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THE EVENING TIMES

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THE COUNTERSTROKE

By AMBROSE PRATT

Author of "Vigoris Daunt, Billionaire."

CHAPTER I.

THE ACADEMY OF EX-AMBA-
SADORS.

At a late hour on a certain cold night in February, in the year 1900, three gentlemen stood near an old padlocked iron gate-way at the northern end of Finchley Road, London. They had arrived at that common point by separate conveyances, and it was easy to discover that they were strangers to each other, for although all stood within a circle whose diameter did not exceed three yards, and although the night was dark and the road otherwise utterly deserted, the face of each, dimly discernible by the light of a neighboring street lamp, wore an air of blank unconsciousness of all companionship. The gentleman nearest the gate, and the tallest of the three, was wrapped in a heavy fur greatcoat. His clear-shaven face, strong, impassive, and good to look upon—was of a type unmistakably English, and he wore an eye-glass that appeared to have become cemented into its position. The second gentleman was of a short, but sturdy build, and his bristling moustache, whose yellow and stiff-waxed points turned fiercely upwards, proclaimed him of Teutonic origin. He wore an imposing military cloak of foreign cut and manufacture, and his attitude was that of a soldier mounting guard. The third gentleman, whose tightly-fitting black frock coat was shiny and threadbare to the verge of seediness, seemed to be of excessively nervous disposition; he stamped about incessantly, swished often at the darkness with his cane, and sent a fire of impatient glances in all directions from a pair of large and piercing black eyes. He was slightly formed and lithe, active as a panther, never still. His face was tiny-fetured, pallid, and almost fleshless, its plainness intensified by the few struggling black hairs that apologized for the lack of a proper moustache and imperial, but relieved from absolute ugliness by the beauty of his eyes. No man might confidently predicate his place of origin, but he resembled most an Austrian, and perhaps a Jew, for his nose was long and slightly hooked. A wondrous half-hour passed by in absolute silence; the relative positions of the three gentlemen remained unchanged, but the impatience of the Austrian appeared to have communicated itself to his companions, for the German often consulted his watch and the Englishman was swearing softly under his breath. "An hour past the appointed time," he muttered at last, half-aloud. The German turned to him. "Less five minutes, my Lord; it is five minutes to twelve," he observed in excellent English. "What, you know me," cried the Englishman. "I saw you once, not long ago, at the Court of the Czar; you are Lord Francis Cressingham." "You have me at a disadvantage then," the German bowed. "My name is Oeltjen, Ludwig Oeltjen." "What! Count Ludwig Oeltjen, chief attaché to the German Ambassador in London?" "Not now, my Lord; I have retired—" "Ah, that fatal—oh, my tongue! I beg your pardon, Count." "No need, my Lord. But it surprises me that you had not already heard; unhappily the affair was kept but half a secret—" The third gentleman here broke in, speaking in English quaintly accented

contained, however, twenty gas jets, and which hovered immediately above the circle of chairs.

The master of the house observed the surprise with which his guests surveyed his arrangements. "Here we shall be free to converse unreservedly," he explained, pointing to the chairs; "the world may see us, for aught I care, but I do not wish the world to overhear us."

The three visitors regarded him with curiosity. They beheld a man neither old nor young, a man of heavy musk-like countenance, with big fleshy nose and sullen jaw over which a russet skin was so loosely drawn that puff-bags fell away at intervals from eyes and cheeks and jaws. The face, although superlatively ugly, was nevertheless ennobled by a broad and splendid brow, and enlivened by a pair of twinkling black eyes that shone with humour and keen intelligence.

He suffered the glances of his guests with a certain calm and dignified composure, staring straight before him and allowing them to look their full upon him. The examination lasted a few seconds only, for no conclusion could be drawn by the most penetrating from that stolid visage, and this fact was quickly recognized by all. jysabrdail rikel gettoda(na as olypo

The Austrian was the first to turn away. "You—I don't know you name, sir," he said affectedly, "have kept us standing in the cold all hour."

"By Jove! yes," said Lord Francis. "An hour exactly," said Count Oeltjen.

The master of the house slightly smiled. "My name is for the present Perigord. It is true that by an accident I have kept you waiting sixty minutes; well—the more reason that we get to business at once; seat yourselves, gentlemen, if you please."

Mr. Perigord, who was over six feet in height and of great bulk, forthwith crossed the apartment in a few ponderous strides and seated himself with perfect sang froid in the largest divan.

"Insolent!" muttered the Austrian. Lord Francis requested his monsele, which had become displaced through sheer surprise. Count von Oeltjen coughed. No one appeared the least inclined to follow the direction or example of his host.

Mr. Perigord, observing their disposition, made a peculiar gesture with his hands, holding them aloft in an attitude of solemn sanctification, and then, with a look of his right hand upon his lips, his guests each immediately fell upon one knee, the left, their arms uplifted to heaven, their hands inclined to the right shoulder.

"Shibboleth! Shibboleth! Shibboleth!" said Mr. Perigord.

"Tobi!" murmured Lord Francis. "Banai!" whispered Count von Oeltjen.

"Amalabe!" said the Austrian, his voice growing strangely husky.

Mr. Perigord slowly stood erect. "Heleniham!" he said impressively.

On a common impulse the others rose to their feet, then fell on both knees, their heads bent in an attitude of adoration.

"Gibulum!" said Lord Francis. "Jubulum!" muttered the Count. "Zebulum!" said the Austrian.

Mr. Perigord raised his arms above his head, holding his left elbow with the finger and thumb of his right hand.

"Mak-Mak-Mak-Mak!" he said intoning the words slowly in the manner of a priest making sacrifice. The three men humbly bent themselves before him, touching their foreheads and their open palms.

"Arise, gentlemen, and seat yourselves," said Mr. Perigord. This time he was obeyed without question and in the deep silence, the silence of speechless astonishment. It was as though the huge, flabby-faced man had suddenly accomplished his own apotheosis, for all traces of combativeness had disappeared from the faces of the three, leaving them stricken dumb and strangely reverent, like Brahmins before a sacred idol's shrine.

Mr. Perigord surveyed his guests with a keen scrutinizing gaze, for a period so extended that the stillness became almost insupportable. He appeared to be endeavoring to read all their thoughts and with such a measure of success that all three were plainly suffering much mental disquietude. Lord Francis clutched the arms of his chair with a grip of iron.

Count von Oeltjen turned violently at his moustache, while the Austrian simply writhed in his seat unable to meet, much less return, his host's searching and compelling gaze.

Finally Mr. Perigord appeared to have satisfied himself. He smiled lightly, and addressed them in low, even tones, his voice nevertheless occasionally expressive of satire and tinged with subtle malice.

"Most worshipful Knights of the Ninth Arch, in this encampment whether you be counts, belted ears, aroldukes, or even princes of the blood royal, you meet as brothers and subjects of the Order. Is it not so?"

"Aye," returned the three, shooting questioning and hesitating glances at each other.

"It is well. You were summoned hither this evening for a solemn purpose which I shall presently disclose to you. It is better first, however, that as brothers you be made acquainted with each other."

Here the Austrian rose abruptly from his chair, his lips parted as if for speech, but Mr. Perigord frowned him down.

"Fear not, sir, names are as nothing save as symbols; yours shall be respected. Well then, you first. Uncle of a monarch, heir perhaps to a crown, you shall be called Prince Carlos; are you content?"

(A cynical smile flashed for a second across his face. "You have an enemy, fearless, remorseless, implacable, who has already twice narrowly failed in accomplishing your destruction. Once death essayed to clutch you lurking in the green depth of a pond. A trespasser whose providential presence in the Royal Park was unsuspected by your enemy, hearing your drowning scream, plunged in and rescued you at the risk of his own life, since he could not swim. Once again death flouted his ensign in your face, this time hid in the honey poison of a woman's scarlet lips. You received a warning, and for the moment escaped. But you are foolish, Prince, to nurse your danger still. Had you disobeyed the summons which explains your presence here tonight, tomorrow would have seen Europe in mourning, Madame Vivella a murderess!")

On mention of that name Lord Francis and Count von Oeltjen uttered cries of dismay, but the effect on the prince was more startling—he fell back on his chair limp and nerveless, his cheeks livid, his eyes glowing like coals. "False, false!" he muttered, or rather groaned.

(To be continued.)

1,400,000 Immigrants This Year

Washington, Oct. 24.—The total immigration to the United States may reach 1,400,000 people this year," said Secretary Metcalf, of the department of commerce and labor, as he left the White House after a brief talk with the president.

Metcalf said that the immigration had been unusually large this year, and that the government today, by averaging 18.87 knots an hour in her standardization trial over the Rockland course. Her best mile with the tide was at the rate of 19.42 knots, which is nearly fifty points better than the best mile made by the battleship Louisiana, the only other ship of this type which has yet been tried.

Mrs. H. T. Walshe, of Boston Highlands, who has been visiting her mother, Mrs. Burns, of New York, left on Wednesday by the Calvin Burns, accompanied by her sister, Miss Annie Burns, and her niece, Miss Dorothy Burns, of Dorchester (N. B.).

The Most Important Household Item

Armour's Solid Extract of Beef

(POTTED IN CANADA)

not only supplies color and flavor to soups, sauces and gravies—but a quarter teaspoonful in a cup of hot water makes a bracing cup to the invalid or convalescent.

Armour's Extract of Beef is more economical than others because it goes four times as far. Write for free Booklet "Culinary Winkles" which tells how to use Armour's Solid Beef Extract.

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NOTHING WRONG IN SUN LIFE CO.

SAYS MacAULAY

Montreal, Oct. 24.—From the quiet recapitulation of the masses of figures and a rather dull—even if important search into the mysteries of ledger accounts, the insurance commission burst into quick life today, when Robertson MacAulay, of the Sun Life, rose to his feet, waved one hand towards the members of the commission and rather pointedly objected to the particular line of investigation then being carried on. To give strength to his objection Mr. MacAulay said that while Mr. Shepley might indeed be a very brilliant lawyer, it was evident that he was a good bookkeeper and hinted rather broadly that the counsel's method would give rise to wrong impressions. Personally, he was not seriously affected, he was quite positive of the position of the company, but he did not want such ideas to grow abroad.

"What will the newspapers say of this tomorrow?" he asked. "Why the public is likely to get it into their heads that there is something wrong," he continued.

"There is nothing of the sort, not a thing is wrong and this seems to be an effort to make a big thing out of a little thing, out of nothing at all."

Mr. Shepley was in the witness box at the moment, standing beside T. B. MacAulay leaning over the company's ledger. He had been trying to find out why when stocks were secured with bonds as a bonus, the fact was not recorded in one account with the bonds. Mr. MacAulay had contended that these stocks cost nothing but Mr. Shepley held otherwise and it was at this stage that Robertson MacAulay broke in.

"GIRLS OF TODAY ARE WEAKLINGS!"

Few Possess the Vitality and Girl-
ish Beauty of the Olden Times.

Never before was physical health and vigor so highly esteemed and so eagerly sought for as today.

No man finds happiness in a sickly wife, and the woman who wishes to enjoy the pleasures of life should spare no effort to maintain perfect health.

Is your daughter growing up strong and ruddy? Has she strength to drink in greedily all the pleasures that youth so zealously seeks—or is she compelled to use the street car instead of enjoying the delightful exercise of walking—does she after the ball arise refreshed and vigorous, or is she exhausted, indifferent, and perhaps irritable?

When strength and vigor can be so easily maintained by Ferrozene, when the glow of health is so quickly brought to the cheeks and elasticity to the step, it is plainly a mother's duty to see that Ferrozene is on hand to assist her daughter back to health.

Upon the wake of Ferrozene quickly follows a stream of rich, nourishing blood, which imparts that power and surplus energy so earnestly desired by those in ill-health.

Stop and think what this means for your daughter—certainly a great deal, and it can be accomplished by Ferrozene.

Every growing girl and young woman derives enormous benefit in many ways from this nutritive, vitalizing tonic.

It is specially suited for young women and is a guarantee of health and regularity as long as it is used.

Ferrozene is free from alcohol and perfectly safe to use. Prepared in the form of a chocolate-coated tablet and sold in 50c. boxes or six for \$2.50, at all dealers.

CUBAN REBELS' GUNS THROWN INTO THE SEA

Havana, Oct. 24.—The statement made by Secretary of War Taft on the eve of his departure from Cuba that he would put all the arms surrendered by the insurgents where they would no further harm, was verified today when a company of the Cuban artillery spent the afternoon throwing these weapons into the sea from the outer bastion of Morro Castle. Thousands of rifles and carbines were sunk in thirty fathoms of water. Some unrest continues to prevail in the provinces of Puerto Principe and Santa Clara where small armed bands are roving and committing minor depredations. The rebels of Holguin requested Protection of troops against a considerable body of ex-rebels who are reported not to have disbanded and a battalion of the eleventh infantry reached Holguin this afternoon.

The Mayor of the town of Aguacate, in the province of Havana, who was ousted from office, was restored to the position Tuesday, and organized an armed escort of 25 men, alleging that he feared an attack by the moderates. Governor Magoon tonight ordered Governor Nunez to proceed to Aguacate and compel the mayor to surrender the arms of his escort and bring his weapons to Havana.

UNCLE SAM'S NEW BATTLESHIP FAST

Rockland, Me., Oct. 24.—The first class battleship Minnesota, designed as an 18 knot craft, exceeded the best expectations of her builders, the Newport News Ship Building & Dry Dock Company, and the government today, by averaging 18.87 knots an hour in her standardization trial over the Rockland course. Her best mile with the tide was at the rate of 19.42 knots, which is nearly fifty points better than the best mile made by the battleship Louisiana, the only other ship of this type which has yet been tried.

Mrs. H. T. Walshe, of Boston Highlands, who has been visiting her mother, Mrs. Burns, of New York, left on Wednesday by the Calvin Burns, accompanied by her sister, Miss Annie Burns, and her niece, Miss Dorothy Burns, of Dorchester (N. B.).

DROPPED CASES AGAINST SANDFORD SHILOH LEADER

Lewiston, Me., Oct. 24.—All the cases in the Androscoggin County Supreme Court against Rev. Frank W. Sandford, of Shiloh, leader of the "Holy Ghost and Us" Society including one charge of manslaughter and four of cruelty to children, have been not pressed. Against each of the charges on the record of the clerk of the court has been written the memorandum: "Not pressed on advice of the court."

Sandford has been tried three times on an indictment for manslaughter, alleging that the death of Leander Bartlett, a fourteen year old boy who was one of the Shiloh colony, resulted from undue punishment inflicted for disobedience of the rules of the colony. It was alleged that the boy was deprived of nourishment, and that weakened by hunger he was attacked with a sickness which resulted fatally. The first trial, which was held in the Androscoggin County Court in Auburn in January, 1904, resulted in a disagreement. On motion of Sandford's counsel, who thought the state of public opinion in the county prejudicial to their client's interests, a change of venue was secured and the second trial was held in the Franklin County Court in Framingham in May, 1904. The jury, after less than an hour's deliberation, returned a verdict of guilty. Counsel for Sandford, however, appealed to the full bench of the supreme court and the verdict was set aside and a new trial

ordered. The third trial was held in the Androscoggin County Court in Auburn in September, 1905, and again resulted in a disagreement of the jury.

At the clearing up of the docket of the term of court just closed in Auburn, County Attorney Ralph W. Crockett, who conducted the case against Sandford for the state in the third trial, was advised by Judge Wiswell, the presiding justice, and by other justices, who were consulted, that in view of the expense that would be incurred, and the difficulty that the state has met with in getting evidence in previous trials, it would be well to not prosecute the indictment. This was done in the case of the manslaughter charge and in that of the cruelty.

Frank W. Sandford is now in Jerycabam. In 1904 he was tried on a charge of cruelty to his own child and a fine of \$100 and costs, amounting in all to \$170.42, was imposed and paid.

CONVICT PREFERRED CANADA TO PRISON

London, Oct. 22.—Gerald Morgan, the young man who obtained money by posing as the nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan, had his trial today and was convicted. Police evidence showed that he had served four terms of imprisonment. He handed the judge a letter containing an offer to take him to Canada after his trouble was over. "Might I point out," he said, "that imprisonment has been a failure with me with respect to regeneration. I have no

energy left when I come out." But the judge thought prison was a better place for him than Canada, and sentenced him to twenty months' hard labor.

Babies Thrive

on Nestlé's Food, because it contains all the food properties of rich, creamy cow's milk—in a form that tiny babies can assimilate.

Ready for the bottle by adding water—no milk required to prepare it.

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