

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

you know. Never mind why, but do as I tell you. That is all, I think. Have all ready for between five and six to-morrow, though the coup may be delayed till the next day.

He held out his hand carelessly as he rose.

The old miser seized it. "You are what I was once," he said. "You have enterprise and nerve. But I have life in me yet, and you will find I shall do my part and not fail you."

For his own reason, the vicomte did not return to the Grange till late, only allowing himself just time to dress for dinner.

In fact, he was the last to make his appearance in the dining-room; so it was not till after the ladies had withdrawn that Sir John had a chance of questioning him.

"So you have failed," he said, with a groan, after he had heard as much of the former chose to tell him. "Well, then, it's all over," he added. "You did your best, I know, and no one can do more than that. There is only one course for me to take, and I shall not shrink from it. Fill your glass, vicomte. Faith! an extra one or two will do me good tonight."

His hand shook, but he filled his own glass before he passed the decanter to the vicomte.

The latter said little, but smoked on tranquilly, waiting for the wine to act on his host.

After a while, he calculated that his time had come.

"I think you have one chance left," he said, quietly, "and one not to be despised either."

The knight paused in the act of filling his glass.

"What?" he cried, "a chance? For God's sake name it man!"

"It rests with your daughter," the other proceeded, flicking the ash off his cigar. "Your creditor is an old man, and madly infatuated by mademoiselle's charms. I really think, if she went to him in person, and asked him to give you time, he would consent, even without her making any direct promise about marriage. You can always trust a woman's tact for that. Of course, Miss Talbot would accompany her, though the interview must necessarily be a private one."

As a drowning man clutches at straws, so did Sir John seize on this frail chance. "She shall go—to-morrow!" he exclaimed, draining his glass. "She cannot refuse me—her father; and, with Olivia to accompany her, there can be no impropriety about her visiting an old man like Grimes. Lucien, I shall look upon you as my saviour. God bless you!"

CHAPTER VI. IN THE NICK OF TIME

When morning dawned, the knight by no means felt so sure that his daughter would consent to pleading his cause with the old miser of the Holt, as he had done the previous evening.

The stimulating effects of the wine had died out, leaving him low and depressed. His fears, however, were groundless.

As soon as Lucy comprehended that no promise of marriage was required of her, she almost joyfully consented to try her best to soften Mr. Grimes' heart.

It was a solace to her to help her father in any way that was possible—he who had always been so kind to her.

Olivia was ready enough to accompany her; in fact, rather pleased than otherwise as she felt piqued because Vicomte de Friel had politely, but firmly, declined to take her out riding, pleading an appointment with Major Stunner of the Lancers, with whom he had also promised to dine at the mess.

As they walked up the ill-kept avenue of the Holt, Lucy's heart began to sink.

"I shall get through it somehow, I suppose," she said to Olivia, "and I shall not leave the old wretch till he has promised, at least, to give papa time; but I do wish dear, that you could be with me, though of course, it would not do."

"I am afraid not dear," replied her cousin. "He would hardly let his wicked old heart be there was a third party present. Courage! We shall be walking back down this avenue in an hour, triumphant!"

"I hope so," sighed Lucy; "but how dreadfully dismal the old house looks! Ring the bell dear, and let us get it over."

The echoes of the bell hardly died away when the servant opened the door.

He had thrown aside the garb of the gardener, and appeared now in solemn black.

Lucy handed him her card.

"If Mr. Grimes can see me," she said and, in spite of herself, her voice trembled a little. "I shall be glad."

"Mr. Grimes is in, and will be sure to see you, miss," the man answered, deferentially, and he ushered the two girls into a small sitting room, which opened off the hall.

In less than two minutes he was back.

"If you will please to follow me, miss my master will see you," he said.

Lucy's face was very pale as she rose.

"Courage, dear," whispered Olivia. "I shall wait for you here."

The next minute the door closed behind Lucy, and Olivia was alone.

The ex-Mayor of Castletown waited anxiously for his daughter's return.

He calculated that, allowing half an hour for her interview with Grimes, she ought to be back easily in time to dress for dinner.

There was still half-an-hour to run before he could expect to know how Lucy's errand had sped, when Lady Minstaid suddenly appeared upon the lawn.

"Sir John," she said excitedly, "the marchesa has arrived; she telegraphed, but the despatch has not yet turned up. Do go in and speak to her whilst I see that everything is prepared; she has only brought her maid—so considerate of her!"

Lady Minstaid led the way to the drawing-room.

For the knight there was no escape, so he resigned himself with a good grace,

A TWICE TOLD TALE.

A St Thomas Lady in May, '97,
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One strong proof of this is the two statements made by Mrs. E. W. Trump, of St. Thomas, Ont.

The first of these, made May 10th, 1897, is as follows: "When I commenced taking Doan's Kidney Pills I was sick and miserable with severe pains in my back and kidneys. I was also very weak and nervous. Since using these pills the pains have been removed, my nerves have been strengthened and good health has been restored to me. They are a splendid medicine for kidney troubles of any kind."

The second statement which we give below is of recent date, and shows what splendid health Mrs. Trump has had since Doan's Kidney Pills Cured her over two and a half years ago.

"Over two years ago I wrote telling of the cure made in my case by Doan's Kidney Pills. At the present time I am enjoying the very best of health, sleep well, eat well and my old enemies, backache and kidney trouble have never returned. Instead of misery and a broken-down constitution, I have for the past two years enjoyed a fresh sense of the value and beauty of life."

As men generally do, when there is a pretty woman to meet.

The Marchesa della Sontenza was certainly handsome; lovely some people called her.

Her graceful figure made her look taller than she really was.

There was a sadness in the great black eyes, fringed with their long lashes, which added an interest to the pale face framed in masses of blue black hair.

With her sweetest smile she rose to meet Sir John.

He thought her handsomer than ever, her talk interested him, he was charmed, flattered, and he forgot all about his daughter and her mission till Lady Minstaid bustled in, and carried the marchesa off to her room, to dress for dinner.

The usual hour for that meal passed, and neither Lucy nor Olivia had returned; but Lady Minstaid declined to wait.

"As they are together, no harm can have happened to them," she exclaimed. "They have met Mrs. Foldice, most likely, and, perhaps, stayed to dinner. Very inconsiderate of them, of course; but girls, in these days, have so much their own way that they never think."

Never before in his whole life had Sir John felt so nervous as he did that night.

What could have become of the girls?

Was Lucy afraid to return with bad news, or had Grimes detained her?

Impossible! Besides, was not Olivia with her?

All the same, he turned and fidgetted in his chair all during dinner.

When it was over, the ladies did not attempt to stir.

Lady Minstaid did not object to smoke, and the marchesa lighted a tiny cigarette herself.

She was a brilliant conversationalist, and engaged Lady Minstaid in an animated discussion on a topic of by no means purely feminine interest.

It was one into which Sir John could easily have entered, and into which, under ordinary circumstances, he would have done so with zest.

But, under existing conditions, he ventured upon scarcely a word.

He was more uneasy in his mind than ever.

He could not understand his daughter's failure to return to dinner.

Something seemed to tell him that the cause suggested by his wife was not the true one.

He felt, somehow, convinced that Lucy and her cousin had not met Mrs. Foldice and gone to dine with her.

Such a thing had never happened before, and he could not believe that it had happened now.

Besides, Lucy would know how terribly anxious he was to learn the result of her mission with the least possible delay.

She would not willingly keep him in suspense one moment longer than could be helped.

And yet she ought to have been back at the Grange long before this.

What, then, was detaining her?

Could it be—?

He shuddered.

He scarcely dared allow the thought to take definite shape.

It was too terrible.

But it was not to be denied.

It forced itself into his mind, and seemed almost to still the beating of his heart with its awful suggestion.

Could it be that Mathew Grimes had pleaded his love, and driven to frenzy by Lucy's scornful rejection, had slain her in his maniacal fury?

His face became ghastly pale, and a cold perspiration bedewed his brow.

The ladies, however, were too deeply immersed in their discussion to notice him. Suddenly the clang of the door-bell reached their ears.

"The girls," remarked Lady Minstaid.

"Sir John, I hope you will speak to them." A minute or two passed, and then the servant brought in a card, and handed it to his master.

The knight looked at it and started. "Why?" he exclaimed, "I thought the fellow had gone with the others. What does he mean by coming back?"

"Who, Sir John?" inquired Lady Minstaid.

"Why, that fellow, Dick Sutton," the knight answered, pushing back his chair from the table. "You will excuse me marchesa, but I suppose I must see this Captain Sutton."

Sir John left the room, and the ladies remained chatting.

Suddenly the door was violently thrown open, and Sir John darted in, his face purple.

"My dear Marchesa," he cried, "you will excuse us one minute," and, seizing his wife's arm, he dragged her into the recess of the window, where he whispered hurriedly in her ear.

The good lady threw up her hands in amazement.

"The ungrateful girl!" she exclaimed. "To get married without a word to me; without asking your consent! You cannot countenance this, Sir John. You must disown her. Let her know what want is; let her tramp with the regiment!"

"I don't think she will require to do that," remarked Dick Sutton, who, with his constant friend, Sholto Dundas, had followed Sir John to the dining room.

"Lady Minstaid—as, doubtless, your husband has just told you—I am married to your step-daughter. It was a perfectly proper legal marriage, as my friend, who was one of the witnesses, can testify. The hurry of our departure, and the old feud between my father and Sir John—which I knew could not be healed—must plead my excuse, for I was sure that it was impossible to gain either's consent to the match. But, I grieve to say, my father died suddenly a week ago, and, now that I am my own master, I have come to claim my wife. May I ask where she is?"

Lady Minstaid, who had re-seated herself at the table, tossed her head.

"I really am not responsible, Captain Sutton, for your wife's extraordinary conduct. She left this house on some errand of Sir John's, and has not yet returned; but, really, after the step she took with regard to her marriage, I am not surprised."

Sutton turned quickly on the knight, and his anxiety increased by seeing the other's agitation.

"What does this mean?" he cried. "Tell me at once on what errand you sent my wife!"

"The Vicomte de Friel, a great friend of Lucy and Olivia, is also absent to-night," remarked Lady Minstaid, maliciously.

The captain placed his hand heavily on the knight's shoulder.

"The truth," he said, sternly; "the truth, man, or—"

The overstrained nerves of Sir John gave way.

"I did it for the best. It was my last chance. I meant no harm; and, as for the vicomte, he is dining with the Lancers. But what else could I do? I ask you, Captain Dundas. A ruined man clings to any chance—it is allowable; and I knew her influence over Grimes. She was to promise nothing, only to plead for time for her father. Vicomte de Friel suggested it; but with Olivia with her, what harm—"

He stopped, gasping for breath.

A clear voice broke in at this moment, foreign in accent, but sharp and ringing.

"Do I understand that the young lady is missing, and Vicomte de Friel also?"

It was the Marchesa who spoke, and Dick answered her at once.

"My wife is missing," he said, "and the Vicomte de Friel is said to be dining in the barracks."

He saw the Italian woman's pale face flush, and her glorious eyes glitter angrily.

"You had better search for your wife, and quickly," she exclaimed, beating back the excitement she evidently felt. "Where she is, you will find the vicomte."

"How do you know that?" demanded Sholto Dundas, sharply.

"Because I know Vicomte de Friel's habits. I am his wife!"

Perhaps the most astonished person present was the lady of the house.

"You his wife!" she gasped. "Why, in Paris it was different. I have no time to explain. Monsieur—and she hastily rose to follow the officers, who were leaving the room—"I implore you to take me with you."

"As you like, madame," answered Dick Sutton. "But we cannot wait."

They were all three in the hall now.

The marchesa snatched a shawl from where it hung on a peg, and hurriedly followed the others out of the hall door.

The cab which had brought the two officers still stood waiting.

"To the Holt—Mr. Grimes' place," Dick called to the driver, as he entered last.

The man turned his horse, and rattled down the avenue.

Hardly a word was spoken during the short drive.

Dick Sutton was hilt mad with anxiety and fury. Sholto Dundas was nearly as furious, and the marchesa's hot Italian blood boiled with jealousy and hate.

As the cab stopped, both men sprang out, and the marchesa followed unheeded.

The bell was pulled, but the wire must have been cut, for the handle came away in Dick Sutton's hand.

The door resisted all their efforts to open it, and the lower windows in front were heavily barred.

As they reached the back of the house, lights were seen gleaming through the round eye holds of old fashioned shutters.

As they stood for a moment, gazing upwards, a faint cry, as if for help, reached their ears.

"By Heaven! it is a woman's cry," gasped Dick, and he made a desperate effort to solemly will by aid of the iron hinges of the lower shutters.

"The door!" shouted Dundas, pulling

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him down. "The door, man! Here it is. Now together!"

The back door of the Holt was old, and though locked and bolted, was wrenched from its hinges as the two powerful men dashed themselves against it.

Sholto Dundas was the first to rush up the staircase.

There was no fear of missing the room for now the cries for help were more distinct.

Dick was on the landing when Sholto burst open the door without waiting to see if it was locked or not.

It was a strange sight which met their eyes.

A square table laid for supper, lit by candles placed in tarnished silver branches, an old man on his knees before a woman, who, pale as death, leant against the wall, and a girl, knife in hand, holding at bay a slim, handsome man, whose dark face was flushed with wine and passion.

He started round with a snarl, like a hunted beast, as the door flew open, and his hand went, like lightning, to his breast.

At the same moment Sholto struck him down, and he fell with a crash across the table, the revolver falling from his nerveless fingers.

Olivia dropped the knife she had seized from the table, and with a gasp of relief, fell on her knees and burst into tears.

With a spring, Dick Sutton cleared the prostrate body of the vicomte, which had rolled on to the floor, and caught Lucy in his arms.

She was trembling violently; but smiled up in his face as he kissed her cold lips and cheek.

"I am quite safe, Dick," she whispered; but take that wretched old man away, or I feel that I shall faint," and she closed her eyes as if to shut out some horrid vision.

Dick Sutton placed her in a chair and turned upon the frightened wretch, who stood, with trembling hands and twitching face, close to where Olivia knelt, as if her presence offered him some protection.

"You found!" cried Dick, whose fury was getting beyond control. "You miserable hound! What am I to do with you? I would give ten years of my life if you were but thirty years younger."

He paused, glaring into the wretched old man's eyes.

Suddenly, a change came over the miser's face. A crimson flush swept downward from the roots of his grey hair to the chin.

With one feeble effort, as if to tear open his collar, he slipped from Dick's grasp and fell—struck down by apoplexy.

At that moment, Dick felt his friend's hand on his shoulder.

"So, one has gone," Sholto said, grimly, looking down on the prostrate body; "but what are we to do with that scoundrel?" and he pointed to the vicomte, who, still insensible, lay with his head pillowed on the marchesa's lap.

She was wiping the blood from his face.

"Throw him out of the window," replied Dick, shortly; "and if he breaks his neck, it will be a blessing."

The marchesa gently laid the vicomte's head upon the floor and rose to her feet.

"Oh, signor!" she cried, coming forward with clasped hands, "have pity on me; for him I would not ask it. He would kill me if he thought I had done so. But I am his wife—his true wife. It was I who, in my passion, led you here; with me you might have wasted time. Oh, signora, and she turned to Lucy, "pray for me, for you, too, are a wife. I will pledge myself that he leave England; that he—"

"Pray do not say any more," said Olivia, who had risen, and was standing, supporting herself with one hand on the table.

"Captain Dundas, please let him go free; I ask it."

She knew well the power of her words. The grim look on the tall, fair man's face melted away in an instant.

"Of course, I'll let him go, if you ask it, Miss Talbot," he said. "All the same—"

She took his hand.

"All the same," she said, her voice trembling a little, "I know what I owe to you—to you and Dick," she added, smiling; "but then, Dick has his own reward. You have punished the vicomte enough; spare him, for this lady's sake."

"For your sake," he replied, raising her hand to his lips. "And now, Dick old chap," he exclaimed, with a shake of his head, "I suppose we must see what's to be done; it's lucky the cab's in waiting."

Olivia sighed, but turned quickly to the marchesa, and kissed her.

A few lines tell the sequel.

Mathew Grimes, the victim of his own evil passions, died the next day.

His papers were in great confusion, and the ex-mayor's bond was never found, nor any mention of it in other documents.

Most likely the miser had hidden it in some place known only to himself.

The vicomte's case was worse than was at first thought.

He had got concussion of the brain, but

his wife never wearied in her nursing, and at last took him away to his own sunny south, convalescent.

Lucy and Dick had yet to bear another separation, for he had only received leave to attend his father's funeral, and now had to rejoin his regiment.

But the time of anxiety passed away. Dick's regiment was sent home at the end of the campaign.

Leave to the officers was granted immediately, and Dick Sutton and his wife went on their honeymoon.

But, before they started, they witnessed the marriage of Olivia and Captain Sholto Dundas, of the Royal Horse Artillery.

"I could not do less for him, poor fellow," Olivia confided to Lucy. "And, after all, I suppose I was 'FATED TO MARRY A SOLDIER.'"

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Queen Victoria's Powers.

Amid all the heated discussions called forth by the pending war in South Africa the argument is often heard that Queen Victoria, at least should be held blameless, since she is wholly powerless to interfere with the existing state of affairs.

This contention is false. According to the accepted terms of England's unwritten constitution, the Queen's powers in time of war are absolute. In case of invasion or sudden insurrection, Her Majesty could demand that every able-bodied man should take up arms, could call out the militia, and could seize all ships. Many of her powers, were they to be exercised in time of war, would probably bring defeat on the British forces, for the Queen has the supreme right to control her forces, whether on land or sea, and has power to cancel the acts and orders of generals. She could disband the navy and sell British ships, if she chose, and she could likewise impress foreign seamen. The Queen, in fact, could make war in any country, and bring peace again at any price—Collier's Weekly.

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