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THE AMERICAN BARON.

(By JAMES DE MILLE.)
(Continued.)

There is no use, Kitty—no use in talking about it any more," said Ethel one day, after Mrs. Willoughby had been urging her to show herself. "I can't. I will not. He has forgotten me utterly. Perhaps he has no idea that you are here. He has never seen you."

"Has he not been in Naples as long as we have? He must have seen me in the streets. He saw Minnie."

"Do you think it likely that he would come to this house and slight you? If he had forgotten you he would not come here. Oh yes, he would. He comes to see Minnie. He knows I am here, of course. He doesn't care one atom whether I make my appearance or not. He doesn't even give me a thought. It's so long since that time that he has forgotten even my existence. He has been all over the world since then, and has had a hundred adventures. I have been living quietly cherishing the remembrance of that one thing."

"Ethel, is it not worth trying? Go down and try him. I can not bear it, I can not look at him. I lose all self-command when he is near. I should make a fool of myself. He would look at me with a smile of pity. Could I endure that? No, Kitty; my weakness must never be known to him."

"Oh, Ethel, how I wish you could try it! Kitty, just think how utterly I am forgotten. Mark this now. He knows I was at your house. He must remember your name. He wrote to me there, and I answered him from there. He sees you now, and your name must be associated with mine in his memory of me, he has any. Tell me now, Kitty, has he ever mentioned me? Has he ever asked you about me? Has he ever made the remotest allusion to me?"

"Ethel spoke rapidly and impetuously, and as she spoke she raised herself from the sofa where she was reclining, and turned her large, earnest eyes full upon her friend with anxious and eager watchfulness. Mrs. Willoughby looked back at her face full of sadness, and mournfully shook her head."

"You see, said Ethel, as she sank down again—you see how true my impression is."

"I must say, said Mrs. Willoughby, that thought of this before. I fully expected that he would make some inquiry after you. I was so confident in the noble character of the man, both from your story and the description of others, that I could not believe you were right. But

you're right, my poor Ethel. I wish I could comfort you, but I can't. In my dear, not only has he not questioned me about you, but he evidently avoids me. It is not that he is ever crossed with Minnie, for he is not so; but he certainly has some reason of his own for avoiding me. Whenever he speaks to me there is an evident effort on his part, and though perfectly courteous, his manner leaves a certain disagreeable impression. Yes, he certainly has some reason for avoiding me."

"The reason is plain enough, murmured Ethel. He wishes to prevent you from speaking about a painful subject or at least a distasteful one. He keeps you off at a distance by an excess of formality. He will give you no opportunity whatever to introduce any mention of me. And now let me also ask you this—does he ever take any notice of any allusion that may be made to me?"

"I really don't remember hearing any allusion to you."

"Oh, that's scarcely possible! You and Minnie must sometimes have alluded to Ethel."

"Well now, that you put it in that light, I do remember hearing Minnie allude to you on several occasions. Once she wondered why Ethel did not ride. Again she remarked how Ethel would enjoy a particular view?"

"And he heard it?"

"Then there is not a shadow of a doubt left. He knows I am here. He knows I am here and he has forgotten me so totally, and is completely indifferent that he comes here and pays attention to another who is in the very same house with me. It is hard. Oh, Kitty, is it not? Is it not bitter? How could I have thought this of him?"

"A high-hearted girl was Ethel, and a proud one; but at this final confirmation of her worst fears there burst from her a sharp cry, and she buried her face in her hands and moaned and wept."

CHAPTER XII.
GIRASOLE AGAIN.

"One day Mrs. Willoughby and Minnie were out driving. Hawbury was riding by the carriage on the side next Minnie, when suddenly their attention was arrested by a gentleman on horseback who was approaching them at an easy pace and staring hard at them. Minnie's hand suddenly grasped her sister's arm very tightly, while her color came and went rapidly."

"Oh dear! sighed Mrs. Willoughby. Oh, what shall I do?" said Minnie, in a hasty whisper.

"Can't we pretend not to see him. Nonsense, you little goose was the reply. How can you think of such rudeness?"

"By this time the gentleman had reached them, and Mrs. Willoughby stopped the carriage and spoke to him in a tone of gracious suavity in which there was sufficient recognition of his claims upon her attention, mingled with a slight hauteur that was intended to act as a check upon his Italian demonstrativeness."

"For it was no other than the Count Girasole, and his eyes glowed with excitement and delight, and his hat was off and as far away from his head as possible and a thousand emotions contended together for expression upon his swarthy and handsome countenance. As soon as he could speak he poured forth a torrent of exclamations with amazing volubility, in the midst of which his keen black eyes scrutinized very closely the faces of the ladies, and finally turned an interrogative glance upon Hawbury, who sat on his horse regarding the new comer with a certain mild surprise not mingled with superciliousness. Hawbury's chin was in the air, his eyes rested languidly upon the stranger, and his left hand toyed with his left whisker."

"He really meant no offense whatever. He knew absolutely nothing about the stranger, and had not the slightest intention of giving offense. It was simply a way he had. It was merely the normal attitude of the English swell before he is introduced. As it was, that first glance which Girasole threw at the English lord inspired him with the bitterest hate, which was destined to produce important results afterward."

"Mrs. Willoughby was too good natured and too wise to slight the Count in any way. After introducing the two gentlemen she spoke a few more civil words, and then bowed him away. But Girasole did not at all take the hint. On the contrary, as the carriage started, he turned his horse and rode along with it on the side next Mrs. Willoughby. Hawbury elevated his eyebrows, and stared for an instant and then went on talking with Minnie. And now Minnie showed much more animation than usual. She was much agitated and excited by this sudden appearance of one whom she hoped to have got rid of, and talked rapidly, and laughed nervously, and was so terrified at the idea that Girasole was near that she was afraid to look at him, but directed all her attention to Hawbury."

"It was a slight, and Girasole showed that he felt it; but Minnie could not help it. After a time Girasole mastered his feelings, and began an animated conversation with Mrs. Willoughby in very broken English. Girasole's excitement at Minnie's slight made him somewhat incoherent, his idioms were Italian rather than English, and his pronunciation was very bad; he also had a fashion of using an Italian word when he did not know the right English one, and so the consequence was that Mrs. Willoughby understood not much more than one quarter of his remarks."

"Mrs. Willoughby did not altogether enjoy this state of things, and so she determined to put an end to it by shortening her drive. She therefore watched for an opportunity to do this so as not to make it seem too marked; and finally reached a place which was suitable. Here the carriage was turned, when, just as it was half way round, they noticed a horseman approaching. It was Scone Dacres, who had been following them all the time, and who had not expected that the carriage would turn. He was there-

fore taken completely by surprise, and was close to them before he could collect his thoughts so as to do anything. To evade them was impossible, and so he rode on. As he approached the ladies saw his face. It was a face that one would never remember afterward. There was on it a profound sadness and dejection, while at the same time the prevailing expression was one of sternness. The ladies both bowed. Scone Dacres raised his hat, and disclosed his broad massive brow. He did not look at Minnie. His gaze was fixed on Mrs. Willoughby. Her veil was down, and he seemed trying to read her face behind. As he passed he threw a quick, vivid glance at Girasole. It was not a pleasant glance by any means, and was full of quick, fierce and insolent scrutiny—a Who-the-devil-are-you expression? It was but for an instant however, and then he glanced at Mrs. Willoughby again, and then he had passed."

"The ladies soon reached their home, and at once retired to Mrs. Willoughby's room. There Minnie flung herself upon the sofa and Mrs. Willoughby sat down with a perplexed face."

"What in the world are we to do?" said she.

"I'm sure I don't know, said Minnie. I knew it was going to be so. I said that he would find me again."

"He is so annoying. Yes, but Kitty dear, we can't be rude to him, you know, for he saved my life. But it is horrid, and I really begin to feel quite desperate."

"I certainly will not let him see you; I have made up my mind to that."

"And oh! how he will be coming and calling, and tease, tease teasing. Oh dear! I do wonder what Lord Hawbury thought. He looked so amazed. And then—oh, Kitty dear, it was so awfully funny—did you notice that other man? Mrs. Willoughby nodded her head. Did you notice how awfully black he looked? He wouldn't look at me at all."

have him go too, and never, never see a man again except dear papa. And I think it is a shame. And I don't see why I should be so persecuted. And I am tired of staying here. And I don't want to stay here any more. And Kitty darling, why shouldn't we all go to Rome? To Rome?"

"Would you prefer Rome?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, thoughtfully.

"Well, yes—for several reasons. In the first place, I must go somewhere, and I'd rather go there than anywhere else. Then, you know, that dear, delightful week will soon be here, and I'm dying to be in Rome."

"I think it would be better for all of us, said Mrs. Willoughby, thoughtfully—for all of us, if we were in Rome."

"Of course it would, Kitty sweetest, and especially me. Now if I am in Rome, I can pop into a convent whenever I choose. A convent exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby, in surprise."

"Oh yes—it's going to come to that. They're all so horrid, you know. Besides, it's getting worse. I got a letter yesterday from Captain Kirby, written to me in England. He didn't know I was here. He has just arrived at London, and was leaving for our place on what he called the wings of the wind. I expect him here at almost any time. Isn't it dreadful, Kitty dearest, to have so many? As fast as one goes another comes, and then they all come together, and do you know, darling, it really makes one feel quite dizzy. I'm sure I don't know what to do. And that's why I'm thinking of a convent, you know."

"But you're not a Catholic. Oh yes, I am, you know. Papa's Anglo-Catholic, and I don't see the difference. Besides, they're all the time going over to Rome; and why shouldn't I? I'll be a novice—that is, you know, I'll only go for a time, and not take the vows. The more I think of it, the more I see that it's the only thing there is for me to do."

proposal following! It would be so charming. Mrs. Willoughby smiled. Well, Minnie dearest, said she, I really think that we had better decide to go to Rome, and I don't see any difficulty in the way. The only difficulty that I can see, said Minnie, is that I shouldn't like to hurt your feelings, you know. Their feelings! repeated her sister, in a doleful voice. Yes; but then, you see, some one's feelings must be hurt eventually, so that lessens one's responsibility, you know; doesn't it, Kitty darling?"

"While saying this Minnie had risen and gone to the window, with the intention of taking her seat by it. No sooner had she reached the place, however, than she started back, with a low exclamation, and standing on one side, looked cautiously forth."

"Come here, she said, in a whisper. Mrs. Willoughby went over, and Minnie directed her attention to some one outside. It was a gentleman on horseback who was passing at a slow pace. His head was bent on his breast. Suddenly, as he passed, he raised his head, and threw over the house a quick, searching glance. They could see without being seen. They marked the profound sadness that was over his face, and saw the deep disappointment with which his head fell."

"Scone Dacres! Said Minnie, as he passed on. How awfully sad he is! Mrs. Willoughby said nothing. But, after all I don't believe it's me. Why not?"

"Because he didn't look at me a bit when he passed to-day. He looked at you though. Nonsense. Yes and his face had an awful hungry look. I know what makes him sad."

"What? He's in love with you. Mrs. Willoughby stared at Minnie for

I really wish they'd stop it. But Kitty dear. What? About this Scone Dacres. Don't you really think there's something very peculiarly sad, and very delightfully interesting and pathetic, and all that sort of thing, in his poor dear old face?"

"I think Scone Dacres has suffered a great deal, said Mrs. Willoughby, in a thoughtful tone. But come now. Let us go to Ethel. She's lonely."

"Soon after they joined the other ladies and talked over the project of going to Rome. Lady Dalrymple offered no objection; indeed, so far as she had any choice, she preferred it. She was quite willing at all times to do whatever the rest proposed, and also was not without some curiosity as to the proceedings during holy-week. Ethel offered no objections either. She had fallen into a state of profound melancholy, from which nothing now could rouse her, and so she listened listlessly to the discussion about the subject. Mrs. Willoughby and Minnie had the most to say on this point, and offered the chief reasons for going; and thus it was finally decided to take their departure, and to start as soon as possible."

Meanwhile Girasole had his own thoughts and experiences. He had already, some time before, been conscious that his attentions were not wanted, but it was only on the part of the other ladies that he noticed any repugnance to himself. On Minnie's part he had not seen any. In spite of their graciousness and their desire not to hurt his feelings, they had not been able to avoid showing that, while they felt grateful for his heroism in the rescue of Minnie they could not think of giving her to him. They had manoeuvred on his part to find them again. He had fallen off from them at first when he saw that they were determined on effecting this; but after allowing a sufficient time to elapse, he had no difficulty in tracking them, and finding them at Naples, as we have seen."

"But here he made one or two discoveries. One was that Minnie already had an accepted lover in the person of Lord Hawbury. The lofty superciliousness of the British nobleman seemed to Girasole to be the natural result of his position, and it seemed the attitude of the successful lover toward the rejected suitor."

"The other discovery was that Minnie herself was more pleased with the attention of the English lord than with his own. This was now evident, and he could not help perceiving that his difficulties were far more formidable from the presence of such a rival."

"But Girasole was not easily daunted. In the first place, he had unbounded confidence in his own fascinations; in the second place, he believed that he had a claim on Minnie that no other could equal, in the fact that he had saved her life; in the third place, apart from the question of love, he believed her to be a prize of no common value, whose English gold would be welcome indeed to his Italian need and greed; while, finally, the bitter hate with which Lord Hawbury had inspired him gave an additional zest to the pursuit, and made him follow after Minnie with fresh ardor, To be continued."

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"Why, Minnie dearest, I don't know what to say. But, darling, you must say something. And then that Scone Dacres. I'm more afraid of him than any body. Oh, if you had only been on his back Kitty darling, and had him run down a steep mountain side, you would be as awfully afraid of him as I am. Oh how I wish Lord Hawbury would drive them off, or somebody do something to save me."

"Would you rather that Lord Hawbury would stay or would you like him to go?"

"Oh dear! I don't care. If he should only go quietly and nicely, I should like to

Well, Minnie, I really think so too, and not only for you, but for all of us. There's Ethel, too; poor dear girl, her health is very miserable, you know. I think a change would do her good."

"Of course it would; I've been talking to her about it. But she won't hear of leaving Naples. I wish she wouldn't be so awfully sad."

"Oh yes; it will certainly be the best thing for dear Ethel, and for you and me, and all of us. Then we must be in Rome in holy-week. I wouldn't miss that for any thing."

"And then, you know, Kitty darling, there's another thing, said Minnie, very confidentially, and it's very important. In Rome, you know, all the gentlemen are clergymen—only, you know, the clergymen of the Roman Church can't marry; and so, you know, of course, they can never propose, no matter if they were to save one's life over and again. And oh! what a relief that would be to find one's self among those dear, darling, delightful priests, and no chance of having one's life saved and having an instant

a moment. Then a short laugh burst from her. Child! she exclaimed, you have no idea of anything in the world but falling in love. You will find out some day that there are other feelings than that."

"But Kitty dear, said Minnie, didn't you notice something very peculiar about him? What?"

"I noticed it, I had a good look at him. I saw that he fixed his eye on you with, oh! such a queer expression; and he was awfully sad too. He looked as if he would like to seize you and lift you on his horse and carry you off, just like young Lochinvar."

"Mel said Mrs. Willoughby, with a strange intonation. Yes, you—oh yes, really now. Oh, you little goose, you always think of people rushing after one and carrying one off. Well I'm sure I've had reason to. So many people are always running after me and snatching me up as if I were a parcel; and carrying me everywhere in all sorts of places. And I think it is too bad; and

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