

THE AMERICAN BARON.

(By JAMES DE MILLE.)

(Continued.)

Once or twice after this he called upon them. On the first occasion only Lady Dalrymple was visible. On the second, none of the ladies were at home. He was baffled, but not discouraged. Returning from his call, he met Minnie and Mrs. Willoughby. Hawbury was with them, riding beside Minnie. The ladies bowed, and Girasole, as before coolly turned his horse and rode by the carriage, talking with Mrs. Willoughby and trying to throw at Minnie what he intended to be impassioned glances. But Minnie would not look at him. Of course she was frightened as usual, and grew excited, and as before, talked with unusual animation to Hawbury. Thus she overdid it altogether, and more than ever confirmed Girasole in the opinion that she and Hawbury were affianced.

Two days after this Girasole called again.

A bitter disappointment was in store for him. They were not there—they had gone. Eagerly he required where. To Rome, was the reply.

To Rome! he muttered, between his set teeth, and mounting his horse hurriedly, he rode away. He was not one to be daunted. He had set a certain task before himself, and could not easily be turned aside. He thought bitterly of the ingratitude with which he had been treated. He brought before his mind the stony British stare, the supercilious smile, and the impertinent and insulting expression of Hawbury's face as he sat on his saddle, with his chin up, stroking his whiskers, and surveyed him for the first time. All these things combined to stimulate the hate as well as the love of Girasole. He felt that he himself was not one who could be lightly dismissed, and determined that they should learn this.

CHAPTER XIII. VAIN REMONSTRANCES.

Hawbury had imolated himself for as much as half a dozen times to gratify Dacres. He had sacrificed himself over and over upon the altar of friendship, and had allowed himself to be bored to death because Dacres so wished it. The whole number of his calls was in reality only about five or six; but that number, to one of his taste and temperament, seemed positively enormous, and represented an immense amount of human suffering.

One day, upon reaching his quarters, after one of these calls, he found Dacres there, making as usual, very much at home.

Well, my dear fellow, said Hawbury, cheerfully, how waves the flag now? Are you hauling it down or are you standing to your guns? Toss over the cigars, and give an account of yourself.

Do you know any thing about law, Hawbury? was Dacres' answer.

Law? Yes.

No, not much. But what in the world makes you ask such a question as that? Law? No—not I.

Well, there's a point that I should like to ask somebody about.

Why not get a lawyer?

An Italian lawyer's no use.

Well, English lawyers are to be found I dare say there are twenty within five minutes' distance of this place.

Oh, I don't want to bother. I only wanted to ask some one's opinion in a general way.

Well, what's the point?

Why, yes, said Dacres; after a little hesitation, You've heard of outlawry?

Should think I had—Robin Hood and his merry men, Lincoln Green, Sherwood Forest, and all that sort of thing, you know. But what the mischief sets you thinking about Robin Hood.

Oh, I don't mean that rot. I mean real outlawry—when a fellow's in debt, you know.

Well, if he goes out of the country and stays away a certain number of years, the debt's outlawed you know.

The debt it is! Is it though? I've been in debt, but I always managed to pull through without getting so far. But that's convenient for some fellows too.

I'm a little muddy about it, but I've heard something to this effect. I think the time is seven years. If the debt is not acknowledged during that interval, it is outlawed. And now, pon my life, my dear fellow, I really don't know but that I have jumbled up some fragments of English law with American. I felt that I was muddy and so I thought I'd ask you.

Don't know any more about it than about the antediluvians.

It is an important point, and I should like to have it looked up.

Well, get a lawyer here; half London is on the Continent. But still, my dear fellow, I don't see what you are driving at. You're not in debt?

No—this isn't debt; but it struck me that this might possibly apply to other contracts.

Oh!

How—such as what, for instance.

Well, you see, I thought, you know, that all contracts might be included under it; and so I thought that if seven years or so annulled all contracts, it might have some effect, you know, upon the—the marriage contract, you know.

At this Hawbury started up, stared at Dacres, gave a loud whistle and then exclaimed.

By Jove!

I may be mistaken, said Dacres modestly.

Mistaken? Why, old chap, you're mad. Marriage? Why, good Lord! don't you know that nothing can abrogate that? Of course in case of crime one can get a divorce; but there is no other way even years. By Jove! A good idea, that. Why man, if that were so the kingdom would be depopulated. Hus-

bands running off from wives and wives from husbands to pass the required seven years abroad. You see, too, there is another thing, my boy, marriage is a sacrament, and you have not only got to untie the civil knot but the clerical one, my boy. No, no; there's no help for it. You gave your word old chap, "till death do us part," and you're in for it.

At this Dacres said nothing; it appeared to dispel his project from his mind. He relapsed into a sullen sort of gloom, and remained so for some time. At last he spoke.

Hawbury!

Well?

Have you found out who that fellow is?

What fellow?

Why that yellow Italian that goes prowling around after my wife.

Oh yes.

What was it?

Well, it seems that he saved her life or something of that sort.

Saved her life! How? Where? Cool too. Oh on the Alps somewhere.

On the Alps! saved her life! Come now, I like that, said Dacres with bitter intonation. Ah! don't I know her? I warrant you she contrived all that; oh she's deep! but how did it happen. Did you hear?

Well I didn't hear anything very definite. It was something about a precipice.

It was Lady Dalrymple that told me. It seems she was knocked over a precipice by an avalanche.

Was what? Knocked where? Over a precipice? By a what—an avalanche? Good Lord! I don't believe it. I swear I don't. She invented it all. It's some of her infernal humbug. She slid over the snow so as to get him to go after her. Oh, don't I know her ways!

Well, come now old man, you shouldn't be too hard on her. You never said that flirtation was one of her faults.

Well neither it was; but as she is a demon, she is capable of anything; and now she has sobered down and all her vices have taken this turn. Oh yes I know her; no more storms now—no rage, no fury—all quiet and sly. Flirtation, ha, ha! that's the word. And my wife; and going about the country tuppeling over precipices, with devilish handsome Italians going down to save her life! Ha, ha, ha! I like that!

See here, old boy, I swear you're too suspicious. Come now; you're going too far. If she chooses, she may trump up the same charge against you and the child angel at Vesuvius. Come now, old boy, be just. You can afford to; your wife may be a fiend in human form; and if you insist upon it, I have nothing to say. But this last notion of yours is nothing but the most wretched absurdity. It's worse, it's lunacy.

Well, said Dacres, in a milder tone; perhaps she didn't contrive it. But then you know, he added, it is just as good for her; she gets the Italian. Ha, ha, ha!

His laugh was forced, feverish and unnatural. Hawbury didn't like it and tried to change the subject.

Oh, by the way, said he, you needn't have any further trouble about any of them. You didn't seem inclined to take any definite action so the action will be taken for you.

What do you mean?

I mean that they are all going to leave Naples.

To leave Naples?

Dacres uttered this in a voice of grief and surprise which astonished Hawbury and touched him.

Yes, he said, you know they've been here long enough. They want to see Rome. Holy week you know; no end of excitement. Illumination of St. Peter's, and all that sort of thing, you know.

Dacres relapsed into sombre silence. For more than half an hour he did not say a word. Hawbury respected his mood, and watched him with something approaching anxiety.

Hawbury, said he at last.

Well, old man?

I'm going to Rome.

You—to Rome.

Yes, me to Rome.

Oh nonsense! See here old boy, you'd really better not, you know. Break it up. You can't do anything.

I'm going to Rome, repeated Dacres stolidly; I've made up my mind.

But really, remonstrated Hawbury. See here now, my dear fellow, look here you know. By Jove! you don't consider, really.

Oh yes, I do. I know every thing; I consider everything.

But what good will it do?

It won't do any good; but it may prevent some evil.

Nothing but evil can ever come of it.

Oh, no evil need necessarily come of it.

By Jove! exclaimed Hawbury, who began to be excited. Really, my dear fellow, you don't think. You see you can't gain anything. She's surrounded by friends, you know. She never can be yours, you know. There's a great gulf between you, and all that sort of thing, you know.

Yes, repeated Dacres, catching his last words—yes, a great gulf, as deep as the bottomless abyss, never to be traversed, where she stands on one side, and I on the other, and between us hate, deep and pitiless hate, undying, eternal!

Then, by Jove! my dear fellow, what's the use of trying to fight against it? You can't do anything. If this were Indiana, now; or even New York, I wouldn't say anything, you know; but you know an Indiana divorce wouldn't do you any good. Her friends wouldn't take you on those terms—and she wouldn't. Not she, by Jove!

I must go. I must follow her, continued Dacres. The sight of her has roused a devil within me that I thought was laid. I'm a changed man, Hawbury.

I should think so, by Jove!

A changed man, continued Dacres. Oh! Heavens, what power there is in a face! What terrific influence it has over a man! Here am I, a few days ago I was a free man; now I am a slave. But, by Heaven! I'll follow her to the world's end. She shall not shake me off. She thinks to be happy without me. She shall not. I will silently follow as she avenging fate. I cannot have her, and

no one else shall. The same cursed fate that severs her from me shall keep her from others. If I am lonely and an exile, she shall not be as happy as she expects. I shall not be the only one to suffer.

See here, by Jove! cried Hawbury. Really. You're going too far, my dear boy, you know. You are, really. Come now. This is just like a Surrey theatre, you know. You're really raving. Why, my poor old boy, you must give her up. You can't do anything. You daren't call on her. You're tied hand and foot. You may worship her here, and rave about your child-angel till you're black in the face, but you never can see her; and as to all this about stopping her from marrying any other person, that's all rot and bosh. What do you suppose any other man would care for your nonsensical ravings? Lonely and an exile! Why, man, she'll be married and done for in three months.

You don't understand me, said Dacres, dryly.

I'm glad that I don't; but it's no wonder, old man, for really you were quite incoherent.

And so they are going to Rome, said Dacres. Well, they'll find that I'm not to be shaken off so easily.

Come now, old man you must give that up.

And I suppose, continued Dacres, with a sneer, our handsome dark-eyed little Italian cavalier is going with us. Ha, ha! He's at the house all the time no doubt.

Well, yes; he was there once.

Ah! of course—quite devoted.

Oh, yes; but don't be afraid. It was not to the child angel. She appears to avoid him. That's really quite evident. It's an apparent aversion on her part.

Dacres drew a long breath.

Oh, said he, and so I suppose it's not her that he goes after. I did not suppose that it was. Oh no. There's another one—more piquant, you know—

stand the general drift, at least, of what you say?

Well, then, you understand this much—I'm going to Rome.

I'm sorry for it old boy.

And see here, Hawbury, I want you to come with me.

Me? What for?

Well, I want you. I may have need of you.

As Dacres said this his face assumed so dark and gloomy an expression that Hawbury began to think that there was something serious in all this menace.

Pon my life, said he, my dear boy, I really don't think you're in a fit state to be allowed to go by yourself. You look quite desperate. I wish I could make you give up this infernal Roman notion.

I'm going to Rome! repeated Dacres, resolutely.

Hawbury looked at him.

You'll come, Hawbury, won't you?

Why, confound it, of course, I am afraid you will do something rash old man and you will have to have me to stand between you and harm.

Oh, don't be concerned about me, said Dacres. I only want to watch her, see; what her little game is. I want to look at her in the midst of her happiness. She is most infernally beautiful, too; has not added a year or a day to her face, more lovely than ever; more beautiful than she was when I first saw her. And there is a softness about her that she never had before. Where the deuce did she get that? Good idea of hers to cultivate the soft style. And there is a sadness in her face too. Can it be real? By Heaven! if I thought it could be real I'd but pooh! what insanity! It's her art. There never was such cunning. She cultivates the soft, sad style so as to attract lovers—lovers—who adore her—

who save her life—who become her obedient slaves! Oh yes; and I—what am I? Why they get together and laugh at me they giggle; they snicker—

Confound it all, man, what are you go-

ing on at that rate for? interrupted Hawbury. Are you taking leave of your senses altogether? By Jove! old man, you had better give up this Roman journey.

No, I'll keep to it.

What for? Confound it! I don't see your object.

My object? Why I mean to follow her. I cannot give her up. I won't give her up. I'll follow her. She shall not go anywhere without seeing me on the track. She shall see that she is mine. She shall know that she's got a master. She shall find herself cut off from the butterfly life which she hopes to enter. I'll be her fate and she shall know it.

By Jove! cried Hawbury. What the deuce is all this about? Are you mad, or what? Look here old man you're utterly beyond me, you know. What the mischief do you mean? Whom are you going to follow? Whose fate are you going to be? Whose track are you talking a bout?

Who? cried Dacres. Why, my wife!

As he said this he struck his first violent on the table.

The deuce! exclaimed Hawbury, staring at him; after which he added, thoughtfully, by Jove!

Not much more was said. Dacres sat in silence for a long time, breathing hard and puffing violently at his cigar. Hawbury said nothing to interrupt his meditation. After an hour or so Dacres tramped off in silence, and Hawbury was left to meditate over the situation.

And this was the result of his meditations.

He saw that Dacres was greatly excited, and had changed completely from his old self. His state of mind seemed actually dangerous. There was an evil gleam in his eyes that looked like madness. What made it more perplexing still was the new revulsion of feeling that now was manifested. It was not so much love for the child-angel as bitter and venomous hate for his wife. The gentler

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