The Chauffeur and the Jewels

By Edith Morgan Willett

CHAPTER VIII.—(Continued.)

The chauffeur's eyelids flickered. "Wareng!" he repeated. "The name is familiar—I think I have heard it before. Is she a tall, slim blonde, with reddish hair?"

"Parfaitement!" The Count spread out his hands. "Une taille de guepe!" he explained, "and of an elegance! Ah!" he dropped his voice solemnly, "she has an income of seventy-five thousand."

With swift eagerness he turned on his companion. "The prince—does he know them, are they connaissances—intimes? Ah!" a light of inspiration leaped into his eyes.—"I have it! those were the two ladies whom you said he was helping into a cab—Hein?"

The chauffeur saw that there was no use in denying it. "Very likely," he said calmly, inwardly cursing himself for his momentary imprudence.

Souravieff eyed him an instant speculatively. "Then Son Altesse doubtless knows where Madame Waring is staying," he said, jumping swiftly to an inevitable conclusion. "Of course, he possibly even gave the direction to the cabman. Good! That is what I want to know,—the name of her hotel—where she is staying."

His beaky nose was intrusively near the chauffeur's his keen eyes searching the other's face. "Tell me," repeated eagerly, "how am I to see Son Altesse?"

Sarto's face was expressionless. "I cannot tell Your Excellency" he was beginning, when the count broke in impatiently,—

"Yes, yes! You can tell—you must tell. Look you!" He gesticulated violently with his strong white hands. "*I must see the prince this very afternoon.* It is a necessity. Tell me where to find him, my good fellow." His tone was coaxing in the extreme, and with one hand he rustled something suggestively in his pocket.

The chauffeur smiled enigmatically. He had been doing some rapid thinking during the last five minutes.

"One likes to be obliging," he said. "Let me see."

He appeared to reflect a moment, and then, turning to the other with an engaging smile, "If M. le comte follows my advice," he said quietly, "he will be at the Club Union this afternoon at about four o'clock. That is the best I can do.'

Souravieff put his hand with impulsive gratitude into his pocket, and then, moved by the counter currents of prudence, drew it forth empty.

"I am exceedingly obliged to you, Sarto," he said warmly, "and I am indeed glad to have been able to give you this lift. Here is your hotel. No, do not thank me; the obligation is on my side, and remember, my man,"—he lowered his voice confidently, "if anything should induce you to give up your present position you must be sure to let me know."

That afternoon at four o'clock, while, in company with two fair ladies who shall be nameless, our friend Ludovic Sarto was sitting tranquilly in the Congressional Limited speeding to Washington, a perturbed Russian diplomat paced up and down the spacious reading-room of the Union Club, straining his eyes anxiously out of the broad windows with increasing impatience as the minutes passed by and the Prince del Pino did not appear!

CHAPTER IX.

Saturday in New York had been cold and blustery; Sunday in Washington was warm with the breath of the tropics. On the wide pavements the summer sun fell glitteringly wherever the black-etched shadow of the long tree arcades gave it a chance to fall at all. There was touch of languor in the still air, a breathlessness, the masses of greenery hardly moving a leaf, above them a palpitating blue sky.

In the Metropolitan Club the big electric fans were whirling madly all day, but the very few loungers in the comparatively deserted rooms preferred to sit by the front windows looking out into shady H street, down which an occasional saunterer passed in the lightest of summer clothes.

As the day wore on the atmosphere became heavier, the sky veiled in an ominous gray opaqueness near the horizon.

"Going to have a thunder storm," predicted a tall man in white flannels who was standing by one of the club windows at about five o'clock. "That's because I'm dining at the Country Club to-night. Just my luck." He groaned. "It's difficult going through an electric storm in my automobile."

"Pocket your pride and take a trolley car," suggested the other man who was looking out. "These clouds won't work up before midnight, anyway, if they do at all."

He put up an eye-glass. "There's another Dip coming along. Funny how you can tell them instantly by their walk! All of us Americans have our individual ways of trotting about, but on the other side they seem to have been drilled into the same step by the same dancing master. See that fellow! Think he's a Frenchman or an Italian?"

"A little of both, I should say," declared the other, following his glance. "And a swell, too, from the look of him and the cut of his clothes! I suppose he's over here on some 'special mission!'"

The object of their attention meanwhile was proceeding up Connecticut avenue at a leisurely pace, that permitted him to glance up from time to time at the houses he passed, many of which sported wooden barricades, wondering inwardly that their owners should be hurrying away from this bit of paradise. For paradise it was, indeed. The evening sky had partially thrown off its gray veiling, displaying a sumptuous riot of flaring tints, against which the red belfry of a distant church struck a solemn note.

As he pased on, guided by the lampposts, making scientific cuts through side streets, the roof-line of the houses seemed to become more irregular, seen through green tree-vistas, under which one caught glimpses of brilliantly colored facades, terraces and vivid flower beds, sloping to stately alleys and broad avenues, gay with pedestrians, carriages and automobiles. While visible at intervals, near at hand seemingly and yet curiously remote, aloof, the monument, like a silver arrow, pierced the still air, pointing heavenward.

Occasionally asking his way and always keeping a diligent eye on the lampposts, the foreigner found himself at last walking down the cloistered aisles of Massachusetts avenue, where he began to look questioningly at the different house fronts he was passing and consult the card in his hand.

Stopping before a white exterior of ornate lines, framed by an Italian garden, he glanced up at the slightly bowed shutters and then, coming to a decision, stepped rapidly along the carriage drive and lifted the ponderous brass knocker.

"Is Mrs. Waring at home?" he asked in due time of the functionary in livery who opened the door, and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, followed a second footman into a great hall, whose shrouded chandeliers and vast uncovered expanse suggested that its hostess was only there on the wing for other latitudes.

Following his guide up a wide, shallow staircase, he stopped before a curtained door, long enough to have the portiere drawn back and hear his name announced in muffled tones.

Before him was unmitigated dimness at first, out of which presently a circle of black dots resolved themselves, surrounding a white object—all of this developing on nearer view into Gussie Waring, a seraphically mundane figure in crepe de chine, behind her tea table, with half a dozen men around her.

"I hoped you would come in," she said, holding out a hand of welcome to the newcomer. Then, turning gayly to her little court, "This is the Prince del Pino, arrived yesterday in America—the very latest thing out, you see. We must make the most of him, my friends, for he's only here for a few days."

Motioning the honored guest to a chair beside her, she introduced him in her characteristic, off-hand fashion to the men about him, and resumed her tete-a-tete with the stodgy-looking Senator on her other side.

The rest of the room looked at the Prince del Pino.

"What does Your Highness think of our little village?" asked a stout man savoring unmistakably of the far West. "Plenty of room to turn about in, eh?"

The supposed nobleman smiled graciously.

"To turn around in?" he ejaculated, in his precise English. "After the maelstrom of your New York, Washington seems to me a blessed retreat—in truth a rest-cure. But it is charming—this place! Everywhere fine houses, wide boulevards, well-dressed men, and as for your far-famed American woman—but—(he made a bow toward the figure behind the tea-table)—I made her acquaintance five days ago, you see!"

Conscious that he was acquitting himself well, he broke off, little realizing the ordeal Fate had in store for him!

"Prince." Gussie had deserted the Senator and was smiling over her shoulder with covert mischief in her half-closed eyes. "You will have to prove an alibi. We have all been reading about you in the morning Post."

She bent forward with the paper in her hand. "See, Your Highness! Over there—on that column to your right."

Adjusting his monocle, the man she addressed glanced over the sheet with an air of polite interest.

"What can it be?" he exclaimed, even as he realized with instinctive certainty what he should find.

"Ah! This sounds alarming!" And, with apparent amazement, he read aloud:

"Special from the Liverpool Daily Transcript:

"It has just transpired that a certain patient who is occupying a private room in the Queen's Hospital here is no less a person than the Prince Roderigo del Pino, whose anticipated trip to America was interrupted by the attack of measles from which he is just recovering. It is hoped that the distinguished invalid will soon be able to carry out his first plans."

So this was the end of the scarlet fever scare and Alceste's well-guarded secret. In spite of his precautions, the truth was out! Something had gone wrong. Some one had blundered.

Pulling himself together with a decided effort, the chauffeur looked up to find seven pairs of eyes confronting him with varying degrees of interest and curiosity. It was a difficult situation to carry off, appealing irresistibly to the adventurer's love of risk, to the actor's instinct for a dramatic climax.

"This is an equivocal position in which I find myself! How am I to prove an alibi?" he ejaculated solemnly.

"That is your affair!"

Throwing his head back, he faced them squarely, daringly, his thin lips twitching. "Yes," he pursued gravely, "this is the issue—either this report is false or," his eyes twinkled irresistibly, "I am myself. My friends, put it to the vote at once! I am in a state of intolerable suspense and exceeding agitation till I hear your verdict."

It was an audacious move, but the chauffeur knew what he was about. In counting the cost, he had not reckoned without his hostess.

"Here's my hand!" she said, raising it in gay, swift response to his whim. "I put my money on the prince without hesitation. How about you, gentlemen? Remember, he's at your mercy."

A burst of laughter answered her as every hand went up, the prodigious clapping sealing the verdict.

The mock prince had scored another victory, indeed a conquest.

"A thousand thanks for your gratifying confidence," he said, laughingly glancing at his new adherents. "Now for the explanation: As it happens, the "certain patient in a private room of the Queen's hospital' is no less a person than my valet. I had to leave the man behind at the last moment with a case of measles—the reporters did the rest! I beseech you, do not be afraid of me!" He spread out his hands in comic deprecation. "I have had that dangerous disease myself years ago, I assure you! I do not want to be avoided in the least."

And for the next half-hour he was most certainly not avoided, being undoubtedly the lion of the occasion, the chief center of attraction; and at the end of that time—such is the magic influence of that trio of forces, a ready tongue, a ready smile, and an attractive personality—there was not a man in the large, dimly lighted room who would not have been willing to swear that Del Pino was not only a capital good fellow but a born aristocrat with every sign of his birth and breeding!

A little while after he had been borne off by two attaches in the direction of the embassies, a lithe, middle-aged man was admitted at the front door, left his hat in the hall, with a glance at the stacks of cards arranged in circular rows on the table, and, hurrying upstairs, pushed his way past the footman, entering the drawing room unannounced.

At sight of him there was a general turning of heads and a cry of "Souravieff! You here!"

"Why, M. le Comte," Gussie looked around. "This is a surprise! We thought you were in Newport!"

Count Souravieff bowed over her hand. "I am only here for the day," he said. "I must return to Newport to-night—in fact, I am due there this very minute (this impressively). You are responsible for my not keeping my appointment. Ah!" he settled down in the chair beside Mrs. Waring and dropped his voice to a confidential pitch. "The Fates have been working against me of late. I had intended to be on the docks to greet you on your arrival yesterday, but, alas!—your miserable steamship companies overturned my cart of apples!" He waved his white hands. "Concevez donc, when I reached there with my permit, you had gone. Even my friend Del Pino had departed. There was no one to speak to me but his chauffeur."

"What!" exclaimed Gussie at this juncture. She stared at him with suddenly awakened interest. "Who did you say was the only person to be seen?"

Souravieff disliked interruptions excessively. Checked in the full flow of his eloquence, he raised his eyebrows as well as his voice, and explained to Gussie in a tone of mild reproof. "The man whom I met, madame, was the chauffeur of my friend Del Pino."

Then, conscious that he had the undivided attention of the room, he went on with restored equanimity: "Eh bien! from the fellow I acquired the information that his master would be at the Club Union at the hour of four, so to that abominable place I repaired, in order to find out if Del Pino knew of your whereabouts."

But at this point in his narrative there was another unaccountable interruption.

"Excuse me," Gussie said, in a curiously strained voice; "what was the name of the man who directed you to the club? The Prince del Pino, as far as I know, hasn't any chauffeur."

Souravieff eyed her with rising displeasure. Never having heard of the Waring robbery, he considered this second interruption on the part of his hostess absolutely inane and in conspicuously bad taste.

"Pardon, madame," he said formally; "but the prince has a chauffeur—a man named Ludovic Sarto, who managed his motor while we were in the Tyrol."

There was a pause, while everyone in the room looked wonderingly at the pair by the tea table, one of whom was leaning forward, her eyes unnaturally bright and dilated, her manner more and more excited.

"You saw Ludovic Sarto!" she ejaculated at length. "I really can't believe it!"

Count Souravieff now began to think that Gussie Waring was going out of her mind.

"Well!" he said, laughing in a constrained way and glancing around for sympathy, "I can only state that I met the Prince's chauffeur—or his double—coming out of the steamship docks yesterday morning. Behold my deposition, madame!"

There was another pause. "Then the prince was right!" remarked Gussie slowly. Her face had grown curiously pale and she shivered a little. "Yes," she repeated, as if to herself. "He was right! Oh, think of it!"—this with a half-frightened gasp—"that man must have been on board with us all the time!"

(To be continued.)

Too Steady.

The irate old farmer entered the employment office.

"You sent me out a batch of farm hands, didn't you?" he blustered.

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk meekly.

"And when I asked you if they were swift workers you said they were regular engines?"

"I think so."

"Wal, by heck, they must be stationary engines then."

"Why so?"

"Because when they once get out on the barn fence they don't move until they hear the dinner horn.

A Brilliant Idea.

"Speaking of the money question," remarked Greening, "what this country needs is an elastic currency."

"Then," rejoined his wife, proud of her ability to see through a stone wall with a hole in it, "why doesn't the government print banknotes on sheet rubber?"

Time to Back.

Harry—Yes, that pretty heiress said you started to propose and then backed out.

Harold—Yes, I backed out of the window. When I got to that part about only earning $9 a week I heard her pa coming with a shotgun.

Not Lively Enough.

"Misery loves company," quoted the moralizer.

"Yes, I suppose so," rejoined the demoralizer, "but it doesn't entertain its company agreeably."

JUDGE PETER S. GROSSCUP.

Jurist Who Reversed $29,240,000 Standard Oil Fine.

Since rendering the decision reversing the fine of $29,240,000 imposed upon the Standard Oil Company by Judge Landis, Judge Peter S. Grosscup of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, has received many intimidating letters, some threatening to kill him and others to blow up his house with dynamite. The letters have been sent to Chicago from all over the country, some of them unsigned and others bearing evidently fictitious names.

Judge Grosscup was appointed to the bench—the District Court of the United States—during President Harrison's administration. It was for disobedience of an injunction issued by him that Eugene Debs, head of the American Railway Union, was sent to jail for contempt, during the great railroad strike, thereby becoming a political martyr. The judge is a native of Ashland, Ohio. His ancestors settled in

JUDGE PETER S. GROSSCUP.

Berks County, Pennsylvania, 150 years or so ago, and were prominent men, holding positions in the colonial government before the Revolution, and later in the State government. Judge Grosscup's grandfather moved to Ohio early last century. The judge was educated in the common schools and Wittenberg College at Springfield, Ohio. He studied law in Boston, and began practice in Ashland in 1874, in partnership with the late Judge William Osborne. He was interested in politics, and once ran for Congress as a Republican, but was defeated. In 1883 he moved to Chicago and entered into partnership with Leonard Smith, one of the most distiguished lawyers in the West. Judge Grosscup soon won recognition at the Chicago bar, and succeeded Judge Blodgett in the United States District Court. Later he became judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals.

Visit from the Inspector.

A woman out west tells how her husband, Silas, got appointed postmaster, says a writer in Lippincott's. "There was four candidates—three men and a woman. One was an undertaker and the woman was a milliner, and the only way they could settle it was by havin' a postoffice inspector come along and decide it.

"He come and the undertaker showed him his hearse, along with other qualifications which he thought entitled him to the postoffice. The woman and her friends showed the inspector how clean the milliner shop was kept and showed him the artificial flowers and artificial birds, trying to outdo the undertaker. The other candidate was keeping a drug store and sold 'nips' to poor and weary pilgrims travelin' from afar at 10 cents a nip, and while the inspector took a deadhead nip, he said the law made it impossible to dispense drinks and mail out of the same room, so this left only Silas to buck the undertaker and the milliner. Whatever he done I never knew, but Silas made a sign at the inspector and I seen him acknowledge it and so I begins to smell woolen, and it wasn't long until the inspector got around to where Silas was handing out the mail, for he was deputy, as they call it, to handle the postoffice, until the new postmaster was appointed. Mr. Inspector says, says he, 'Young feller, you don't run a burial cart nor milliner store, nor you don't mix drinks, but if you can raise a bond, why you can have the office.'"

Irrelevancies.

Put a sign "Fresh paint" on your dor and every one will test it to see if it is really so. Hang out a sign of "Wisdom, gravity and profound conceit" on your face and half the world will take it for true without question.

These are the days when even the modest little girl in the world looks forward.

The amount of wealth one has is usually in inverse proportion to his capacity to enjoy it.

High finance is thus termed because it is so expensive to those on the outside.

Made a Change.

"Poor man! Have you always been blind?"

"No, mum," answered Tired Tiffins, unthinkingly." Last week I wuz lame, but dere wuzn't enuff in it."

How He Liked 'Em.

Miss Gushley—I like people who are always the same, don't you?

Mr. Lushley—Not if they're uniformly disagreeable.—Smart Set.

Thoughts of hell in the next world never bother a man half as much as public opinion in this.