

A WOULD BE COUNTESS

By John Winthrop Green.

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WHEN I reached Leghorn, I found myself in the company of two people I had heard of several times before in Italy. They were James Saunders, widower, and his daughter Eileen of America. He was a man of sixty and a half, and she was a girl of twenty who had an overwhelming desire to become an Italian countess. Mr. Saunders was a frank, blunt spoken man. I didn't know him an hour when I knew all his troubles. He had amassed wealth, and he loved his daughter, but he had no use for a son-in-law nor born in America.

"I don't know what on earth possesses the girl," he said, when referring to Eileen, who had been plain Ellen before the steamer left New York. "She's just gone mad on the title business. At home she'd have been satisfied with a colonel, a judge or an honorable, but now she declares that nothing less than being a countess will fill the bill. It seems as if all the counts in Italy had heard of her desires and the size of my bank account, and they have hung on her heels by the dozen. It's no use for me to talk to the girl. She gets holy toly the minute we start to argue, and if I don't cave in to her she sulks for a week. Do you know anything about Italian counts?"

"Very little," I replied. "As near as I can find out they are a mighty poor lot, take 'em as they run, and I haven't seen one I'd hire for a coachman. There's one fellow in particular I'd break in two if I was twenty years younger and could run him down. He's followed us for a month, and the girl seems to be dead gone on him. Say, but I want you to do something for me. He calls himself the Count Padova, and he's dinged his title and castles and ancestors into my ears till I want to kick him. I want you to find out if he is a real count."

It was a matter of little trouble to discover that Count Padova had a right to his title, but it also came to light that he was almost sixty years old, poor as a church mouse and had been twice married. His character as a man was very unsavory, and it was easy enough to guess that he was after a marriage which would bring him in money.

"The miserable old dodo!" exclaimed Saunders when I made my report. "I mistrusted that he was an old sinner and that he was trying his best to knock twenty years off his age. Why hang the man, I'm sure he's got a waxy nose, false teeth and a wooden leg and that without his wig we'd find his head as bare as a billiard ball. I want you to help me save Ellen."

"But she can't marry without your consent and assistance," I replied. "But she'll keep at me till I give my consent and assistance," he protested. "Think of it, will you—the daughter of James Saunders, a straight haired Yankee Doodle Dandy, picking up with a lop shouldered, knockkneed, played out old Italian granddaddy just for the sake of being called Countess Padova! Why, I want to upset the stove



"What have you done?" shrieked the daughter.

and break the dishes when I think of it. I want you to have a talk with the girl and tell her what a fool she is making of herself."

I naturally refused to mix in the matter, though willing to offer such outside advice as might strengthen the father. Indeed one look at Eileen satisfied me that at my first word she'd retaliate with a mighty snub. It was four or five days before I got sight of Count Padova. He had probably been obliged to fish around to get his railroad fare from Florence. I found him all that Saunders had described him and a little more. He had been washed and wrung out and bleached until one could think only of an old towel on a clothesline. We didn't hit it off at all. He saw in me a rival, and straightening up as far as possible and assuming what he probably thought was a ferocious dignity, he advanced upon me and said:

"Sir, I am the Count Padova!"
"Well, what of it?" I queried.
"And the affianced husband of Miss Saunders."
"I'm sorry for her."
I thought a challenge would follow, but it didn't. He tottered around and tried to look bloodthirsty and finally took his finger at me and cried out in a hoarse tone:
"Beware, sir—beware! No man shall come between me and my love and live!"
I think he went up stairs and told his ladylove that he had scared me off the track and then discovered that I was no rival, for he soon returned and begged my pardon and offered me his hand. I was reading a newspaper and didn't see or hear him. Saunders was laid up in his room that day, but he came down after dinner and growled out as he met me:
"My last hope is gone! Ellen tells me she has accepted the count, and the beggar is going to have the fact published tomorrow!"

"But suppose you refuse your sanction and order the old beggar to get?"
"Say, you don't know Ellen. I threatened to do that, and she declared she'd elope with him."
"And what if you told the count he should never touch a dollar of your money?"
"He'd smile and smirk and take it for a bluff. By the horn spoon, but I'll pay a bravo ten thousand dollars in gold to break his old neck! You know about these bravos. Go out and find one for me and tell him to come around with a sandbag."

The man was really in wretched spirits over the affair. It would not have taken some fathers two minutes to end it, but he was ill and morbid, and his strength of character was gone for the time. We sat talking for an hour and then went up stairs and joined the couple on the balcony. The daughter received us in a chilly fashion, but the count had been drinking and was good natured and voluble. I had insulted him, but I was a compatriot of the charming Miss Saunders and her respected father, and he would overlook it. We were a little family party, and we were by ourselves on a little balcony, and he would take advantage of the occasion to say that in seeking the hand of the fair girl before him he was lured by love alone. He was forty-five years old and lonely. He wanted to love and be loved. Money to him was as to the robberstones in the desert. He had estates in Sardinia, in Lombardy and in Umbria. He had castles in Tuscany, Naples and Sicily. He had gold mines in the Alps, silver mines in the Carnies and lead mines in the Apennines. And as to his social standing, who could desire more than to be the confidant of the ruler of the land?

The old count was a sleek, slick liar, and it was entertaining to hear him talk, but at the same time one could not help but pity the father and feel provoked at the daughter. The aged lover was still exploiting when he suddenly pitched forward out of his chair. The girl screamed out and ran away to her room, and I was for bringing a doctor as quick as possible when Saunders protested:

"Hold on a bit. The old vagabond has only fainted away. Let's see what he is made of."

We went to work, and the results were strange enough. I brought soap and water from my room, and the first thing we took off was a false brow. We got enough enamel off his face to reveal a score of wrinkles, and it was discovered that every tooth in his head was false. Under his wig was a shiny pate, and his backbone was stiffened with a corset. I believe that it was the tightness of the corset that caused his faint. There was something still to come. His right leg was supported at the knee with a brace, and a nose which had been broken was neatly trimmed with wax. When we had taken the old fellow all to pieces, he was a queer sight to look at, and it was hard to tell whether the heap on the chair or the heap on the floor was Count Padova. He had partly revived before we got through, and he chuckled away like an old hen.

"And this," groaned Saunders as he pointed to the heap on the chair—"this was to be my son-in-law! This was what my daughter was to marry in order to be called a countess; I want her here!"
He was back with her in a moment. I lifted the count to a sitting position, and he was chattering of love and castles as the girl got sight of him.

"What have you done?" shrieked the daughter as she turned from the grisly spectacle to us.
"We've simply taken him apart!" replied the father, "and the best part of him is on the chair there."
When the would be countess had fled, we went for help to get Count Padova to his room. He had to be handled with care. Any sudden move might have pulled a limb or his head off. There was considerable hilarity among the servants, and it was left to them to glue the pieces together again and make a man of the heap. When morning came, he had disappeared, and he had not even left a farewell note behind. A day later Saunders said to me:

"Lord, man, but I feel like dancing a hornpipe! There is to be no countess in our family. Ellen has written to a young lawyer in Chicago and said yes to his proposition, and we are making ready to scoot for home. Come out and have three drinks and a hurrah with me!"

Tennyson's Early Poems.
Tennyson was only eight years old when he covered both sides of his brother's slate with a poem on "Flowers," done in unimpeachable meter. His brother had said to him, "See if you can write poetry," and when he read the verse on the slate he merely said, "You've done it." Between the ages of eleven and twelve the young poet wrote an epic of over 4,000 lines in Scott's octosyllables mingled with heroics. These were the only finished poems of Tennyson's boyhood, but when about fourteen or fifteen years old he commenced a drama in iambic meter which still survives. Thus he practiced himself in three different meters before he began seriously to write or publish.

Forgetting His Own Picture.
Reynolds once forgot the existence of one of his pictures. Burke once obtained a very early work and called on the great artist, submitting the work as that of a young student who sought advice from the master. Reynolds had a long look and then asked, "Is the painter a friend of yours?"
Burke replied in the affirmative.
"Well," replied the great man, "I really don't feel able to give an opinion. It's a cleverish thing, but whether it is of sufficient promise to justify your young man in adopting art as a profession I cannot say."
Sir Joshua had entirely forgotten his own work—"Chambers' Journal."

Taking One's Own Pulse.
Being able to "take" one's own pulse is a doubtful accomplishment, because the heart has some peculiarities, the importance of which are sure to be overestimated except by physicians, and much uneasiness occasioned in consequence. Irregularity of the pulse is naturally to no small number of people without other signs of disease. It may also be simply a transient symptom, due to errors of habit or other causes, which, disappearing, leave no trace behind them.

NEW SHORT STORIES

Forty Examples.
When Mehmet Ali was khedive of Egypt, there were reports of discontent and dissatisfaction in the Arab quarter of Cairo, and one evening a decree was issued announcing that any one proved to have spoken disloyally of the government would be hanged on the spot. It so happened that the British consul had asked for an audience of the khedive on the day following the issue of the decree. According to the custom of the time, the interview was fixed for a very early hour in the morning. On riding past the Esbekieh gardens, which were then a sort of No Man's Land, the consul saw forty corpses hanging in rows by the roadside with a label affixed to each stating that they had spoken evil of the government. At the palace the British representative expressed surprise at so many persons having been detected in so short a time. Mehmet Ali's explanation was to the following effect: "I sent word last night to the head of the police that he must hang forty persons by daybreak this morning and told him to pick out two score of the biggest scoundrels he could think of in the slums of Cairo. I dare say they had spoken or would have spoken disrespectfully of the government. If they did not, they are a good riddance, and, at any rate, we shall hear no more of any popular discontent under my rule."

Wanted to Make Sure.
The constituent from San Francisco was telling President Roosevelt about the extraordinary qualifications possessed by himself for the job in the consular service which he was seeking. Senator Perkins was a smiling and approving listener.
"And do you believe the senator here will give you his indorsement for this place?" asked the president.
"I haven't a doubt of it," the applicant replied. "I am quite willing to rest my chances on what the senator may say."

"Very well," said the president, turning to the senator.
"But on one condition," the applicant added, with haste, "provided only that I be permitted to leave this room after the senator."

How He Secured Silence.
Mrs. Arthur Stannard, better known to the literary world as John Strange Winter, who is president of the International Society of Women Journalists in London, always has some musical celebrity to meet the guests at her weekly afternoon receptions during the season. One day, out of courtesy to the guests, she had had a pianist brought in to play. The pianist was a young man of about twenty, and he was very nervous. He had been told to play a certain piece, and he was very anxious to do so. He had been told to play a certain piece, and he was very anxious to do so. He had been told to play a certain piece, and he was very anxious to do so.

Misunderstood.
An attendant in a London business house was recently approached by a furtive looking stranger. This suspicious person, dressed in somber black, came quite close to the attendant and, raising his eyes from the ground, whispered tragically, "Are you prepared to die?"
The attendant wasn't, and he caught the suspicious one by the throat and half throttled him. When the invalid was recovering, it "transpired" that he was an amateur missionary inquiring after everybody's spiritual needs.

An Australian Mole.
The Australian mole burrows obliquely in the sand, going two or three inches under it and never betraying its passage except by a slight undulation of the soil. In digging it uses its conical nose, which is protected by a horny plate, and the strong, mattock shaped claws of its fore feet. The hind feet, which are wider and spade shaped, throw the sand back, so that no trace is left of the tunnel which it hollows. It comes to the surface a few yards farther on and then buries itself again, all without making any noise.

A Witty Retort.
Having once lost a case in New York, Counselor Nolan sadly remarked, "My poor client is little likely to get justice done here until the judgment day."
"Well, counselor," said the court, "if I have an opportunity I'll plead for the poor woman myself on that day."
"Your honor," replied Nolan, "will have troubles of your own upon that day."

Precoitous Discernment.
Little Gertrude—I'm going to be a spinster, like you, Aunt Gertrude.
Aunt Gertrude—Why do you want to be a spinster, dear?
Little Gertrude—Cause, Aunt Gertrude, a spinster doesn't have to try to look pretty, an' she can comb her hair any old way.—Brooklyn Life.

Appalled.
Doctor—I am slightly in doubt as to whether yours is a constitutional disease or not.
Patient—For heaven's sake, doctor, have I got to go to the expense of appealing to the United States supreme court to find out whether it is or not?—Richmond Dispatch.

Thriffliness.
Poor Woman—Ah, your ladyship, the very serious illness of my husband has consumed our little all, and we are penniless!
Lady—Dear, dear! How could your husband be so thrifflous as to get ill so much beyond his means?—London Tit-Bits.

Considerate.
Aged Criminal (who has just got a life sentence)—Oh, me, I shall never live to do it!
Judge (sweetly)—Never mind. Do as much of it as you can!—Punch.

The Captive.
"They tell me Maude Burlocks is going to be married."
"You're misinformed. Miss Burlocks is going to marry the man who is going to be married. Your difficulty is that you don't know Miss Burlocks."—Baltimore News.

Bound to Explain It.
"Say, pa," asked Willie sweetly, "what does a chopping sea chop?"
"I guess," answered his father thoughtfully, "it must be the sea-board."—Philadelphia Record.

The Joke Will Turn.

Chauncey M. Depew and Samuel L. Clemens, the humorist, were crossing the ocean on the same steamer. One evening after dinner it was suggested that, following the time honored custom in the United States, the diners make speeches. Mr. Clemens made a characteristic address, such as might have been expected from one whose writings are so well known under the nom de plume of Mark Twain.

"It was understood," said Senator Depew when called upon to speak, "that Mr. Clemens and I should write out our speeches for this occasion in advance and then exchange manuscripts. We have done so, but I regret to say that I have forgotten Mr. Clemens' speech."

The senator then took his seat. His auditors roared in appreciation of the joke.
The next day an Englishman met Mr. Clemens on deck.
"I say," he remarked, "I have always heard that Senator Depew was remarkably clever, but what wretched drivelt of his that was which you were obliged to recite last night!"—New York Herald.

Foundlings.
For the humanity of parents let it be said also that the police records show the percentage of foundlings increases in summer and decreases as regularly with the oncoming of winter. It is another interesting fact that hard times mean more foundlings, and this may be taken as a corroboration of the theory of one of the oldest and most humane captains in the police department, who would never believe that any infant was abandoned except for the reason that there were already too many mouths in the house to feed. This particular police captain would look at the foundling when the patrolman brought it in from his post, grunt and then say: "Get it to the hospital quick. They can afford to feed it there. There's too many mouths in the house where that came from—God forgive 'em." But in this charitable view of the old police captain is not supported by many of his fellows.—Ainslie's.

Why He Liked Henty.
Wearily plodding through a pile of compositions brought from school for corrections, this teacher suddenly burst into boisterous laughter.
"What is it?" asked his roommate, who was engaged in a similar task.
"Listen," said the amused pedagogue, "and perhaps you will be able to read between the lines."
"I asked my class yesterday to write a brief composition on their favorite author. Here is what one boy says: 'Henty is my first choice among story writers. I like him very much. One of his stories in particular pleases me. It tells of how the boys gave their teacher a coat of tar and feathers.'—New York Times."

A Garden Party Gown.
A pretty garden party gown is made of cream colored broton net, with a pointed lace tablier falling over four flounces edged with lace, the shaped frill also lace edged, the tucked blouse to correspond, having a transparent yoke and elbow sleeves, a touch of color being introduced in a large, soft blue silk rosette on the left side of the bodice.

Pretty Muslin Ties.
The soft muslin ties for warm weather are specially attractive this year. The foundation is usually white, patterned with dots, lines or conventional designs in dainty colorings. Some have the tucked band for the neck with turnover collar matching the ends. The hems, in colored muslin, are hemstitched both on the ends and collar.

Costume For Small Boy.
The sketch pictures a charming pelisse for a little boy, made of white pique, with collar and revers of finest tulle, with decorative leaf shaped insertions of embroidery and bordered with scalloped edging to match.

A White Pique Pelisse.
The little vest, which shows between the collar, is of the lawn, with lines of beading and a double row of fine pearl buttons for its own particular adornment. The Tam O'Shanter is of white pique, with a ribbon bow at the left side.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Plain Linen Skirts.
The justification of a linen gown rests absolutely in its studied simplicity. Elaborateness of any description is completely out of place unless, of course, it chances to be some exclusive hand embroidery or applications of lace. Plain linen skirts surmounted by embroidered linen boleros are counted among the things that are chic.

Much In Her Name.
Church—She is a Russian countess. Gotham—Indeed! Has she much in her own name?
"Has she? She's got nearly the entire alphabet!"—Yonkers Statesman.

A bad beginning makes a good ending sometimes, but more often it makes a very quick ending.—Syrause Herald.

Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.—Confucius.

WOMAN AND FASHION

A Pretty Waist.
This is a blouse of dark gray silk made with two plaits in front and ornamented with old silver buttons.
It is trimmed in an odd way with straps of black velvet or soutache fastened at the ends with little old silver buckles.
The large shoulder collar is of light gray silk or cloth, embroidered with dark gray dots.
The little tucked plastron is of cream mousseline de soie, the collar trimmed with the narrow black velvet.

Colored Straws Fashionable.
Colored straws are all the fashion for hats—gray, brown, heliotrope and the color we call ecru, which is really a coffee tint. Very little is seen of the foundation of fashionable headgear, for it is covered with chiffon and tulle and large chiffon flowers. A good deal of trimming is relegated to the back in the form of large Alsatian bows. Paradise plumes are coming in again, and fruit and foliage play an important part in decorating the up to date hat.
A lovely colored creation is fashioned of pale green straw, trimmed with a garland of green foliage and red and white cherries.



Gray Silk with Silver Buttons.
The sleeves, which flare at the bottom, are trimmed with the velvet straps and buckles and finished with an edge of the lighter embroidered material.
The full undersleeves are of the cream mousseline de soie gathered into wristbands of the same trimmed with black velvet.

THE FIRST AUTOMOBILE.
It was an Ancient, Self Moving Shrine of Baecchus.
Few, perhaps, are aware that the first automobile, considered in the sense of a vehicle containing within itself powers of locomotion, of which there is any authentic account was a self moving shrine of Baecchus.
This was the invention of Heron of Alexandria, who describes it in his work on automatic mechanism. The shrine in question was mounted upon two supporting and two driving wheels. On the axle of the driving wheels was a drum, about which was wound a rope, which passed upward through the space on one side of the shrine over pulleys and was fastened to the ring of a ponderous lead weight, which rested upon a quantity of dry, fine sand. The escape of this sand through a small hole in the middle of the floor of the compartment containing it allowed the lead weight gradually to descend and, by pulling upon the cord caused the shrine to move slowly forward in a straight line.
Heron describes the method of arranging and proportioning the wheels in case it was desired that the shrine move in a circular path. He also shows how the shrine can be constructed to move in a straight line at right angles to each other.
Officials of the patent office overlooked the device of Heron when they granted patents on slot machines, notwithstanding that previously Thomas Eubank, commissioner of patents in 1850, illustrated and described Heron's invention. The mechanism of the latter is almost identical with that in the modern device and simply serves as another proof of the saying, "There is nothing new under the sun."—Washington Times.

Spring a Surprise.
The man had not settled with the grocer for nearly six months. The grocer, needing some money, presented his bill.
"Surely," said the man, looking in surprise at the long list of items, "there must be some mistake in this."
"No mistake at all, sir," answered the grocer belligerently. "I am prepared to make affidavit that every item is correct and that the footing is right to a cent. When an account runs as long as this one has run and the customer hasn't kept track of it, he nearly always kicks."
"Oh, I'm not kicking," said the man, proceeding to write a check for the amount. "What surprises me is that the bill is only about half as big as I expected."—Chicago Tribune.

Dreaded the Results.
Doctor—You'll have to accustom yourself to one cigar after meals.
Patient—Oh, doctor, that's pretty hard.
Doctor—Tut, tut! After a time you'll find it easy to give up even the cigar after meals.
Patient—But I'm sure I'll be giving up my meals after the cigars. I've never smoked, you know.—Catholic Standard and Times.

An Artful Dodger.
"How is your boy getting along at school?"
"Splendidly, splendidly! I tell you, my friend, this boy of mine will make his way in the world, don't you fear. During the time he's been going to school they have had thirty-two examinations, and he's managed to dodge every one of them."—Glasgow Evening Times.

He—I am really surprised at Dr. White. After being our family doctor for years and treating me for all sorts of things, and to think of all the money we've paid him too!
She—What has he done?
He—He wouldn't pass me for the life insurance company!

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Asks what percentage of cases cured by Foster's Compound, the physician replied: 'I don't know but it must be at least a majority of the cases are cured by this.'
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A Game of Leapfrog.

Napoleon Bonaparte, as is well known, was in the habit of walking with his arms crossed upon his chest and his head slightly bent forward. Isabeau, the painter, was at Malmaison, and by and some of the first couple's aids de camp were having a game of leapfrog on the lawn. Isabeau had already jumped over the heads of most of them, when at the turning of a path he espied the last player, who, in the requisite position, seemed to be waiting for the ordeal. Isabeau pursued his course without looking, but took his flight so badly as only to reach the other's shoulder, and both rolled over and over in the sand.

To Isabeau's consternation, his supposed fellow player turned out to be Bonaparte, who got up, foaming at the mouth with anger, and, drawing his sword, pounced upon the unfortunate artist. Isabeau, luckily for himself, better at running than at leaping, took to his heels and, jumping the ditches dividing the property from the highroad, got over the wall and never stopped until, breathless, he reached the gates of the Tuilleries.
Isabeau, it was added, went immediately to Mme. Bonaparte's apartments, and she, after having laughed at the mishap, advised him to lie low for a little while.

Cemeteries Where Women Gossip.
Friday, the Sabbath of the Moslems, when all true believers of the masculine gender make a point of going to church, their wives, sisters, and daughters resort to the cemeteries and wall for the dead. But all their time is not spent in weeping, and sorrow is not the only emotion they display on these occasions. They take with them bunches and garlands of flowers and decorate the graves of their relatives and pray and weep over the dead for a time. Then, when this pious duty is performed, they gather in little groups and have a good time gossiping about the living.

Thus the day of mourning is very popular among the Moslem women. It gives them almost the only opportunity they have of cultivating the acquaintance of their neighbors, because it is not customary to exchange visits as in our country.—Exchange.

Different Kinds of Feet.
As to national characteristics in feet, it may be said that the French foot is narrow and long. The Spanish foot is small and elegantly curved—thanks to its Moorish blood—corresponding to the Castilian's pride of being "high in the instep." The Arab's foot is proverbial for its high arch. The Koran says that a stream of water can run under the true Arab's foot without touching it. The foot of the Scotch is high and thick, that of the Irish flat and square, the English short and fleshy. When Athens was in her zenith, the Greek foot was the most perfectly formed and exactly proportioned of that of any of the human race. Swedes, Norwegians and Germans have the largest feet, Americans the smallest. Russian toes are "webbed" to the first joint. Tartarian toes are all the same length.

Queer Coronation Custom.
One of the most extraordinary gifts made on the coronation day of Edward I. was that of 500 horses, which had been used by the royal princes and other personages in the procession to Westminster abbey. These horses, all richly caparisoned and harnessed just as they were, were let loose into the very midst of the mob after the banquet in Westminster hall that always preceded a coronation in those days. The people in the streets were permitted to catch the animals, and to him who caught a horse it and its appointments belonged.—London Chronicle.