, useful once undoubtedly, but of questionable service now.

Meanwhile Oly-coeks had not returned. Having faithfully closed and locked all the iron shutters, he had crept out of a cellar window and voluntarily resigned as caretaker of the manor, with its burden of dangers and vexations. With characteristic prudence he had timed the period of his departure with the beginning of the end in the fortunes of the old patron principally. The storm cloud, gathering during the life of Mauville's predecessor, was now ready to burst, the impending catastrophe hastened by the heir's want of discretion and his failure to adjust difficulties amicably.

A branch of a tree grated against the window as Mauville scanned the surrounding garden. Then his eye fell upon an indistinct figure stealing slowly across the sward in the partial darkness. Her reserve was fuel to his flame, and at that moment, while his life hung in the balance, he forgot the rebuff he

dered the antirenters were effectually shattering the heavy door.

"The serfs are here! The drawers of water and hewers of wood have arisen! Hang the land baron! Hang the feudal lord!"

A braver man than Mauville might have been cowed by that chorus, but after pausing irresolutely, weighing the chances of life and death, gazing jealously upon the face of the apprehensive girl and venomously at the intruder, he finally made a virtue of necessity, and he sprang upon the balcony—none too soon, for a moment later the door burst open and an incongruous element rushed into the room. Not until then did the soldier discover that he had overlooked the possible unpleasantness of remaining in the land baron's stead, for the antirenters promptly thrust themselves upon him. The first to grapple with him was a herculean, thick ribbed man of extraordinary stature, taller than the soldier if not so well knit—a Goliath. Indeed, with arms long as windmills.

"Stand back, lads," he roared, "and let me throw him!" And Dick the tollman rushed at Saint-Prosper with furious attack. Soon they were chest to chest, each with his chin on his opponent's right shoulder and each grasping the other around the body with joined hands.

Dick's muscles grew taut like mighty whiplows, his chest expanded with power, he girded his loins for a great effort, and it seemed as if he would make good his boast. Held in the grasp of those arms, tight as iron bands, the soldier staggered. Once more the other heaved, and again Saint-Prosper nearly fell, his superior agility alone saving him.

Then slowly, almost imperceptibly, the soldier managed to face to the right, twisting so as to place his left hip against his adversary—his only chance—a trick of wrestling unknown to his herculean but clumsy opponent. Gathering all his strength in a last determined effort, he stooped forward suddenly and lifted in his turn. One portentous moment—a moment of doubt and suspense—and the proud representative of the barn burners was hurled over the shoulder of the soldier, landing with a crash on the floor, where he lay dazed and immovable.

Breathing hard, his chest rising and falling with labored effort, Saint-Prosper fell back against the wall. The antirenters, quickly recovering from their surprise, gave him no time to regain his strength, and the contest promised a speedy and disastrous conclusion for the soldier, when suddenly a white figure flashed before him, confronting the tenants with pale face and shining eyes. A slender obstacle, only a girlish form, yet the fearlessness of her manner, the eloquence of her glance—for her lips were silent—kept them back for the instant.

But fiercer passions were at work among them, the desire for retaliation and bitter hatred of the patron, which speedily dissipated any feeling of compunction or any tendency to waver.

"Kill him before his ladylove!" cried a piercing voice from behind. "Did they not murder my husband before me? Kill him if you are men!"

And, pressing irresistibly to the front, appeared the woman whose husband had been shot by the deputies. Her features, once soft and matronly, flamed with uncontrollable passions.

Gently the soldier, now partly recovering his strength, thrust the young girl behind him as, pushing to the fore, the woman regarded him vengefully. But in her eyes the hatred and bitter aversion faded slowly, to be replaced by perplexity, which in turn gave way to wonder, while the uplifted arm, raised threateningly against him, fell passively to her side. At first, astonished, doubting, she did not speak, then her lips moved mechanically.

"That is not the land baron!" she cried, staring at him in disappointment that knew no language.

At this unexpected announcement imprecations and murmurs of incredulity were heard on all sides.

"Woman, would you shield your husband's murderer?" exclaimed an overzealous barn burner.

"Shield him?" she retorted as if aroused from a trance. "No, no! I'm not here for that! But this is not the patron. His every feature is burned into my heart! I tell you it is not he. Yet he should be here. Did I not see him driving toward the manor?" And she gazed wildly around.

For a moment following this impassioned outburst their rough glances sought one another, and the soldier quickly took advantage of this cessation of hostilities.

"No; I am not the land baron," he interposed.

"You aren't?" growled the disappointed leaseholder. "Then who are you? An antirenter?" he added suspiciously.

"I am no friend of his," continued the soldier in a firm voice. "You had one purpose in seeking him; I another. He carried off this lady. I was following him when I met you in the grove."

"Then how came you here—in this room?"

"By the way of a tree, the branch of which reaches to the window."

"The land baron was in this room a moment ago. Where is he now?"

For answer Saint-Prosper pointed to the window.

"Then you let him?"

"We're wasting time," impatiently shouted the barn burner who had disclaimed the soldier's identity to the patron. "Come!"—with an oath—"do you want to lose him after all? He can't be far away. And this one isn't our man!"

For a second the crowd wavered, then with a venal shout they shot from the room, disappearing as quickly as they had come. Led by Little Thunder, who, being a man of peace, had discreetly remained without, they had reached the gate in their headlong pursuit when they were met by a body of

as the antirenters were hurrying out. At the sight of this formidable band the leaseholders immediately scattered. Taken equally by surprise, the others made little effort to intercept them, and soon they had vanished over field and down dell. Then the horsemen turned, rode through the avenue of trees and drew up noisily before the portico.

From their window the soldier and his companion observed the abrupt encounter at the entrance of the manor grounds and the dispersion of the leaseholders like leaves before the autumn gusts. Constance, who had breathlessly watched the flight of the erstwhile assailants, felt her doubts reawakened as the horsemen drew up before the door.

"Are they coming back?" she asked, involuntarily clasping the arm of her companion.

She who had been so courageous and self controlled throughout that long, trying day on a sudden felt strangely weak and dependent. He leaned from the narrow casement to command the view below, striving to pierce the gloom, and she, following his example, gazed over his shoulder. Either a gust of air had extinguished the light in the candelabra on the mantel or the tall dip had burnt itself out, for the room was now in total darkness, so that they could dimly see without being seen.

"These men are not the ones who just fled," he replied.

"Then who are they?" she half whispered, drawing unconsciously closer in that moment of jeopardy, her face distant but a curl's length.

Below the men were dismounting, tying their horses among the trees. Like a noisy band of troopers, they were talking excitedly, but their words were indistinguishable.

"Why do you suppose they fled from them?" she continued.

Was it a tendril of the vine that touched his cheek gently? He started, his face toward the haze in the open borderland.

"Clearly these men are not the leaseholders. They may be seeking you."

She turned eagerly from the window. In the darkness their hands met. Momentary compunction made her pause. "I haven't yet thanked you!" And he felt the cold, nervous pressure of her hands on his. "You must have ridden very hard and very far."

His hand closed suddenly upon one of hers. He was not thinking of the ride, but of how she had placed herself beside him in his moment of peril, how she had held them—not long—but a moment—yet long enough!

"They're coming in! They're downstairs!" she exclaimed excitedly.

A flickering light below suddenly threw dim moving shadows upon the ceiling of the hall. As she spoke she stepped forward and stumbled over the debris at the door. His arm was about her almost before she started, exclamation had fallen from her lips, for a moment her shapely young figure rested against him. But quickly she extricated herself, and they picked their way cautiously over the bestrewn threshold out into the hall.

At the balustrade they paused. Reconnoitering at the turn, they were afforded full survey of the lower hall, where the latest comers had taken possession. Few in numbers, the gathering had come to a dead stop, regarding in surprise the broken door and the furniture wantonly demolished.

With unusual pallor of face the young girl stepped from behind the sheltering post. Her hand, resting doubtfully upon the balustrade, sought in unconscious appeal her companion's arm as they descended together the broad steps. In the partial darkness the men ill discerned the figures, but divined their bearing in the relation of outlines lined against the obscure background.

"Why," muttered one in surprise, "this is not the patron! And here, if I am not mistaken, is the lady Mr. Barnes is so anxious about."

"Mr. Barnes—he is with you?"

"It was Constance that spoke."

"Yes; but—"

"Where is he?"

"We left him a ways down the road and—"

The sound of a horse's hoof beats in front of the manor, breaking in on this explanation, was followed by hurried footsteps upon the porch. The newcomer paused on the threshold, when, with an exclamation of joy, Constance rushed to him and in a moment was clasped in the arms of the now jubilant Barnes.

decreased. A fine, pale, thin man, he was dressed in a dark suit, and his eyes were fixed on Mauville with a keen, searching gaze.

"What do you want, men?"

At these words the demonstration became more turbulent, and amid the threatening hubbub voices arose, showing too well the purpose of the gathering. Aroused to a fever of excitement by the shooting of the tenants, they were no longer skulking, stealthy Indians, but a riotous assemblage of antirenters expressing their determination in an ominous chorus:

"Hang the land baron!"

In the midst of this far from reassuring uproar a voice arose like a trumpet:

"We are the messengers of the Lord, made strong by his wrath!"

"You are the messenger of the devil, Little Thunder!" Mauville shouted derisively.

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"They are coming; they are coming!" she said, and Mauville stopped short.

But while anger and resentment were at strife within him some one tried the door of the chamber and, immediately the provokers in the wings, the searchers in the kitchen and the stragglers below congregated in the main hall. Footsteps were heard ascending rapidly, pausing in doubt at the head of the stairway, not knowing whether to turn to the right or to the left.

"Here they are!" called out the man at the door.

"You meddling fool!" exclaimed Mauville, lifting a revolver and discharging it in the direction of the voice. Evidently the bullet, passing through the panel of the door, found its mark, for the report was followed by a cry of pain.

This plaint was answered from the distance, and soon a number of antirenters hastened to the spot. Mauville, in vicious humor, moved toward the threshold. One of the panels was already broken and an arm thrust into the opening. The land baron bent forward and coolly clasped his weapon to the member, the loud discharge being succeeded by a howl from the wounded leaseholder. Mauville again raised his weapon when an exclamation from the actress caused him to turn quickly, in time to see a figure spring unexpectedly into the room from the balcony. The land baron stood in amazement, eying the intruder who had appeared so suddenly from an unguarded quarter, but before he could recover his self possession his hand was struck heavily, and the revolver fell with a clatter to the floor.

His assailant quickly grasped the weapon, presenting it to the breast of the surprised landowner, who looked not into the face of an unknown antirenter, but into the stern, familiar countenance of Saint-Prosper.

"You here?" stammered the land baron as he involuntarily recoiled from his own weapon.

The soldier contemptuously thrust the revolver into his pocket. "As you see," he said coldly, "and in a moment they"—indicating the door—"will be here."

"You think to turn me over to them?" exclaimed the other violently. "But you do not know me! This is no quarrel of yours. Give me my weapon and let me fight it out with them!"

"By heaven, I am half minded to take you at your word! But you shall have one chance, a slender one! There is the window. It opens on the portico!"

"And if I refuse?"

"They have brought a rope with them. Go or hang!"

The heir hesitated, but as he pondered the antirenters were effectually shattering the heavy door.

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CHAPTER XIV.
AFTER this brief hostile outbreak in the garden below the right wing Mauville prepared to make as effective defense as lay in his power and looked around for his aid, the driver of the coach, but that quaking individual had taken advantage of the excitement to disappear.

The young girl, too, had availed herself of the opportunity while he was at the window and vanished.

"Why, the slippery jade's gone!" he exclaimed, staring around the room, confounded for the moment. Then, recovering himself, he hurriedly left the chamber, more apprehensive lest she should get out of the manor than that the tenants should get in.

For the moment he almost forgot the antirenters. He hastily traversed the upper hall, but was rewarded with no sight of her. He gazed down the stairs eagerly, with no better result. The front door was still closed as he had left it.

"Yes; she's gone," he repeated. "What a fool I was to have trusted her to herself for a moment!"

A new misgiving arose, and he started. What if she had succeeded in leaving the manor? He knew and distrusted Little Thunder and his cohorts. What respect would they have for her? For all he had done it was never the less intolerable to think she might be in possible danger—from others save himself. A wave of compunction swept over him. After all, he loved her, and, loving her, could not bear to think of any calamity befalling her.

"Surely I've gone daft over the stroller!" he thought as his own position occurred to him in all its seriousness. "Well, what's done is done! Let them come!"

With no definite purpose of searching further, he nevertheless walked mechanically down the corridor and suddenly discerned Constance in a blind passage, where she had inadvertently fled.

At the end of this narrow hall a window looked almost directly out upon the circular brick dovecot, now an indistinct outline, and on both sides were doors, one of which she was vainly endeavoring to open when she approached.

"Unfortunately, the door is locked," he said ironically. "Meanwhile, as this spot has no strategic advantages, suppose we change our base of defense."

Realizing how futile would be resistance, she accompanied him once more to the chamber in the wing, where he had determined to make his last defense. After closing and locking the door he lighted one of many candles on the mantel.

The flickering glare fell upon the young actress standing, hand upon her heart, listening with bated breath, and Mauville, with ominous expression, brooding over that chance which sent the leaseholders to the manor on that night of nights.

The violent crash of a heavy body at the front of the house and a tumult of voices on the porch, succeeded by a din in the hall, announced that the first barrier had been overcome and the antirenters were in possession of the lower floor of the manor. Mauville had started toward the door when the anticipation in the young girl's eyes held him to the spot. Inaccessible, she was the more desired. Her reserve was fuel to his flame, and at that moment, while his life hung in the balance, he forgot the rebuff he

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For the moment he almost forgot the antirenters. He hastily traversed the upper hall, but was rewarded with no sight of her. He gazed down the stairs eagerly, with no better result. The front door was still closed as he had left it.

"Yes; she's gone," he repeated. "What a fool I was to have trusted her to herself for a moment!"

A new misgiving arose, and he started. What if she had succeeded in leaving the manor? He knew and distrusted Little Thunder and his cohorts. What respect would they have for her? For all he had done it was never the less intolerable to think she might be in possible danger—from others save himself. A wave of compunction swept over him. After all, he loved her, and, loving her, could not bear to think of any calamity befalling her.

"Surely I've gone daft over the stroller!" he thought as his own position occurred to him in all its seriousness. "Well, what's done is done! Let them come!"

With no definite purpose of searching further, he nevertheless walked mechanically down the corridor and suddenly discerned Constance in a blind passage, where she had inadvertently fled.

At the end of this narrow hall a window looked almost directly out upon the circular brick dovecot, now an indistinct outline, and on both sides were doors, one of which she was vainly endeavoring to open when she approached.

"Unfortunately, the door is locked," he said ironically. "Meanwhile, as this spot has no strategic advantages, suppose we change our base of defense."

Realizing how futile would be resistance, she accompanied him once more to the chamber in the wing, where he had determined to make his last defense. After closing and locking the door he lighted one of many candles on the mantel.

The flickering glare fell upon the young actress standing, hand upon her heart, listening with bated breath, and Mauville, with ominous expression, brooding over that chance which sent the leaseholders to the manor on that night of nights.

The violent crash of a heavy body at the front of the house and a tumult of voices on the porch, succeeded by a din in the hall, announced that the first barrier had been overcome and the antirenters were in possession of the lower floor of the manor. Mauville had started toward the door when the anticipation in the young girl's eyes held him to the spot. Inaccessible, she was the more desired. Her reserve was fuel to his flame, and at that moment, while his life hung in the balance, he forgot the rebuff he

decreased. A fine, pale, thin man, he was dressed in a dark suit, and his eyes were fixed on Mauville with a keen, searching gaze.

"What do you want, men?"

At these words the demonstration became more turbulent, and amid the threatening hubbub voices arose, showing too well the purpose of the gathering. Aroused to a fever of excitement by the shooting of the tenants, they were no longer skulking, stealthy Indians, but a riotous assemblage of antirenters expressing their determination in an ominous chorus:

"Hang the land baron!"

In the midst of this far from reassuring uproar a voice arose like a trumpet:

"We are the messengers of the Lord, made strong by his wrath!"

"You are the messenger of the devil, Little Thunder!" Mauville shouted derisively.

A crack of a rifle admonished the land baron that the just might have cost him dear.

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[TO BE CONTINUED.]

An Apt Quotation.
The readiness of repartee of Thomas B. Reed was never better illustrated than on one occasion when he went to visit a friend who lived at the top of a long and narrow flight of stairs. Half way up Reed missed his footing and fell to the bottom. His friend, hearing the racket, rushed to the door and shouted down the semidarkness of the hall, "Who is that?"

"'Tis Eiser rolling rapidly," drawled the man from Maine as he picked himself up.

Chickweed.
Like the plantain, which the Indians called "the white man's foot" because it sprang up wherever the whites penetrated, the chickweed seems to follow the track of the white colonist, and in New Zealand the Maoris call it "the mark of the paleface." The little flower is a sort of barometer. It opens when fine weather is coming, remains closed if rain is in the air.

Both Artists.
"My pa," said the blind man's boy, "can tell'dines from pennies and nickels from quarters by just feeling of them."

"Hub," replied old Harphish's son, "that's nothing! My pa can tell the difference by the smell."

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