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THE

COUNTERSTROKE

By AMBROSE PRATT

Author of "Vigorous Daunt, Billionaire."

(Continued.)

"That is it," Desire looked up with bright and fearless eyes. "Do you know, my Lord, when I get to England I intend to give it all up, to escape it if I can? Do you think I could? England is a big place, isn't it; not like this little island? Do you think I could hide so that they would not find me?"

"I think so," said Cressingham with a fleeting smile. "You must come and live with me, I shall protect you. I am a rich man, Desire."

"So am I," said the lad. "Ah, you need not laugh. I showed the abbot, he laughed too at first, but after he had seen that, what he said."

"What did you show him?"

"My jewels. I took them from grandfather's chest. He had so many he could never miss them, indeed he has never missed them, but I did not know they were valuable at the time. I took them just to amuse myself with them, they are so beautiful."

"Show them to me, will you?"

The boy looked at him keenly.

"I won't rob you," laughed the man. Desire flushed hotly. "I was not thinking that," he cried. "I was thinking that perhaps I should return them. They are really grandfather's, you know."

Cressingham shook his head. "Your grandfather is not worthy such consideration, lad; he is one of the wickedest men on earth."

"Is it not wrong to take--to steal from the wicked, then?" The boy's words were without an afterthought; he asked the question simply, from the depths of an incomprehensible innocence. Cressingham met his pure inquiring eyes and felt quite a thrill as he looked. Answer he could find none for a moment.

but then he said: "It is wrong to steal from anyone, Desire."

"Then I shall put the jewels back tomorrow. I have them hidden in the house and cannot get them tonight."

"Do you always do what you think is right, Desire?" asked the man, who felt amazed and a little ashamed before the boy's strangely frank straightforwardness.

"I always try," said Desire.

Cressingham felt in his heart a sudden glow of eager hope. "Listen, boy," he said; "listen attentively, for I am going to try to show you, make you understand, a great chance that has come into your life to do a great good in the world."

"Yes, my Lord."

"You know the object, which this terrible society to which you belong have in view?"

"Pardon me," interrupted the boy; "I know what you would say, I think, but the abbot taught me all that. He wanted me to help him kill my grandfather and afterwards escape with him. He told me that by doing so I should rid the world of a monster and earn the gratitude of nations and kings."

"Ah!"

"I thought that he was right. I felt he was right in his heart. He pointed to do what he advised, but I could not, my Lord; I had not the power. I do not love grandfather, but somehow, even when he beats me, I could not even try to harm him."

Cressingham was silent, and the lad continued, speaking almost apologetically: "You see, my Lord, I have always lived with him, and sometimes he has been kind to me. Besides, I have never been able to harm anyone or anything. When grandfather has any of the negroes flogged, it hurts me almost as much. I am sure, and their cries ring in my ears for days. I always have to run away."

In spite of his keen disappointment, Cressingham could not help feeling a sincere respect rise in his heart for this strange, sweet-natured boy, who had grown up pure and good amidst a festering mass of evil and crime. "I should not have asked you to kill your grandfather, Desire," he said quietly. "Only help Miss Elliott and me to escape and to yourself accompany me. Then we would be able with your help to frustrate the Count's diabolical purposes, and perhaps, may surely, save the lives of great and good men whom he hates because of their goodness and his own wickedness."

The boy shook his head. "I would love to escape," he said, "but that is not possible."

Cressingham pointed to the silver boy's not with the help of that? Even with-

out engines, with oars and a sail we could manage."

Desire blushed at this, and muttered in a low voice, his eyes on the floor: "I scarcely like to tell you sir."

"Speak Desire."

"You may think me foolish and wicked."

"No, I promise not to."

"Well, ever since you spoke to me last night, I've been thinking of what you said. I know you are right and kind and good, and I am wrong and wicked, although I want terribly to do what you say, but I can't, because--"

"Well?"

"Because he trusts me."

"Trusts you, does he? Didn't he take the plates from you then?"

Desire gasped: "Yes, but I have the key of the portcullis; if he had really ceased to trust me, he'd have taken that first."

Cressingham almost groaned. "Have you given him your word?"

"No, I wouldn't mind so much if he had asked me for that. He just trusted me because he felt he could. I couldn't disappoint him, could I, sir?"

"You ought to, Desire, if you really desired to do right. If, I say, you had promised to kill a man, would you keep your word?"

"No, but that is not trust, not silent trust."

"It is by keeping that trust my life is sacrificed, what then?"

The boy got slowly to his feet and answered gravely: "I should be sorry, my Lord--"

"Ah!"

"But if my own life were to be sacrificed as well as yours I would still do the same, because I could not do anything else."

"You are hard, my boy; hard and obstinate."

Desire drew himself suddenly erect and walked immediately to the tunnel door, which he threw wide. You had better return, sir, to the cavern," he said coldly. "You cannot miss it if you take the first turning to the right. Your lamp and food are there. I shall visit you tomorrow."

"Why this sudden change, Desire?"

The boy's lips trembled, but he stared Cressingham straight in the eyes. "Look you, my Lord," he said; "I have spoken to you just as I used to speak to the abbe, and told you all about myself just as I am, because you asked me. I cannot help myself, I am as I was made and cannot alter. But because I cannot bring myself to do what you want you insulted me and called me names." At this he gave a great sob, and to Cressingham's utter amazement broke down and wept like a veritable girl.

The man was entirely nonplussed, and for a time could only stare silently at the boy's shaking figure. He watched his chest heave up and down with big choking sobs; he saw the tears trickle through his fingers and fall to the ground in a perfect stream. Quite unmoved by the sight, he tried to soothe him with muttered apologies, but Desire seemed heart-broken and wept unreservedly. Cressingham patted him on the shoulder with one hand and passed his free arm round the boy's slender body, marveling to find how slight he was and little. Then with a sudden gasp of sheer astonishment he started back, in a flash of light a dozen mysteries having been explained to him. Desire was a girl!

"Good God!" he cried sharply, "what is the meaning of this?"

His sudden start and cry shocked Desire into self-control. She ceased her sobs and looked up through her tears. "What?" she muttered.

"You are a girl!" he cried.

Her face turned scarlet on the instant, and she watched him as if fascinated.

Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.



HOUSE GOWN OF FOULARD SILK.

Old blue foulard, figured with black rings was used for the house gown pictured, although challie, cashmere or any such material would be equally suitable. The chemise was of white mull tacked, the top of the collar being finished by a band of lace. The robe collar was of black velvet, finished with old blue silk tassels. The fronts and sleeves had velvet ribbon laced through eyelets and tied in bows.

her big shining eyes staring at him strangely.

"But are you sure?" she demanded breathlessly.

He eyed her with deep suspicion, wondering if such innocence could be all assumed. "You should know best," he said half angrily.

"How could I know?" she cried. "I have suspected so for a great while, and once I asked grandfather, but he beat me cruelly for asking him the question, and I have never dared ask anybody else."

"Do you mean to say," asked Cressingham, feeling somehow his flesh begin to creep, "do you mean to say you don't know yourself?"

Desire's lips trembled pitifully. "Please don't speak to me like that; I can't help it, my Lord. There has never been anybody to tell me things."

(To Be Continued.)

REV. C. B. PITBLADO

He and His Wife First Met in St. John--An Interesting Sketch (Christian Advocate.)

The late Rev. Charles B. Pitblado was a member of the New York East conference.

For some years he had been affected with disease of the heart, and this, complicated with bronchitis, was the final cause of his death. His career was diversified. He was not so far advanced in years as he appeared, having been born September 26, 1837, in Dunfermline, Fife-shire, Scotland. Andrew Carnegie was born in the same town and in the same year, and in their boyhood days they went to the same school. The foundations of his education were laid in Scotland. When a young man he came to Canada. In the course of his early career he was a student in Edinburgh university. He was twenty-five years of age when he entered the ministry, which he did as a member of the Nova Scotia conference in New Brunswick he was pastor at the capital, Fredericton, also at Chatham and Falmouth, N. S. From 1880 to 1881 inclusive he was stationed at Saint Andrews, N. B., which brought him in close connection with the State of Maine, and in 1882 he entered the Maine conference and was pastor of the Maine conference and was pastor of the Congress street church, Portland. He remained there three years, and was transferred to New Hampshire conference and appointed to Manchester. In 1878, at Portsmouth, while he was a member of the New Hampshire conference, we had the pleasure of making his acquaintance. His appearance was striking. At first glance he appeared to be no ordinary man, and he appeared to be formed the idea that he was such he soon discovered his mistake. In 1888 he visited his native country and travelled extensively in other parts of Europe; returning to the conference he was appointed to New Market, where he remained two years, thence he was transferred to Broadway church, Providence, in the New England Southern conference, in which he remained, passing from Providence to Brockton, until in 1888 he joined the New York East conference and was appointed to First church, Hartford, where he remained three years, leaving that city for Asom, and that place for New York, where he was pastor of the Twenty-seventh street church. His later pastorate were in Connecticut and his last at Greenwich. When he came to this country he brought with him a gold watch on which was inscribed the thanks of his fellow citizens for his evangelistic work in Dunfermline. In Saint John, N. B., he met the lady who afterwards became his wife, who like himself, was of Scotch origin. She was the daughter of an Edinburgh lawyer, and had come to make her home with a sister, wife of Dr. Donald, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Saint John. Mrs. Pitblado, herself a graduate of Winnington college, England, fully sympathized with the great value of education. Their children were educated, and after his collegiate course, one of them was graduated at the Berkeley Divinity school and is, we believe, at the present time rector of a Protestant Episcopal church in Toledo, O. Brother Pitblado's oratory was peculiar. His Scotch ancestry was apparent from the beginning. He possessed that peculiar form of union in delivery

Who Said



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ST. JOHN COUNTY W. C. T. U.

The annual meeting of the St. John County W. C. T. U. was held yesterday afternoon in their rooms in German street. Mrs. Seymour presided. The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Mrs. James McAvity; vice-president-at-large, Mrs. J. H. Grey; 1st vice-president, Mrs. Charles Dearborn; 2nd vice-president, Mrs. James McAvity; 3rd vice-president, Mrs. Retallick; 4th vice-president, Mrs. Long; secretary, Miss Jane Lockhart.

The delegates appointed to the Local Council of Women are Mrs. George Thompson, Mrs. G. A. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. J. H. Grey, Miss Lockhart and Miss Farlow.

Miss Graham was deputed to distribute temperance literature to Sunday schools. Rev. Thomas Marshall spoke briefly, referring to the E. Tennyson Smith campaign, saying that more than 500 signed the pledge during the campaign.

Mrs. A. Grey Eagles presented the report of the North End W. C. T. U. The share of the receipts derived from the tea-room at the exhibition, gathered by that branch, amounted to \$46.27. One hundred and forty-eight visits had been made to the sick by members of that branch.

In the report from Carleton, Mrs. G. A. Kirkpatrick predicted a great revival in temperance work as a result of E. Tennyson Smith's efforts.

The report from the young ladies' division of the union, presented by Miss L. M. Lee, showed that temporary sheets had been distributed to Sunday schools, and 200 bouquets presented to the sick. The members were engaged in the making of comfort bags for sailors, and Christmas presents for the free kindergarten.

Mrs. Emma Clark reported for the St. John Union, stating that there were 478 white ribbons in New Brunswick, 120 of whom had been added in the last year. A large number of new members are expected to join soon.

Dainty refreshments were served after the meeting.

The street car service was tied up last night at the foot of King street for about half an hour. Car number 55, going down King street, went off the rails at the Market Square turn. It took twenty-five minutes to put it on again. During that period no less than seven other cars, bound in various directions, were stalled nearby. No damage was done.

A. R. Wetmore, of Fredericton, government engineer, was at the Dufferin yesterday.

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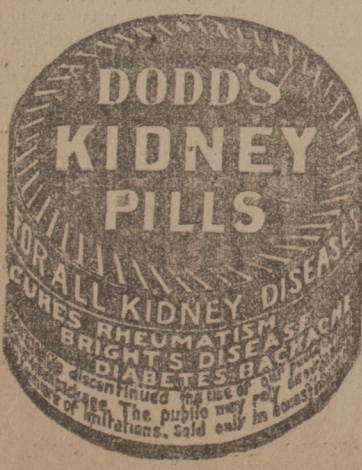
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