

The Chauffeur and the Jewels

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By Edith Morgan Willett

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

Giving his shoulders a resolute, fatalistic shrug, Sarto stepped out of his stateroom and, locking the door behind him, went jauntily down to dinner. In the saloons through which he passed people were still scattered about, notwithstanding the claims of table d'hôte, and more than one loiterer turned around or glanced up over his newspaper at the sight of the distinguished looking foreigner sauntering by.

"Dining saloon on the left, Your Highness," an obsequious steward informed our friend as he turned into the main entrance.

Alceste was an ally worth having! With a sense of satisfaction that amounted to positive elation, Sarto opened the door on his left. Before him glimmered a river of lights, looked a river of faces—men and women of varying types, plying their knives and forks assiduously.

Perfectly conscious of the eyes that followed him, the mock prince walked slowly up the length of the room between rows of waiters, his eyes well to the front, where a chair had been already drawn out for him, far up at the captain's right.

It was as he sat down, with a bow to his uniformed host, and let his glance wander idly about him that Sarto experienced his second shock that day, and a startling one indeed. For an instant the sheer surprise of it staggered him completely. Then, recovering himself with supreme effort, he lifted his monocle and looked steadily across the table.

Yes, there they were—there was no mistake—the very last people he had wished or expected to see—Mrs. Richard Waring, Annette Bancroft and Gerald Buist, Englishman!

After all, why had he not thought of this possibility? It was just like Gussie, after laying her plans for a protracted stay in London, suddenly to take passage for home.

Raising his head, the chauffeur glanced rapidly over the tables, his quick eye picking out a keen-eyed profile—an angular back. Surrounded! Hemmed in on all sides! His lips twitched. The situation was positively comic in its direfulness. Detective, robber, and robbed, breaking bread together! What a juxtaposition!

"Game's up," Sarto told himself stoically, and, fixing his eyes on his menu card, he awaited the inevitable checkmate.

But it was long in coming! Over and over the chauffeur coned that interminable list of dishes, his brain on the alert for developments across the table; yet nothing happened, the tinkle of glasses and the clatter of cutlery continuing unbroken.

What did it mean? At last the sound of a voice opposite made him prick up his ears. "I told you Blantock was on board," came a familiar British drawl. "See him over there, Gussie!"

"Where?" Sarto experienced a faint thrill at the clear-cut, well-known tones. "Down there. That second table to your left. Look! Four seats from the end."

But Gussie did not look! Under his lowered eye-lids the man opposite was unpleasantly conscious that her gaze was upon him curiously, interrogatively. She had recognized him!

Taking a little gold pencil out of his pocket, Sarto began, with perfect self-possession, to cross off an elaborate meal, while he waited for her next move.

What would she do? Gradually the eyes upon him shifted, then they came back again. Gussie put up her hand and lightly touched her hair, the furtive, beringed fingers patting a lock here, a coil there—a characteristic gesture, this of hers. Why, the bird was actually pluming itself! For whose benefit?

There was a moment's silence. "If Mr. Blantock is really on board," Mrs. Waring remarked, in obviously cautious tones, "what do you suppose it means?"

Gerald hesitated a moment. "Perhaps," he suggested significantly, "it means that a friend of yours is on board too."

It was a tremendous moment. Handing the card to the waiter, with a low-toned direction, Sarto now raised his head and looked deliberately across the table, his eyes encountering those of the woman opposite in a steady, impenetrable stare. To his surprise, Mrs. Waring looked away, blushing faintly, and set down her wine glass with a little click.

"Well, I've quite finished," she announced, glancing at her party; "how about you? Shall we go up on deck and have coffee?"

The girl beside her acquiesced, speaking for the first time, and, still under his lowered eye-lids, Sarto watched the familiar procession pass out of the room, Gussie taking the lead, as usual, the Englishman bringing up the rear.

If they had recognized him, of which the chauffeur made no doubt, then, he told himself, there must have been a mutual silent decision to avoid a scene in the saloon. Probably the arrest would be made as soon as he went out.

"After dinner, the deluge!" quoth Sarto, the philosopher, paraphrasing a famous maxim, and, true to the teachings of Mme. de Pompadour, he set forth on his consomme. It was some time later that, his eventful meal ended, the mock prince stepped out of the saloon and, standing in the lee of the outer door, placidly lit a cigar. What a night of enchantment it was!

Low in the heavens, over the luminous, palpitating ocean dangled the full moon—a great, golden coin—and from it, descending the waves, a ladder of light hung suspended, each rung girt with silver. Not a breath of air moved, the throbbing of the screw alone breaking the mystic stillness.

Glancing about him cautiously, Sarto took in one group after another saunter-

ing up and down the deck, and then drew back with sudden swiftness into the door shadow, his cigar bitten tight between his teeth, his breath coming unevenly, as he watched two familiar figures go by under the electric lights. Scarcely were they past, a breath of violets following the swish of Gussie's skirts, when the man in the doorway sprang forward and picked up something that whirled over the deck in her wake.

What should he do with it? Grasping the white lace thing, he stared after the couple, twisting his thin lips uncertainly. Fate had thrown him Gussie's handkerchief, with some obvious end in view. Why not run the chance now?

"It's always best to know the worst," Sarto told himself, with unconscious Irish wit, and he set out along the decks, quickening his steps to catch up with the loitering pair.

"Pardon, madame?"

He saw them stop, and felt Gussie turn her head inquiringly. "Then advancing, hat in hand, 'I think you dropped this,' he said, speaking in English and holding the handkerchief out to her with a glance that was half question, half grim, daring defiance, for Gussie's eyes were full of recognition.

"Thank you very much," she said, taking her possession without looking at it, and, with a little hesitation, "Isn't this the Prince del Pino? The captain told me that he sat opposite to us at dinner."

Holding himself well in hand, Sarto achieved a bow.

Mrs. Waring smiled. "I feel as if I knew Your Highness already," she said, "through my old friend Count Souravieff, of the Russian Legation. I wonder if you ever heard him speak of Mrs. Richard Waring?"

With his self-possession miraculously restored, Mrs. Waring's chauffeur bowed over the hand so graciously outstretched to him.

"I have heard your name, madame, a hundred times," he said gallantly, "and from many others beside Count Souravieff. Boris Souravieff!" He laughed, with a keen recollection of his late patron's boom companion. "Why, we were motoring together only last autumn."

At this point another voice broke in. "My name's Buist," said that individual, introducing himself with his usual nonchalance. "Glad to meet you, I'm sure."

"Charmed," declared the Prince del Pino.

Clicking his heels together, he bowed again, searching the other's face warily; but Gerald's straightforward lineaments were as open as the proverbial political door. Not a shade of suspicion, not a sign of doubt, lurked in that broad, clean-shaven expanse!

Behind his tilted monocle the eyes of Ludovic Sarto, chauffeur, glistened with satisfaction at his own amazing good fortune. So these two people had accepted him without reserve! There's the risk, then. He would play the part for all it was worth.

"We were just about to join my cousin, Miss Bancroft," Gussie explained, leading the way around the deck. "Ah, here she is!"

"Annette, this is the Prince del Pino." She sat down next to the girl and smilingly motioned to a chair beside her. "Won't Your Highness join us? You see, Mr. Buist is evidently going to desert us for a smoke. Perhaps you will take his place?"

With a murmured word of thanks, Sarto slipped into the low, easy chair, his mind going back rapidly to a certain tea party when he had first taken Mr. Buist's place—when the 'humble chauffeur' had been first allowed the honor of sitting by Mrs. Waring.

What a turning of tables to-night! With what subtle difference of texture the Fates had woven in the old design!

And yet this exquisite situation had its undoubted perils. It was with a swift realization of his own immediate danger that, turning his head, the mock Prince del Pino now met Gussie Waring's half-puzzled, interrogative gaze.

"Really," she apologized, "your face is so absurdly familiar, you know, I've been wondering, ever since I first saw you across the dinner table, where I could possibly have met you before—or is it that you remind me of some one I know? Let me think" (she frowned absently).

"Who can it be?"

"Yes, who can it be?" echoed the man beside her. He smiled a faint twinkle in his inscrutable eye. "Not Souravieff, I hope?"

Gussie took the bait. "Souravieff, I should think not!" She laughed, remembering the diplomat's razor-like outlines. Then, her thoughts swerving unconsciously into a new channel, "Oh, by the way, prince, we have another mutual friend I haven't mentioned yet"—this with a mischievous side-glance at Annette. "Perhaps you haven't heard of my experience with your chauffeur?"

"Ah, that miserable scelerat!" ejaculated Ludovic Sarto. He bent towards the woman he had robbed, his face positively sphinx-like in its impenetrability, his manner serious, deferential; and, relapsing unconsciously into French, "My dear Mrs. Waring, I cannot tell you how distressed—absolutely apologetic—I feel about your loss. To think of that fellow of mine turning out such a rascal! It is inconceivable."

He paused, hesitated, then, the humor of the situation carrying him on irresistibly. "Why, I trusted Ludovic Sarto as I did myself," he declared, with infinite pathos; "I was sincerely attached to him!"

For the first time he looked across deliberately at the girl on his other side.

Annette Bancroft was leaning forward also, taking in every word that he said, her lips parted, her small face, in the all-revealing electric lights, oddly tense and eager.

"Ah! you too!" she exclaimed impulsively, as she caught his eye. "Wasn't it

a terrible disappointment that he should turn out so? That poor chauffeur!"

"There was a little pause, then: 'How about my poor diamonds?' asked Gussie. 'What do you think, prince?' She turned to him. 'Shall we ever get hold of that man?'"

"How can I tell?" asked Ludovic Sarto. He cleared his throat and spoke in business-like English. "What steps are you taking, if I may ask, madame? I suppose it is in the hands of the police—yes?"

Mrs. Waring nodded her head. "I have a very capable detective," she said confidentially, "who tracked the chauffeur all the way from Southampton to Liverpool, where, unfortunately, he gave him the slip. Mr. Blantock's idea is that he was trying to get over to America."

"That is very probable," agreed Sarto. Turning slightly, he glanced again at Annette, to find her eyes fixed on him with an intensity that was almost painful.

"My experience of the man indeed," he went on, choosing his words deliberately and watching her face, "is that he seldom fails of his ends. Sarto, I think, will elude you by every means in his power. He is a shrewd fellow, I can tell you, and if you are too many for him"—he shrugged his shoulders—"ma foi! I doubt me if you will ever catch him alive."

With keen satisfaction he saw Annette wince. "Ah!" she said, in a low tone, "what a grisly suggestion!" Then, rising abruptly, "There's Mr. Buist." This with evident relief. "I think I am going to join him and walk up and down a bit, if you and the prince will excuse me, Gussie."

Holding on to the rail, she made her way off unsteadily. Watching the small figure, Sarto was so absorbed in his own speculations that it was with a start he became conscious of a voice beside him.

"Don't you think," it asked, in languid, rather bored accents, "that your chauffeur and my diamonds have absorbed quite enough of the conversation? It seems to me that you and I, prince, have a thousand other things in common."

(To be continued.)

TEA FROM THE FLOWERS.

Naturally Sweet Tea of Western China—Value of Tea Dust.

Tea, not from the leaves, but from the flowers alone of the plant, is rarely encountered in commerce. The petals, stamens, etc., are sun-dried, and the resulting tea is of a rich, deep brown hue of peculiarly delicate odor, and gives a pale amber colored infusion rather more astringent in taste than that from the average fair grade leaf. The taste for it is an acquired one, and even if this tea could be made commercially possible, it is doubtful if it would ever become popular.

The American tea trade could advantageously take a suggestion from the brick tea of the far east. In our country, the tea dust, some of which is of good quality, is not properly utilized. In Europe it is a regular article of trade, and it is advertised and sold as tea dust. In America it is sold to thousands of cheap restaurants, who make from it the mixture of tannic acid, sugar and boiled milk which they sell as "tea." If, as in the Orient, this dust were compressed into bricks, good tea could be made from it, and the product would find a ready market through the multitude of uses for which it is adapted. A beginning in this direction has been made by the Pinehurst tea estate in South Carolina, and in Europe similar advances have been inaugurated.

The virgin tea (blepjeki-chi), so called from its use at Chinese weddings, is the sun-dried leaf intact, tied up with three strands of colored silk. After infusion, these fagotlike little bundles are pickled in vinegar and used as salad. This tea is sold in especially handsome silk-covered and glass-topped boxes. The rarest of all teas, and one that has never been known to reach this country, is a naturally sweet tea, produced in western China on a very limited scale. Its culture is centuries old, and the secret has been jealously guarded from generation to generation. The saccharinity is probably due to grafting and years of patient study and care, such as only the small Chinese tea farmer is capable of bestowing.—Scientific American.

New Red Clover Is Found.

The Bureau of Plant Industry has been experimenting with a new form of red clover which came from the black soil region of Russia. The plant is practically hairless and therefore does not hold dust like the common red clover.

For this reason it is believed that it will make a better forage plant for horses, since it will be much less likely to cause heaves and will be cleaner and more convenient to handle. Bloating in cattle is perhaps due in part to the presence of hairs on common clover. If this be true the trouble would be obviated by feeding them the new hairless Orel clover.

Another objection to the common red clover is that it matures much earlier than timothy, with which it is usually sown. It is thus impossible to harvest the mixture at a time when the full value of both the clover and timothy can be obtained.

The new Orel clover matures two weeks later than the common red kind, or at the same time with the timothy, and at a season when the farmer's attention is not so imperatively demanded for his corn, and also at a time when in most of the clover belt the weather is more favorable for harvesting the crop without injury by rain.

Effect of Heavy Gun Fire.

The firing of a big gun causes hemorrhages in the ears of eight out of ninety-six soldiers.

Freckles may be hereditary. Cases of freckles all over the body are mentioned. Food is not supposed to cause them. Sun and wind make some faces freckle.



Cultivation of Corn.

Corn makes a rank growth both above and below ground, and for that reason requires treatment somewhat different from what is given to wheat or oats. Planting in rows is necessary not only to permit full development of the stalks, but also to give plenty of feeding room to the roots. Corn roots, if they have a chance, will occupy every inch to the depth of from three to five feet, and the yield of the corn will depend on the completeness of this occupation.

The feeding ground, or, in other words, the corn root pasture, depends mainly on the preparation and cultivation of the soil. It may be limited in many ways, so that the farmer, instead of using from three to five feet of his field as soil, will use only a small portion of it. If the land is not properly drained, either naturally or artificially, the corn roots cannot penetrate into the regions saturated with water, for the water shuts out the air. If hard pan comes near the surface the corn roots cannot reach into that, and he may be cultivating but six, eight or ten inches of the field as soil. If the land be heavy and ploughed wet, full of lumps on the surface or resting on the plough pan or bottom of the furrow, the corn roots cannot utilize these, and hence his soil is limited. If he has ploughed under, in a dry time, coarse manure, so as to shut off the supply of water from below, the corn roots are again limited. It is, therefore, about as necessary for the farmer to understand the anatomy of the system, where the bones lie, and where the arteries, veins, nerves and muscles are hidden under the skin.

The corn plant, it will be seen, has no top-root. The first roots start out from the seed grain and go down.

Thunder and Milk.

To many persons the curdling of milk in a thunderstorm is a mysterious and unintelligible phenomenon. Yet, according to scientists, the whole process is simple and natural. Their claim is that milk, like most other substances, contains millions of bacteria. The milk bacteria that in a day or two, under natural conditions, would cause the fluid to sour are peculiarly susceptible to electricity. Electricity inspires and invigorates them, as alcohol, cocaine or strong tea affects men. Under the current's influence they fail to work with amazing energy, and instead of taking a couple of days to sour the milk they accomplish the task completely in a half hour. With an electric battery it is easy on the same principle to sour the freshest milk.

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Improved Shovel Handle.

In a scoop-handle for shovels, spades and similar articles recently patented, an Illinois inventor claims that he has designed a device for tools of this kind by which the weight of the load can be more effectively balanced and the forward hand of the operator shifted in a more convenient manner to facilitate the operation of the tool in scooping and lifting. The operator is also relieved of the necessity of stooping so low as he does in shovels of the ordinary construction. He introduces a supplemental handle, which is secured to the handle of the shovel, the opposite end extending forward of the rear end of the blade, being supported from the latter by braces. The supplemental handle is engaged by the forward hand of the operator, the latter being thus greatly relieved of weight. It avoids the twisting strain of the body caused by lifting a heavy load when the forward hand is placed low down upon the usual handle. The hand of the operator can be readily slid back and forth in the various manipulations of the scoop, rendering it more convenient and efficient in use, adapting it to be used with decreased power and strain.

The Codling Moth.

About one-fifth of the first laying of eggs by the codling moth is on the fruit, the rest being on the leaves and branches. The young larva that hatches from the egg is able to feed on the foliage to some extent and may come into maturity without entering the fruit, although it rarely does so. About 80 per cent of the first brood finds its way into the apples at the calyx, while the rest eat in at other points, principally at the stem. Only about 28 per cent of the second brood enters at the calyx, the others eating in where the apples touch each other, or a leaf at the stem end. The average life of the adult insect, or moth, is about four days.

Farm Help Less Expensive.

Farm labor is cheaper than it was at this time last year and is pretty sure to continue so for the season. There has been some curtailment in manufacturing throughout the country, the result being that a great many men are out of work. With this condition farmers find that they can get help more readily now than they have been able to for several years.

It is ascertained that where contracts have been made in the Middle West and Southwest for farm hands the rate of wages averages about \$5 per month lower than that prevailing a year ago.

A common rate of pay for farm hands at this time is \$25 per month, as against \$30 last season. Competent men with experience in special departments of farming will command more, but not as much as in 1906 and 1907. Good live stock hands receive \$35 to \$45, but above this there are few men hired even for fancy farming or the specialties who are receiving more.

Youths and inexperienced immigrants are offering their services for from \$15 to \$20 per month.

Concrete Outdoor Cellar.

A simple method of constructing a cool, outdoor cellar in localities where the common house cellars are too warm for use during the summertime, is shown in the accompanying sketch. It is a cellar made under the pump, so that the water pumped by the windmill has a very cooling effect. In places where it is difficult to obtain ice, it will prove indispensable to the dairyman who keeps a few cows. Another important item is the fact that a man does not find it necessary to pull up all of the pipes every time that he finds it necessary to repair the pipes and pump. It is constructed of concrete. The top is re-enforced with one-half-inch steel rods placed one foot apart each way and the concrete is about six inches thick. The sides are made by a form and the stairs are also made of concrete and are re-enforced by small steel rods. The cost

including the labor, amounted to about \$50. In the west and southwest it will also answer the purpose of a storm cove, which is considered a fixture on all farms.—Farm and House.

A New Swindle on Farmers.

An entirely new but highly successful scheme to separate farmers from their money has been worked in South Dakota during the past few months.

An oily grafter calls on a farmer and makes a bid for his land. The figures are absurdly low at first, but by degrees are raised as high as \$60 an acre, and the farmer consents.

Then the visitor explains that he is only an agent, but that he can sell the land at the price named if the owner will agree to pay for advertising at the rate of 50 cents an acre.

The "agent" promises orally that the advertising money will not be payable until the land is sold, but this stipulation is not contained in the contract that the farmer signs.

In a few days he receives a copy of an ad and not overcourteous demand for money.

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