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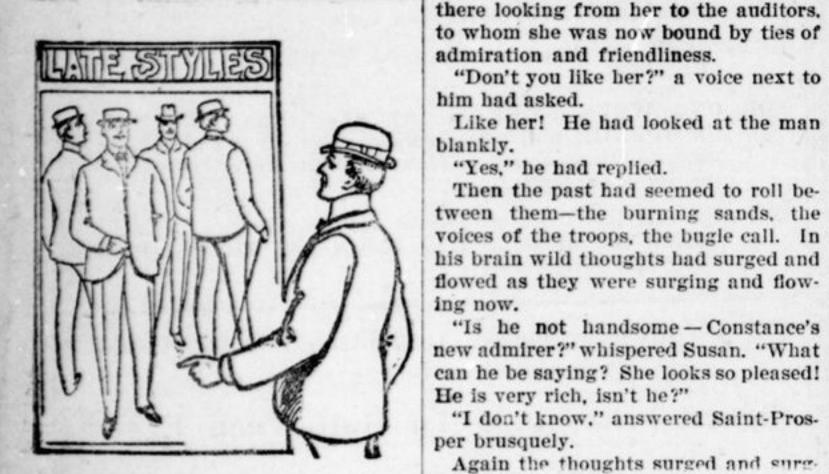
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Machine Oil, Harness Oil, soldier's thoughts reverted to the performance, and amid the chatter of Su-Axle Grease and Hoof san he reviewed again and again the Ointment, go to details of that evening. Was this the

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By FREDERIC S. ISHAM, Author of "Under the Rose" * * *

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CHAPTER XXIV.

Constance, the manager, Straws, etc.,

So fancy must picture the devotion of

the count to his fair neighbor, the al-

most superhuman pride of noisy Barnes,

Saint-Prosper, while through his mind

wandered the words of a French song:

Adieu, la cour, adieu les dames;

Intermixed with this sad refrain the

self, seated in the rear of the theater?

When she won an ovation he had him-

self forgotten to applaud, but had sat

Like her! He had looked at the man

Then the past had seemed to roll be-

"Is he not handsome - Constance's

"I don't know," answered Saint-Pros-

Again the thoughts surged and surg-

His glance chilled her, it seemed so

"I believe you are so-so strong you

don't even notice it," added Susan,

with conviction. "But you don't have

"Perhaps I enjoy myself in my way."

"What is your way?" she asked

"For once I want to be myself."

riously. "Luc we were speaking about

the count and Constance. Don't you

think it would be a good match?" she

continued, with enthusiasm. "Alas, my

titled admirer got no further than the

When they do reach the Song of Solo-

"And leave the fair ones to Lamenta-

At the sound of their laughter Con-

stance looked coldly their way until a

remark from the count engrossed the

young girl's attention once more. But

finally time reminded Barnes that the

hour had arrived when the curtain

should descend upon these festivities.

and the guests departed one by one,

taking with them flowers in memory

of the occasion, until all had left save

Constance, the count, Saint-Presper

and the manager. Barnes was talking

somewhat incoherently, holding the

soldier by the coat and plunging into

successive anecdotes about stage folk,

while Saint-Prosper, apparently listen-

ing, observed the diplomat and Con-

stance, whose conversation he could

"As I said to the royal infanta of

Spain, flattery flies before truth in

your presence. mademoiselle," sighed

the count, and then, raising her hand

to his lips, "Ah, ma chere mademoi-

selle, que je vous adore!" he whis-

mon they pass on to Exodus."

her last remarks.

overhear.

Susan's bright eyes rested on him

ed and the past intruded itself ...each-

ing for his glass, Le drank quickly.

wine?" asked the young woman.

strange and steely.

half as good a time."

he answered.

"Yes," he had replied.

Adieu les filles et les femmes.

unfortunately no record remains.

Leaning against the chair, her figure outlined by the glow from the crystal SUPPER was given the comchandelier, her face in shadow, the pany after the performance by hand the diplomat had pressed to his the manager, to which reprelips resting in the exposed light on the sentatives of the press-artful mahogany, the gayety went out of her Barnes!-had been invited. Of all the face, and the young girl wearily merry evenings in the bohemian world brushed the hair from her brow. As if that was one of the merriest. Next to unaware of the soldier's presence she the young girl sat the Count de Proglanced absently at the table in its priac, his breast covered with a double wrecked glory and, throwing her lace row of medals. Of the toasts drunk to

"Miss Carew!" She paused, standing with clasped hands before him, while the scarf slipped from her arm and fell at her the attention bestowed by Susan upon

ward the door when he spoke.

"May I not also tell you how glad I am that you succeeded tonight?" "I dislike congratulations," she said

indifferently. He looked at her quickly, but her eyes expressed only apathy. In his a sudden gleam of light appeared.

"From me, you mean?" The light became brighter. young girl who played in schoolhouses, She did not answer. His self control inns or town halls, he had asked himwas fast ebbing.

> "You underestimate your favors if you fancy they are easily forgotten." A crimson flush extended to her brow, the unconcern died out of her

"I do not understand," she answered "Don't you like her?" a voice next to slowly. "When a woman says 'I do not understand' she means 'I wish to for-

clasped her fingers.

"Forget what?" she said coldly. smile, a glance, nothing to you, perhaps, but"-the set expression of his face giving way to abrupt passion- ed the marquis, starting from the cor- ness!" "everything to me. Perhaps I had not meant to say this, but it seems as though the words must come out towith strange earnestness-"for once I have been-friends-and then suddenly you begin to treat me-how? As though baron accused me of following you across the country. He was right. I was following you. I would not confess it to myself before. But I confess

ended bitterly. She shrank back before his vehement words; something within her appeared violated, as though his plea had pene trated the sanctity of her reserve.

it now. It was a fool's paradise," he

about deception?" she replied, and her dark eyes swept his face. Then, turn ing from him abruptly, she stepped to the window and, drawing aside

lace curtains mechanically, looked out. The city below was yet teeming with life, lights gleaming everywhere and shadowy figures passing. Suddenly out of the darkness came a company of soldiers who had just landed, marching through the streets toward the camp ing ground and singing as they went.

The chorus, like a mightly breath of patriotism, filled her heart to overflowing. It seemed as though she had heard it for the first time; had never before felt its potency. All the tragedy of war swept before her; all that inspiring. strange affection for country, kith and his own-drove him irresistibly to un-

kin suddenly exalted her. dy rose and fell on the distant air, dy- a miniature in ivory depicting a woming away as the figures vanished in the an in the loveliness of her charms, but gloom. With its love of native land, its | whose striking likeness to the young expression of the unity of comradeship and ties stronger than death, the song appeared to challenge an answer, and when the music ceased and only the drum beats still seemed to make themselves heard, she raised her head without moving from her position and looked at him to see if he understood. But though she glanced at him, she hardly like a guilty wretch. His eyes were saw him. In her mind was another picbeginning! But men are deceivers ever. | ture-the betrayed garrison, the soldiers slain-and the horror of it threw such a film over her gaze that he became as a figure in some distressing sure you will reap as you have sown." tions," said Straws, who had caught dream.

questioning of her eyes, the dread evoked by that revolting vision of the past-was reflected in his glance.

voice to her sounded as from afar. ly, weak and wavering. "How-what"-

words?"

eyes, shadows he could not penetrate, although he still doggedly, yet apprehensively, regarded her. Watching her, his brow grew darker. "Why not?" he continued stubbornly. like that paper, and there is no life Why? The dimness that had ob- after this, one. All then is nothing,

scured her vision lifted. Now she saw emptiness, a blank. I need rest. It is him very plainly indeed-tall and pow- this cursed dyspepsia which has made erful, his face harsh, intense, as though by the vigor of physical and mental force he would override any charge or imputation.

Why? She drew herself up as he quickly searched her eyes, bright with the passions that stirred her breast.

"You told me part of your story that day in the property wagon," she began, repugnance, scorn and anger all She withdrew it hastily, and, ogling | mingling in her tones. "Why did you and gesticulating, he bowed himself | not tell me the rest?"

His glance, too, flashed. Would be marquis leered at himself in the pier

still profess not to understand her? His lips parted; he spoke with an ef-

"The rest?" he said, his brow lower-

"Yes," she answered quickly - "the stain upon your name, the garrison sold, the soldiers killed, murdered"-She had turned to him swiftly, fierce-

ly, but before the look of sudden shame and dread on his face her eyes abruptly fell as though a portion of his dishonor had inexplicably touched her. Motionless he stood, a darkness overspreading his features, as words struggled within him for mastery-a moment, an eternity!

"Why don't you go?" she cried. "Why don't you go?"

He started as though struck, then wheeled sharply around. At the threshold he paused, but she did not look up; could not.

The door opened, closed. She was

Pale as the dying lilies on the table. she stepped toward the threshold when Barnes, chipper and still indefatigable, entered by another door. He was too inspired with festal intoxication to obwrap over her arm, was moving toserve her agitation.

"What, my dear!" he exclaimed cheerily. "Has he gone? Did you make up your little differences? Did you settle your quarrel before he leaves for Mexico?"

"For Mexico!" she repeated mechan-

"Of course. He has his commission in the army and leaves early in the morning. But you look tired, my dear. I declare you are quite pale," pinching her cheek. "Rest will bring back the roses, though."

Impulsively she threw her arms around his neck. "Why, why, what's this?" he said, patting her head.

"I only care for you," she whispered. "My dear, my dear!"

CHAPTER XXV.

ERHAPS she will fail, and that Francois on his high seat next to the coachman, repeating Her wide open glance flashed omi- the marquis' words as they drove home nously to his. She clasped and un- after the nobleman's precipitous retreat from the theater. Here the carriage drew up sharply before the marquis' "Nameless nothings," he returned. "A home, and Francois, hastily alighting. threw open the door.

ner where he had been reclining. He arose with some difficulty and finally, with the assistance of the valet, night. It may be"-his voice vibrating found himself once more in his room, the sick chamber he had grown to dewant to be myself. For weeks we test! Here alone, having dismissed the servant as soon as possible, he moved restlessly to and fro, pondering deeply. "Don't you ever feel the effects of I no longer existed. Why did you de- Since the moment when he had seen ceive me, let me drift on? Because I and recognized his daughter, all the was mute did you think I was blind? | buoyancy which had given his wasted Why did I join the strollers? The land figure a sort of galvanic vitality seem. He was obliged to monsieur, the ticket ed to vanish.

"That resemblance cannot be coincipast, you come home in our old age

box that had not been opened in years the performance and led the conversaand with trembling fingers turned over tion to the young actress. many papers. He shivered and, think-"Would it not be well to say nothing | ing it was cold, stirred the fire. Re- apparent carelessness. "but I'm sure turning to the secretary, he took from the box a package tied with a ribbon, in London, many years ago." still, after the lapse of these many years, slightly fragrant, and he breath- the manager proudly. ed that perfume, so faint, so subtle, while recollections smote him like a

Its scent was familiar to him. It ties through another denomination!" seemed to bring life to the dead, and for the moment in his mind's eye he saw her glowing figure-the love of his youth-with flashing, revengeful eyes and noble mien. He cowered over the desk, as if shrinking from an avenging spirit, while the perfume, like opium, filled his brain with strange fantasies. He strove to drown remembrance, but some force-it seemed not tie that ribbon, to scrutinize many old Above the tramping of feet the melo | theater programmes and to gaze upon actress he had just seen filled his heart with strange fear. Some powersurely it could not have been his will, which rebelled strenuously - impelled him to open those letters and to read them word for word. The tenderness of the epistles fell on his heart as though to scorch it, and he quivered fascinated by these words in her last letter: "Should you desert me and your unborn child your end will be miserable. As I believe in retribution, I am

Suddenly the reader in a frenzy An inkling of her meaning-the mute | threw the letter to the floor and trampled on it. He regarded the face in the miniature with fear and hatred and. dashing it into the drawer, called down "Deceived you?" he began, and his maledictions on her. He ceased abrupt-

"I am going insane," he said, laugh "Must it be-could it be put into ing harshly. "Fool! To let that woman's memory disturb me. So much for The deepest shadows dwelt in her her dire prophecy!" And he snapped his fingers and dropped the letter in the fire.

"What can her curse avail?" he said aloud. "She is gone, turned to ashes me nervous. Something to compose me, and then to bed."

In spite of soothing powders, however, he passed a restless night and arese unrefreshed, but ordered his valet to bring one of his lightest suits, and, having dressed, he set a white flower upon his coat, while the servant proceeded to apply various pigments to the wrinkled face until it took on a mocking semblance to the countenance of a man fifteen years younger. The

glass and assumed a jauntiness of demeanor he was far from feeling. "I do not look tired or worried, Fran-

"Not at all, my lord," replied the obsequious valet. "I never saw you, my lord, appear so young and well."

"Beneath the surface, Francois, there are age and weakness," answered the marquis in a melancholy tone.

"It is but a passing indisposition, my lord," asserted the servant soothingly. "Perhaps. But. Francois"-peering around-"as I look over my shoulder

do you know what I see?" The almost hideous expression of the roue's face alarmed the servant. "No, my lord. What is it?"

"A figure stands there in black and is touching me. It is the spirit of death, Francois. You cannot see it. but there it is"-

"My lord, you speak wildly." "I have seen some strange things, Francois. The dead have arisen. And



Side by side they knelt.

will amuse me," ruminated I have received my warning. Soon l shall join those dark specters which once gayly traversed this bright world. A little brandy and soda, Francois." The servant brought it to him. The marquis leered awfully over his shoulder once more. "Your health, my guest!" he exclaimed, laughing harshly. "But my hat, Francois. I have "Eh? What? Are we here?" mutter- business to perform, important busi-

He ambled out of the room. On the street he was all politeness, removing his hat to a dark brunette who rolled by in her carriage and pausing to chat with another representative of the sex of the blond type. Then he gayly sauntered on until, reaching the theater, he stopped and made a number of inquiries. Who was the manager of Constance Carew? Where was he to be found? At the St. Charles hotel? seller, and wished him good day.

Entering the hotel, he sent his card dence!" he thought. "Oh, errors of the to Barnes, requesting an interview, and the manager, overcome by the honwhen the limbs are faltering and life or of such a visit, responded with alacrity. The customary formalities over, Going to the secretary, he took out a the nobleman congratulated Barnes on

"Pardon my curiosity," he said, with remember an actress of the same name

"Her mother, undoubtedly," replied

"She was married, was she not, to" "A scoundrel who took her for his wife in one church and repudiated the "Ah, a French-English marriage!" said the marquis blandly. "An old device! But what was this lover's

"This husband's, my lord!" "Lover or husband, I fancy it is all the same to her now," sneered the caller. "She has passed the point where reputation matters."

"Her reputation is my concern, M. le

"You knew her?" asked the nobleman, as though the conversation wearied him. "And she was faithful to his memory? No scandals; none of those little affairs women of her class are prone to? There"-as Barnes started up indignantly-"spare me your reproaches! I'm too feeble to quarrel. Besides, what is it to me? I was only curious about her; that is all! But she never spoke the name of her hus-

"Not even to her own child!" "She does not know her father's name?" repeated the marquis. "But I thank you. Mlle. Constance is so charming I must needs call to ask if she were related to the London actress! Good day, monsieur! You are severe on the lover. Was it not the fashion of the day for the actresses to take lovers or for the fops to have an opera girl or a comedienne? Did your most popular performers disdain such diversions?" he sneered. "Pardie, the world has suddenly become moral! A gentleman can no longer, it would

seem, indulge in gentlemanly follies." Mumbling about the decadence of fashion, the marquis departed, his manner so strange the manager gazed after him in surprise.

With no thought of direction, his lips fashion, the nobleman walked mechanically on until he reached the great voices arose sweet as those of sera phim. He hesitated at the portal and then laughed to himself. "Well has Voltaire said: 'Pleasure has its time; so, too, has wisdom. Make love in thy youth and in old age attend to thy salvation." He repeated the latter words; but, although he paused at the threshold and listened, he did not en-

As he stood there, uncertain and trembling, a figure replete with youth and vigor approached, and, glancing at

her, an exclamation escaped him that caused her to pause and turn.

"You are not well," she said solicitously. "Can I help you?" "It is nothing, nothing," answered the marquis. ashy pale at the sight of her and the proximity of that face which regarded him with womanly

sympathy. " away." "At least to me assist you. You were going to the cathedral? Come." His hand rested upon her strong young arm. He felt himself too weak to resist, so together, father and daughter, they entered the cathedral. Side by side they knelt, he to keep up the farce, fearing to undeceive her, while yet only mocking words came to the old man's heart as the bitterness of the situation overwhelmed him. She was a daughter in whom a prince might have found pride, but he remained there mute, not daring to speak, experiencing all the tortures of remorse and retribution, and was only recalled to himself as his glance once more rested upon the young girl.

He became dimly conscious that people were moving past them, and he suddenly longed to cry out, "My child!" but he fought down the impulse. Something within held him from speaking to her-perhaps his own inherent sense of the consistency of things, his appreciation of the legitimate finale to a miserable order of circumstances. Even pride forbade departure from long established habit. But while this train of thought passed through his mind he realized she was regarding him with clear, compassionate eyes, and he heard her voice:

"Shall we go now? The services are

He obeyed without question.

He leaned heavily upon her arm and his steps were faltering. Out into the warm sunshine they passed, the light revealing more plainly the ravages of time in his face.

"You must take a carriage," she said to the old man.

"Thank you, thank you," he replied. "Leave me here on the bench. I shall soon be myself. I am only a little weak. You are good to an old man. May I not" - asking solely for the pleasure of hearing her speak-"may I not know the name of one who is kind to an old man?"

"My name is Constance Carew." He shook as with the palsy. "A good name, a good name!" he repeated. "I remember years ago another of that name-an actress in London. A very beautiful woman, and good! But even she had her detractors, and none more bitter than the man who wronged her. You-you resemble her! But there, don't let me detain you. I shall do very well here. You are busy, I dare

"Yes, I should be at rehearsal," she replied regretfully.

"At rehearsal!" he repeated. "Yesyes. But the stage is no place for you!" he added suddenly. "You should leave it-leave it!"

She looked at him wonderingly. "Is there nothing more I can do for you?" "Nothing! Nothing! Except - no,

"You were about to ask something?"

she observed with more sympathy. "If you would not think me presuming-if you would not deem it an offense-you remind me of one I loved and lost-it is so long ago since I felt her kiss for the last time-I am so near

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