

A GOLDEN DREAM.

By G. Manville Fenn,

Author of "A Mint of Money," "Black Blood," "The Master of the Ceremonies," &c.

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CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

"Don't threaten her again, my dear," she said; "and do, pray, leave this business to me. I can manage Toinette."

An hour later Madame Saintone was being driven to the house at the outskirts of the town, feeling a slight shrinking as she approached the place and saw the number of blacks idling about the verandah and sleeping in the sunshine.

"They will not dare to molest me," she said to herself, proudly; but all the same she could not help recalling the various troubles consequent upon the independent position taken up by the black race.

To her surprise, however, instead of being received by the people in sullen silence and with furtive looks, there were smiles and salutations, and one woman went so far as to offer her a few flowers.

Madame Saintone received these graciously as she was stepping out of her carriage, listening to the while with some surprise to the tones of a piano, a few chords upon which were being struck carelessly. But the next moment she was face to face with the difficulty of her task, Nousie having left her child to hurry out to meet what seemed to her a danger.

"Ah! Madame Dulau," said Madame Saintone, smiling, but without offering her hand, "I have called to see your charming daughter. I think I have been most patient in waiting all these days before renewing our delightful acquaintance."

"What do you want?" said Nousie, suspiciously, "why have you come?"

She spoke in a loud tone, and was evidently suffering from great excitement.

Madame Saintone smiled.

"Oh come," she said playfully, "you must not want to keep the poor child all to yourself, Madame Dulau. You forget what friends my daughter and Aube had become. I want you to let her go for a drive and then spend a few hours with us up at Beau Rivage. You will not say no."

It was on Nousie's lips to say no, never

trouble us again, but it was beginning to dawn upon her that she had brought her child to a very unsuitable home. She had been startled at the difference between them. Forgetful of self, the mother had had this one thought—her child; and it had not occurred to her that this child would return to her an accomplished lady, whose every word and act would stand in strange contrast to her own. And now in this brief interview she had to battle with two ideas. Would she be standing in her child's light in checking all further intercourse? On the other hand, if she allowed Aube to accept the invitation, would she be doing that which sent an agonising pang through her, widening the gulf between her and her child.

As she was hesitating Madame Saintone brought to bear the calm matter of fact mental pressure of the woman accustomed to be obeyed, on one who was moving in a lower grade.

"Ah," she said, smiling, "I thought you would relent. I understand your feelings. I should be as jealous as you if someone tried to separate me from my darling Antoinette. Where is our dear Aube?"

She walked quietly forward, and as if mastered by a stronger will, Nousie led her in silence to the inner room she had religiously set apart for her child.

Aube rose from the piano as they entered, coloring vividly and then growing pale, while her mother stood at the door watching jealously every look and feeling painfully more and more that she had been creating the gap between her and the child she loved.

"Ah, my darling," cried Madame Saintone, "I have come at last."

She kissed her affectionately, but Aube made no sign.

"What a delightful little nest. A piano! Books! All thoughtful little preparations made by your dear mother for her child's return. There, have I not been patient. I should have been here before," she continued, seating herself in a lounge and arranging her dress while Aube stood by, and Nousie closed the door and seemed to keep guard lest her child should be stolen from her, "but Toinette said you two ought to have a few days together undisturbed."

"It was very kind of you, Madame Saintone, and good of you to call."

"Oh, come, my child don't talk like that. We must not be formal. There, go and put on your things. I see how it is: you are quite pale with keeping indoors, and you have been feeling the heat. I am going to take you for a drive where you can feel the sea air; then come for a few hours to dine with us, and I'll bring you back in the evening."

Aube looked at her in a startled way, and then at her mother, who remained a silent and watchful spectator of the scene.

"You have seen nothing of the place yet, I am sure, and if I go back to Paris and call on the dear sisters, I shall never be able to face them if I have not done my duty by you. Come."

Nousie stood with her lips parted, and feeling as if something was constricting in her heart as she told herself that she had committed a grievous error, and all her labors of these many years was to prepare her child for another grade of life, and that from this moment Aube was going to drift away.

Yes; it was all plain enough. She realised fully the difference between herself and this elegantly-dressed, polished woman with whom Aube seemed in accord. Misery, agony, despair—all fought for the possession of her breast as she felt now that she was only fit to be servant to her child, and for a moment, she was on the point of running from the room and finding some lonely spot where she could throw herself down and beat her head against the ground.

But as she gazed wildly at Aube, their eyes met, and there was so soft and gentle a look directed at her that her breast heaved, her great love prevailed once more and she said to herself, "Why not? I have been her servant and slave all these years. Why should it not continue now if it will make her happy? Is she not my life?"

"Why, my child," cried Madame Saintone, with a forced laugh, "how strange you look. Oh, I see you have some non-

sense in that pretty head about obligation and not wishing to trouble me. Quite school etiquette, that, and all very well in Paris; but here we are more free and neighborly. Aube, my darling, I have to give you your first lesson in Haytian hospitality, so to begin with, my dear, my horses and carriage are at your service whenever you like. We must mount you, and Toinette and you can go for long rides together."

At that moment a jealous suspicion flashed across Nousie's brain, for she recalled meeting Toinette on horseback nearly two years before, and she was riding with her brother Etienne. If Aube went with Madame Saintone, she would meet this man.

"Don't you think so, Madame Dulau?" Nousie started and gazed at her wildly.

"I said," continued Madame Saintone, with a smile, and in a voice full of good humored condescension, "do you not think our dearest Aube would look charming in a riding habit?"

Nousie's lips parted, and Madame Saintone said to herself, "Poor woman; I can lead her as I like." Then aloud, as Aube crossed toward her mother, "That's right, my dear. Do not hurry, and make yourself hot, and pray let there be no more formality between us. Your dear mother wishes you, I can see, to make friends with our people, and it will be better for you, of course."

"And she will meet Etienne Saintone, the man who came here that day," thought Nousie; and with her eyes dilating she recalled the bribe he had given her, and what had followed when he and his friend kept their appointment.

She was recalling all this with the agony at her heart increasing as the possibility of Saintone seeing and loving her child flashed across her, and quite heedless of her daughter's words as Aube laid a hand upon her arm, she now caught her to her side and held her fast.

"What?" she said, wildly; and she looked fiercely at Aube's eyes.

"I said that it was kind and thoughtful of Madame Saintone to come and make this proposal; but will you tell her, dear, as I did, that I have come back home to you, to be with you, and that I cannot accept her offer."

"My dearest Aube," cried Madame Saintone, holding out her hands.

"I am saying what I am sure my dear mother wishes," said Aube gently, "and it is what I feel. Thank you, Madame Saintone; I am very grateful—indeed I am—for all your care of me during the voyage; but I must decline."

"My dear Madame Dulau," said the visitor, "it really is your duty to help your child. Do not, pray, stand in her light. Indeed, all this will be for her good."

Nousie felt constrained again.

Was it right? Was it for Aube's good, and would she stand in her light? This beautiful, ladylike girl, was, she saw now, so out of place there.

"Do you not feel this?" continued Madame Saintone, who followed up her advantage, and spoke earnestly to her mother.

"Feel this?" faltered Nousie, as she looked wildly at her child. "Stand in her light! Aube, dear. Should I? Yes. You should go."

Aube's arms were round her, and she laid her head upon her mother's shoulder.

"No," she said, softly, "Madame Saintone means it kindly, but it is not right. No, Madame Saintone, I have thought all this over, and thank you all the same. Mother, dear, I cannot go."

Nousie stood as if carved in stone as Madame Saintone rose, shrugged her shoulders, and raised her eyebrows, thinking the while.

"I see," she cried, pleasantly, "Toinette was right. I have still come too soon. You two are quite lovesick yet. There, I am going now to wait till all this emotion has had time to cool down. Good-bye, Madame Dulau. Aube, my sweet child," she continued, kissing her, "au revoir, I am going to disappoint Toinette, but you will make up for it another day."

Aube shook her head, but Madame Saintone laughed.

"We shall see," she said gently. "Good-bye."

She rustled out of the door, and mother and child stood apart now in the shaded room, listening as the chatter of the blacks outside ceased, and in imagination they saw the visitor mount into the carriage; then the wheels crushed the dusty road, the loud talking of the blacks began again, and there was a cheer.

Then Nousie gazed wildly in her child's face.

"It is all true," she said. "I shall stand in your light and keep you back."

Aube flung her arms round her neck, and nestled to her as she whispered:

"My own dearest mother, you hurt me if you speak like that."

But Nousie made no sign, for Madame Saintone's words had gone deeply home; and more and more in her heart she knew that they were true.

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SWEET IS REVENGE.

By J. Fitzgerald Molloy,

Author of "How Came He Dead?" "That Villain Romeo." "A Modern Magician," &c.

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CHAPTER XIX.—GONE.

On the evening Lady Fothergille quietly and unobservedly left the abbey, the family circle, as usual, assembled in the drawing room before dinner. Mrs. Crayworth and the captain were first to arrive; the former looking, as she hoped, fascinating, in an elaborate toilet: the latter seeming somewhat uneasy and morose. He walked over to the corner where the widow sat fanning herself, and gazed at her with an evil expression.

"I know," she said, smiling at him. "You have done your work, but I'm not sure that we shall have to make another attack before we rout the enemy from her stronghold."

"You didn't tell me," he remarked, "where you found the portrait?"

"In his desk," she answered calmly.

The captain gave a low whistle. "You don't hesitate to take a bold step," he said, with an ugly leer.

"I never hesitate when I am determined to win."

Unscrupulous as he was a feeling of loathing arose in his mind at her words. "Tell me," he asked, "did you forge these words written at the back?"

Instead of being affronted by the question she seemed highly amused, and leaning back in her chair gave a little silvery laugh. "Forge them," she said, "there was no necessity, or I might have done so, the lines were written on the photograph when I found it amongst his papers. Do you think they are strong enough to have the desired effect on Sir Danvers?"

"Yes," he replied.

At that instant the baronet entered and looked swiftly round the room. The figure he either hoped or dreaded to see was not present, and it was difficult for Mrs. Crayworth, who watched him keenly, to judge whether he was disappointed or relieved.

It was, however, easily perceptible that his usual bright, buoyant air had deserted him, and that the customary cheerful look on his face had given place to an expression of dark doubt and bitter pain. In an absent-minded way he advanced to where his guests were conversing, all unsuspecting that his honor and happiness were the subject of their talk. Mrs. Crayworth was quite equal to the occasion.

"We have just been discussing," she cheerfully remarked, "the subject of reincarnation."

"Indeed," replied Sir Danvers, quite unheeding the movement of her hand sweeping aside her skirts, and making a motion for him to sit beside her. His eyes glanced uneasily towards the door.

"Does the theory admit that we are to have our choice in returning in whatever form we please?" asked the captain.

"O, yes; we, as well-educated and admirably behaved souls, will seek entrance into the bodies whose physical peculiarities and material surroundings will best help us to work out our missions."

"Few people would, I fancy, care to return and live their lives over again," said Sir Danvers, with a sigh, his face still turned towards the entrance.

"If I am given my way I shall certainly come back as a dove," said Mrs. Crayworth.

"I fancy some women must return as serpents, or perhaps I should say some serpents have returned as women," the captain remarked, looking at her with the smile she dreaded hovering on his cruel lips.

"And some tigers must have come back into the world as men, retaining all their old ferocity and blood thirstiness!" she said, in a malicious tone. Her face brightened as she saw his complexion turn to a dull leaden hue, and his eyeballs glow like coals of fire. She had hit home, and felt the pride of a victor.

Smothering a curse that rose to his lips the captain turned away. Poor Sir Danvers was too much absorbed in his own grief to notice what passed before him, for at that moment he suffered agonies of suspense, wondering if the woman he had in a moment of uncontrollable anger told to leave his house would dare enter the room as if nothing had occurred; and again hoping to meet her with a pleading look in her eyes, and a whispered denial on her lips. If only a note were put into his hands explaining this evidence of wrong doing, if he could only be assured he labored under some mistake, what a load would be lifted from his heart, what brightness might shine again upon his life after the passing of this threatening cloud. But no, this could never be; the proof of his wife's frailty lay in his desk, the past could not be undone, the future bitterness, pain, and humiliation must be endured.

All these thoughts rushed through his mind as he apparently listened to Mrs. Crayworth's platitudes concerning the philosophy of eastern faiths, and her high aspirations after a spiritual life which the western creeds were unable to satisfy.

"My nature is such that it must aspire," she said, lowering her voice to the pathetic compass, "its thirst for the higher life is unquenchable, its desire to soar into the regions of sublimity is unconquerable; my soul is ever in rebellion against its frail tenement the body." J.T.B.

"Indeed," Sir Danvers said, after a pause, believing some remark was expected from him, and not in the least heeding her sentiments.

The clock on the chimney piece struck eight; at that instant a rustle was heard outside the drawing-room door; Sir Danvers' heart beat in expectation, his brow clouded, and he turned away. Immediately he heard his daughter's voice addressing him.

"Father, hasn't Ethel come down yet?"

"No," he replied briefly.

"How late she is, perhaps her headache isn't better. I'll go and see her."

"Stay, Meg," he answered, in a voice so unlike his usual tones that she wondered. "She is not quite well, and doesn't wish to be disturbed."

Before he had concluded his sentence dinner was announced. The absence of his wife from her customary place at the head of the table added to Sir Danvers' uneasiness.

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pain and anger. The vacant seat seemed symbolic of the sudden emptiness which had occurred in his life. The feeling of wrath and misery surging through his mind prevented him from thinking of any other subject than that of his betrayal. He could not eat, and merely trifled with what was set before him that his sudden loss of appetite might not be remarked; but he drank more wine than usual to stimulate, if possible, his weary spirits.

Mrs. Crayworth chattered incessantly; she was resolved the dinner table should not appear dull because of the absence of her hostess, and carried on a running fire of comment on the topics of the day, expressing admiration for leading movements and censure for political actions, sustaining a rattling monologue that required neither answer nor interruption. The captain seated beside Meg, gave her all his attention, making up for his lack of fervor during Lord Hector Maynes' stay at the abbey. Devoid of resentment, the girl welcomed what she considered a change of mood, and received his devotion with an honest show of pleasure. The unexpected appearance of Maynes had altered the tenor of the captain's plans with regard to his cousin, but relieved of the restraint Lord Hector's presence had caused, he fell back into his former position as a suitor, though he now no longer clearly saw his way towards fulfilling his hopes of gaining her fortune. He could not foresee what steps future circumstances might urge or permit him to take. He was willing to risk much, and meanwhile he continued his former course, hoping that by some change of fate, some unexpected accident, he might yet be able to obtain Meg's dowry of thirty thousand pounds.

The poor relation and the baronet alone maintained silence, the latter mentally repeating the scene of that afternoon with his wife, the former wondering how she should ever again, after her lengthened stay at the abbey and acquaintance with its luxurious life, be able to endure an existence confined to a back room in a Bloomsbury lodging-house, attended by a slipshod maid of all work, whose bell-bewildering soul Miss Gauntly could only hope to inspire with due respect and attention by continued reference to her cousin the baronet, and her residence at the abbey.

When at last dinner ended and Meg rose from the table, she left the poor relation and Mrs. Crayworth to occupy the drawing-room, whilst she ran quickly upstairs to make enquiries for Ethel. Entering her stepmother's dressing-room, the door of which stood ajar, she found Clegg absorbed in trying on one of Lady Fothergille's bonnets before the glass, into which she stared with a lofty air and frowning brow, which she believed expressive of true dignity.

"Where is your mistress?" asked Meg, looking round the room.

"La, miss, you did startle me," cried Clegg, whisking the bonnet off her head and making a struggle to replace her cap. "I'm that nervous."

"Where is your mistress?" Meg repeated, a sense of uneasiness seizing her.

"Gone, miss," answered the maid.

"Gone!" Meg repeated in a bewildered way. "Where?"

"To London, miss, by the eight train; and I must say her ladyship was terribly cut up, and took on wonderfully before she started, though no one saw her but myself."

"What are you saying, girl?" Meg cried in angry tones.

"Only what's true, miss, and her ladyship left a letter for you there on the chimney piece."

Meg took it in her hands, which trembled so violently that she could hardly tear open the envelope, and read the lines Ethel had written. When she had gone over them she could scarcely understand their import, and sat down to con them once more. Seeing Clegg's eyes fixed on her enquiringly, she bade the girl leave the room, and then repeated the words "Why I go your father will best be able to explain. Believe and trust me if you can." What could this mean, where had she gone, and for how long, and why did she leave in this secret manner? There was some mystery here, connected she feared with trouble. No doubt of Ethel crossed her mind; her only apprehension was that some painful event which called for her presence necessitated her departure. But why should this be kept secret? she asked herself: there was something wrong, trouble brooded in the air and filled her with depression.

She rose up, and going hurriedly down stairs to the dining-room, said, "Father, what is the meaning of this?"

"Of what?" he asked nervously.

"Of Ethel's leaving her home."

"Leaving her home!" he repeated.

"Has she gone?" he asked, a fresh fear rushing in upon him.

"Surely you knew she was going," the girl said, his manner causing her sense of uneasiness to increase. "She says you will best be able to explain why she left. Here is her letter."

Striving to suppress his excitement and to stem the black forebodings that swept across his mind, he read the note aloud until he came to the line, "I am going where a faithful and affectionate friend will take care of me," at which he paused. The silence that fell upon the room was suddenly broken by a harsh, abrupt laugh coming from the captain. Sir Danvers interpreted the meaning of that sound, and his heart sank within him.

Meg watched the expression of despair that gradually crept over her father's face, and, alarmed at the change, threw her arms round his neck and cried "Father, what has happened? What does all this mean?"

(To be continued.)

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Some young men, bantering a fat man, said, "If all flesh is grass, you must be a load of hay." "I suspect I am," replied he, "from the way the asses are nibbling at me."—Ex.

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for four weeks after the prize has been awarded, and many answers have been laid aside on this account.

Answers to History Questions, No. 12.

1. Who was the first regularly commissioned general of New Brunswick and when was he appointed?

Ans. Major-General Sir George Tracy Smythe, appointed 1818.

2. Who was the political leader in Lower Canada (Quebec) from 1824 to 1837?

Ans. M. Louis Papineau.

3. Where did "Montgomery's Tavern" stand, and how did it become noted?

Ans. "Montgomery's Tavern" was situated on Yonge street, the road running north from Toronto. It became noted for being the place near where the rebels under Lyon McKenzie were defeated in 1837.

4. Who commanded the American revolutionary forces that attacked Quebec in 1775?

Ans. General Richard Montgomery.

HISTORY QUESTION COMPETITION No. 14.

1. In whose reign was the battle of the Nile fought, and who was the English general?

2. Who were the leading statesmen after the American war?

3. Explain what is meant by the Septennial act, and in whose reign and year was it passed?

4. In what century did the gothic style of architecture arise?

Been Out to See a Man.

Conjuror—You see, ladies and gentlemen, the dollar has vanished. You will soon find out where it has gone. You, honest countryman over there, just put your hand in your coat pocket! I bet you will find the dollar. Peasant—No; I've only got two marks and eight pennings.

Conjuror—Impossible! You must have the dollar! Peasant—No, I haven't. That was the dollar you put in my pocket a while ago, but I've been out to have a drink since then. Tableau!—German Joke.

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