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THE COUNTERSTROKE

By AMBROSE PRATT

Author of "Vigorous Daunt, Billionaire."

(Continued.)

"That is true, and some day we shall marry; is it not so? Even Miss Elliott told me it was proper in such a case. Then I shall kiss you, Ludwig."

She put her arms about his neck, and did as she had said. Cressingham, feeling entirely relieved in mind by the latter portion of the converse, gave a sudden cough.

The lovers started guiltily apart. He stood up and said smilingly: "It is thus you interrupt my repose; you Ludwig, who should be in your tent and fast asleep by this."

Oeljen hung his head at the reproach, and stammered: "I can see the Count's tent quite easily from here, Frank."

"Oh, of course, and you were watching it! But there, I do not think any great harm is done in this instance. It is always thus, however; when love wakes, duty sleeps. Is it not so?"

"You heard?"

"Enough to convince me that you have much cause to be congratulated. I do so now with all my heart—and you too, Desire; your future husband is one of the best men I have ever known."

"He is a beautiful man, Lord Francis," replied Desire artlessly; "I love him very much."

"Thank you, my friend," muttered Oeljen.

"Rather sudden though, isn't it?" whispered Cressingham with amiable satire. "Hush!" replied the other; "she knows nothing." "Aloud," said "Sudden, Frank!" I do not think so; we have already known each other four days, and we did not become affianced until this morning."

"I feel as though I had known Ludwig all my life," protested the girl.

Cressingham laughed, and waved his hand. "Well, old boy, I'll not disturb you further, but will take the rest of your watch. Relieve me as soon or as late as you please. A riverdicki, Desire."

"You are a brick," said the Count, using with much feeling a favorite expression of the Englishman.

"A riverdicki, and thank you, my Lord," said the girl.

Cressingham swung off, laughing softly to himself; he was deeply pleased, since had he possessed the power of moulding Desire's fate he could not have chosen a prospect more promising of happiness for her than marriage with his friend.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The End of Bosa Gracci.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the day following there entered the harbor of Attala a large grey yacht, flying Italian colors at her peak. Anchoring near the mouth of the bay, a boat was instantly lowered, and Perigord, taking his place in the stern sheets, was rowed swiftly to the beach. He was met by Cressingham and Oeljen, who presented their reports with speed and brevity.

Perigord complimented them on all they had achieved, and then asked to see the prisoner, to whom he said he wished immediately to announce sentence of death, as it had been determined in council to execute the Count without delay and without trial. When the three gentlemen entered the Count's tent the old man sat up and stared fixedly at his enemies. He had just eaten his lunch, the remains of which rested on a tray beside his mattress; consequently he was still ungagged, and free to speak.

"You may not remember me, sir," said Perigord. "It is so many years since we have met. My name is Perigord."

"You deceive yourself," replied the Count; "I recollect you perfectly. Kindly ask your servants to leave us together. I have many things to say to you."

"Afterwards, sir, perhaps; I have come to inform you that tomorrow at daylight you, Bosa Gracci, Count—"

"Prince!" interjected the old man sharply.

Perigord shrugged his shoulders. "Count d'Attala, will be shot. Five Italian officers will be your executioners. I personally obtained this indulgence to be granted you in deference to your undoubted rank, so that you may die in the manner

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illegal unless sanctioned by her State."

"Nevertheless, I demand the proofs!"

The old man took from his inner pocket a bulky leather case, from which he extracted a paper. "I have kept this on my person since the first day that I knew you were upon my track," he said quietly. "No one can foretell the future, but a wise man always provides for it in the best manner that he can. You observe that my precaution has justified itself. Read!"

Perigord snatched from his hand the paper, which he found to be a properly attested marriage certificate between the princess, his mother, and the Count d'Attala. The date and everything about it corresponded perfectly with the old man's story. "My God—I thank Thee," he cried brokenly.

"For having found your father?" jeered the Count.

"No!" replied Perigord, his eyes shining like stars. "But for having at length discovered that I was not born in shame! For thirty years I have thought myself a bastard! At last the stain is removed!"

"Bah!" sneered the old man with a bitter chuckle. "Undeceive yourself, that paper is utterly valueless; you are a bastard, for your mother's marriage was illegal."

"Not in the sight of Heaven!" retorted Perigord, with a dignity that abashed the old man for a moment, but presently he rallied and muttered jeeringly: "Shall I go on with the story?"

"Yes."

"We left off at the marriage. Your mother was ill than, ha, ha! she remained ill for nine months, and so lost a king for a husband. You were born without scandal in her friend's house at Totna, and brought up as I have said. She subsequently returned to her father's protection, and shortly afterwards married the Grand Duke. I consented to the match, and we remained friends up to the very day of her death. It was I who provided you on her solicitation with the fortune which you subsequently wasted in endeavoring to destroy my work. It was she who first informed me of your mad enterprise, the secret of which you had fondly confided to her keeping. She told me of your change of name, and from time to time warned me of your doings. With one hand she pushed you on, helping you to power, and the friendship of those in power, with the other she wrote me long letters advising me in detail of your doings. I lost a good friend when she died. I can tell you Valdemar. In order to replace her and keep a check on you, I married her second son." (He sneered bitterly.)

"Ah, well, he was not hard to seduce; the fellow was already a gambler and a thief; he readily fell in with my suggestions; I married him to my daughter Katherine, with whom he had fallen madly in love, and created for him a vacuum in the inner circle. Thus for the past two years I have played off brother on brother—a pretty plan, was it not?"

(To be continued.)

CLOSING OF THE U. S. CONSULOR AGENCIES

Judge Willich Refers to Closing of Agencies in Fredericton, St. George and Grand Manan.

Asked yesterday as to the closing of the United States consular agencies in Fredericton, St. George and Grand Manan, Judge Willich, United States consul here, said: "I was directed to close these agencies on the 1st inst., under direction of the department of state, on the ground that they were not considered really necessary for the conduct of the public business and efficiency of the consular service in this district."

"I am directed by the department also to state to those agents who have served in that capacity for some years the appreciation of the department for their services and to assure them that the closing of the agencies is simply in line with the department's policy to do away with agencies not absolutely necessary."

"This necessarily will increase the importance of the consulate here, and I hope the business of the shippers will not be seriously disturbed by any delay which might be caused. However, the future only will tell how the matter will adjust itself."

The consular agents at the agencies closed were J. T. Sharkey, Fredericton; Edward Milliken, St. George; and H. E. Fraser, Grand Manan.

Grand Manan being close to St. Stephen, the territory has been attached to the St. Stephen consular district.

Under the new regulations the business of the St. John office will be considerably increased, and Consul Willich and his deputy, L. M. Jewett, will be kept more busy than ever before.

The United States consular agency at St. Andrews was closed Dec. 31. G. H. Stickney held this office since 1892, and his father held it eleven years before that date.

WEDDINGS

Jones-Sharp.

The marriage of Miss Elizabeth Young Sharp to Louis Jones, of New York, which took place on Dec. 31 in New York, has aroused much interest here. Miss Sharp is a native of this city, and though without near relatives here, has many warm friends, who wish her every happiness in her married life.

Miss Sharp was educated at the Sacred Heart Convent here, and went from St. John to a hospital in New York, from which she graduated as a nurse. In the course of her duties she met Mr. Jones, who is understood to be a wealthy business man of New York, and the marriage followed the acquaintanceship.

McGibbon-Gray.

On Wednesday last, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. James Gray, Central Kingsclear, York county, their eldest daughter, Jean, was married to Alexander McGibbon, of Douglas, York county. The ceremony, which took place at 6 o'clock in the evening, in the presence of only immediate relatives and friends, was performed by Rev. Canon Montgomery. The bride was tastefully gowned in white silk, and her bridesmaid, Miss Minnie Murray, wore pale pink. Both carried bouquets of carnations. The groom was attended by his cousin, William McGibbon. After the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. McGibbon left for Douglas, where they will reside.

Stone-Darling.

Moncton, N. B., Jan. 3.—(Special)—A pretty wedding took place in St. George's church this afternoon, the principals being Arthur E. Stone, of the Transcript staff, and Miss Cassie E. Darling. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Mr. Holbrook. Mr. and Mrs. Stone went to Fredericton, the groom's former home, to spend the honeymoon.

L. R. Hetherington, principal of the Elgin superior school, came to this city yesterday.

Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.



A TRIUMPH IN HANDIWORK.

What with our steam heated houses and apartments which make practically summer time of winter within doors, many there be who make the negligees of the summer do duty for winter wear as well. Such is the effect of the charming imported Parisian morning gown that forms the subject of the picture. This is veritably a triumph in handiwork, since the whole of the fascinating thing is wrought by hand—tucks, hems, appliques and whippings of lace. One of these late inventions that combines a Princess front and sides with a decidedly short-waisted Empire back is

the design followed, and lengthwise appliques of lace, from beneath which the material is cut away, form most of the body portion, the cut defining the svelte lines of the figure to perfection. The skirt portion is extremely full, this amplitude of material being further embellished by little flounces tucked in rows parallel with the hem and whipped with lace at the edge. The sleeve, such as it is, is merely a succession of frothy flounces of lace, and ribbon bows are deftly posed on arm and shoulder. A tinted slip of China silk is oftentimes worn beneath those transparent, little gowns with delightful effect.



BLACK HAT WITH COLORED PLUMES.

The drawing shows a large hat of satin or a bow tied across the back of the crown. The feathers were placed at the left side under a rosette of the ribbon caught by two large jet pins. The left side of the crown was round and rather large, and was banded with wide black moire ribbon, with loops and folds of the black moire.

PRACTISES AS HE PREACHES

J. G. Phelps-Stokes Says He Spends Only Such Money as He Earns.

(New York Globe, Jan. 1)

J. G. Phelps Stokes, the well-known east side settlement worker, who recently criticized the Young Men's Christian Association because it had established classes in real estate and stock market speculation, today asserted that he applied to his own life the rule to use for his personal expenses only money which he had produced by labor.

When Mr. Stokes took exception to the "new idea" in Y. M. C. A. work many persons wondered if the young man, reputed to be a millionaire, had not acquired much of his wealth through speculation. Mr. Stokes denied that such was the case, and stated that the amount of his worldly possessions was greatly exaggerated.

Mr. Stokes receives \$2,000 annually from investments, but he does not use a penny of the sum for his personal expenses, but "in work likely to hasten public recognition of the influence of the capitalist system which legalizes the appropriation by non-producers of portions of the wealth produced by others."

"I receive annually," said Mr. Stokes, "an income from investments amounting to about \$2,000. I consider that this income has been produced by others than myself, and that I am not entitled to make any personal use of it. If I could ascertain the names and addresses of those individuals who by their own productive and creative effort produced this unearned income which I receive I would return every penny of it to them severally, to each in proportion to his contribution to it."

"There are circumstances, however, evidently such that it would be entirely impossible to secure the information that would be required to make possible such a return, for the reason that the production of wealth has long ceased to be individual in its nature. With rare exceptions there is no wealth created today except by the cooperation of vast multitudes of people, who each contribute in some manner to the production."

"It would be impossible, for instance, to ascertain the individuals who directly or indirectly contributed to the wealth represented by the few hundred dollars which I receive as dividends on stock which I own in the Woodbridge Company of this city. That company has improved and for many years rented and managed high-class office property in our financial district. Large buildings, insurance, manufacturing, mercantile, and other productive enterprises pay the rentals of which I receive a share."

"All the employees of all those companies have contributed through their productive effort to the creation of that income of a few hundred dollars a year. So also, have all persons who, directly or indirectly, participated in the development of the communities in which these business enterprises have sought and received support. So, also, have all those individuals who, as citizens of our country, have contributed of their wealth to the support of those governmental institutions without the aid and protection of which these businesses could not have been conducted."

"At least a majority of our people—i. e., at least as many as the number of those who support our present political and industrial systems—have contributed, each in a measure, to that income of each and all of our important industries. To ascertain the proportion of my unearned income of \$2,000 which should be returned to each or any of this majority would obviously be utterly impossible. A simple calculation would show that the average amount due to each would be approximately the fortieth part of a cent."

"Since, then, this \$2,000 cannot be returned proportionately to those who are better entitled to it than I am, and since it is impossible to determine the proportion due to any, and since to single out any individual and give him more than his due would be unjust to some other, rightly entitled to the excess, it is clear to me that the entire amount must be devoted to the support of such work as is in my judgment likely to hasten public recognition of the injustice of the capitalist system which legalizes the appropriation

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tion by non-producers of portions of the wealth produced by others.

"My personal expenses are all defrayed from the earnings which I receive as compensation for productive services rendered (Of my unearned income I use not a penny for my own support or otherwise than as above stated.)"

Perhaps one of the most interesting Sunday schools in the city is that conducted in Glad Tidings hall, Brussels street, by workers from Exmouth street church.

There are about 120 pupils on the roll, and they were given their annual treat last

night. The hall was well filled with the little ones and their friends. The exercises were opened with an excellent programme, in which the following took part: Retia Finlay, Alice Thompson, Hazel Blachford, Margaret Johnson, Bessie Love, Mabel Blachford, Pearl Finlay, Iva Patchell, Henry Smith and Miss Myles. After brief addresses from Revs. Charles Comben and Samuel Howard and James Myles, the superintendent of the school, all the children sat down to a substantial supper, served by the young ladies. Following the supper bags of candy and raisins were distributed among them and all went home happy and contented.

The annual installation of officers in Branch 184, C. M. B. A., Fairville, was carried out by Grand Deputy Kickham last evening, as follows: President, P. Murphy; 1st vice-president, W. Terry; 2nd vice-president, J. McGovern; R. secretary, John Gillis; assistant secretary, C. Savage; financial secretary, John O'Toole; treasurer, John Gallagher; marshal, Michael Butler; guard, George Burns; trustees, P. Murphy, Jas. Garey, Jas. Wallace, William O. Connor, and T. A. Hooley; delegate, John Gillis.

E. M. Shadbolt returned to the city yesterday.