

John Arthur's Ward; OR THE DETECTIVE'S DAUGHTER.

Continued from 1st page.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"I HAVE COME BACK TO MY OWN."

Quite the pleasantest of all the rooms that had been so suspiciously fitted up, when "Mrs. Torrance" came to Oakley, a bride, was the back drawing-room. At least it was pleasant in winter. Its large windows faced south and west, and all of the windows were lighted from within, glowing through crimson curtains and hanging the piled-up anthracite in the grate to bathe the room in a ruddy glow of crimson and bronze.

On this particular December day, the air was crisp and cold, and all of floating particles of frost, while the winter sun shone bright and clear. Outside one felt that it was an exceedingly cold sun. But viewed from within, it looked inviting enough, and one felt inspired to dash out into the frosty air and try if they could not walk a la hippogriffe, without touching their feet to the ground.

Some such thoughts were floating through the mind of Mrs. John Arthur, who was progressing in her convalescence very rapidly now, and had, on this day, made her second descent to the drawing-rooms.

She had donned, for the first time since her illness, a dinner-dress, and had had her sweeping train and elbow sleeves enriched with flounces of black lace. As there was, at present, no need to play the invalid—herself and her attendant, the sole occupants of the room—she was slipping up and down its length like a caped lioness.

By and by she swerved from her course, and coming to the grate, put a daintily-shod foot upon the bronze fender. Her right hand on a chair, and looking down upon Davlin, who was lounging before the fire in full dinner costume, she said, abruptly—

"How very interesting all this is!" Davlin made no sign that he heard. "Do you know how long we have been playing this little game, sir?" The man smiled, in a goodly way, exasperatingly to her, and lifting one hand, began to tell of the months on his fingers.

"Let me see, had opened in June, did it not?" She nodded impatiently. "In June?" He was thinking of his June flirting with Madeline Payne, and involuntarily glanced at the windows from whence could be seen the very trees under which they had wandered, himself, and that fair dead girl, in early June. "Yes, the last of June—I remember,"—reflectively.

"And pray, from what event does your memory date?" exclaimed Cora, with strong sarcasm. He glanced up quickly. "Why, Ma Belle, from your introduction to the hills and vales of Bellair, and the master of Oakley?"

"Oh, I thought it was from the time you received your pistol wound?" Davlin smiled. "Yes, that scratch was given in June; but I don't date from trifles, do I?" "Oh! Well, I fancy it was not the fault of the hand that aimed the bullet, or rather of the heart, that you got a 'mere scratch'! I never believed in your credible explanation of that affair, sir."

BOONING THE DETECTIVE ON GREAT ONES AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES—

"Then she stepped back, and a vision appeared before them, which struck them dumb and motionless with surprise. Across the threshold swept a young lady richly robed in trailing silk and velvet and fur, with a face fair as a star-flower, haughty as the face of any duchess; with amber eyes that gazed upon them as if they were the vilest of slaves; with a smile of cunning, mastery, fearlessly; with a wave upon her waves of golden hair, clustering about the temples and snowy neck; and with scarlet lips had part in a scornful smile.

She swept the length of the room with matchless grace and self-possession, and pausing before the astonished group, said in a voice clear as the chiming of silver bells—

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! I have been this morning at court—knocking—ah, yes, this is Miss Arthur, Aunt Ellen, how do you do?"

"There are some scenes that beggar description, and this was such an one." Miss Arthur, who clearly recognized in this lovely young lady the little Madeline of years ago, was so stricken with astonishment that she utterly forgot how to inhale; and it was not till she had taken Cora sat like one in a nightmare.

Percy was conscious of but one feeling, Trance, and he was here, he was staring at this vision of beauty, thinking only, "how lovely! how lovely!"

And Lucian Davlin? At the first sight of that face, the first sound of that voice, he had felt as if turning to stone, incapable of movement or speech. At that moment, had Cora once glanced toward him, his face must have betrayed his secret. But her eyes were fixed on Madeline.

Davlin felt a tremor raging within him. Madeline alive! This glowing, brilliant, richly robed, queenly creature—Madeline! Again in his ears rang her farewell words. Quick as lightning came the thought of his own death, and how she would denounce him! And yet, through an ether of his being, he felt a thrill of gladness. Again there surged in his mind that mad dream, that mad spring into being when she had so gloriously defied him. She was not dead, and he was glad!

Old Hagar had closed the door after her young mistress; and now she stood near it, calm and immovable as a block of ice.

Madeline Payne stood, for a moment, gazing laughingly into the amazed face of the spinster. Then she said, "Come, I have a very important errand, and as if I were a ghost! Introduce me to your friends. Is this young lady my new step-mamma?"

Cora roused herself from her stupor, and said, laughing, "I am Mrs. Arthur, and the mistress of the house."

There was a brief moment of silence, when she stepped back, and a vision appeared before them, which struck them dumb and motionless with surprise. Across the threshold swept a young lady richly robed in trailing silk and velvet and fur, with a face fair as a star-flower, haughty as the face of any duchess; with amber eyes that gazed upon them as if they were the vilest of slaves; with a smile of cunning, mastery, fearlessly; with a wave upon her waves of golden hair, clustering about the temples and snowy neck; and with scarlet lips had part in a scornful smile.

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