

DOOMED.

By WILLARD MacKENZIE

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

In the midst of the conversation, Parsons suddenly interrupted her, and pointing to a box opposite, said, in a low voice, "Do you see Miss Grierson?"

She broke off in the middle of a sentence, her face flushed, and, with an instinctive movement, she drew back behind the curtains. Arthur cast his eyes in the direction indicated, and saw Constance leaning forward looking towards the stage; beside her was seated her uncle, surveying the scene through a lorgnette. Arthur also drew further back, to escape their observation.

"Do you know Miss Grierson?" he said, addressing himself indifferently to either. "I have heard of her. Who does not hear of an heiress?" replied Mrs. Castleton, instantly recovering from her momentary discomposure. "Of course you know her."

"Yes; oh, yes," answered Arthur, confusedly.

"This, then, is the heiress," thought Mrs. Castleton. "Wylie did not tell me this. How strange! I wonder if they care for each other?"

After this she became a little thoughtful, the conversation flagged, and Arthur thought it time to take his leave.

"Perhaps Mr. Penrhuddyn would honor me with his company at my little dinner on Thursday," she said, turning upon him her sweetest smile.

Arthur hesitated; but Parsons immediately replied for him. "Oh, yes, Penrhuddyn, I am sure, will come, if he has no prior engagement."

Arthur confessed that he had none, and so it was settled that he should dine with Mrs. Castleton on Thursday—it was then Monday. She gave him her hand at parting—the slightest pressure of her fingers, and a look that went thrilling to his heart.

Arthur had desisted Jerome and one or two of his student friends just enter the pit. A strange feeling of excitement possessed him—a feeling that rendered him averse to be left alone with his own thoughts, so upon leaving Mrs. Castleton, he joined them. After a time he cast his eyes up toward her box; she was gone. Constance and her uncle were still in their places; but standing near the entrance, on the same side, and with his back turned towards them, they could scarcely recognize him, unless their gaze was turned pointedly in his direction. "They will think it very strange behavior on my part, if they have seen me, not to have paid my respects to them, but I cannot to-night," he thought.

At length the curtain fell upon the first piece. He saw Constance and her uncle rise, as though they were about to retire. Jerome at the same time proposed that they should leave the theater; he went a little in advance of his companions: there was a large stream of people, and he soon became separated from them. When they emerged out into the street, they saw him standing under the portico, talking to a policeman, in a strange and somewhat excited manner.

"What is the matter, Jerome?" inquired Arthur.

"I have seen her!" he cried, excitedly. "Circe! She stepped into a carriage a moment ago, with an old man beside her."

"Pshaw! you have been deceived by some fancied resemblance," cried Leland.

"Do you take me for a fool?" answered Jerome, angrily. "I should know her among a thousand by the peculiar fashion in which she wears her golden hair. I only caught sight of her as she stepped into the brougham, and there was such a crush of people that the carriage had driven away before I could reach the spot; and this man," pointing to the policeman, "either cannot or will not tell me to whom the carriage belonged."

"I can tell you, sir," said a man who had come up to listen—one of the numerous loiterers who hang about theater doors; "I called the carriage—it was Mr. Grierson's."

CHAPTER XI.

Visitors were rare at the Castle of late years, for Sir Launce lived a life of almost total seclusion, and the sound of carriage wheels brought Daniel to the door with a somewhat quicker movement than was usual to him. The gentleman alighted, and dismissed the driver of the chaise; and, giving Daniel his card, requested him to convey it immediately to Sir Launce. On the card was printed, "Mr. James Wylie."

Mr. Wylie had left Paddington by an early train that morning, and, upon arriving at the station nearest to Penrhuddyn, had hired a chaise and driven over to the Castle. He had two motives in making this journey. In the first place, he had a certain game to play with Sir Launce. And, in the second place, he was desirous of seeing Penrhuddyn, of reconnoitering the country, upon the chance of falling upon information that might assist his schemes.

The first of these games was the most difficult, and the most important of all to play for; upon that greatly depended the success of the second, and the perfect gratification of the last. The first object to be attained was to so far gain upon Sir Launce's good will as to become an inmate of the Castle for a day or two. In this latter respect, Mr. Wylie overrated his difficulties; the duties of hospitality were punctually discharged beneath that roof, and it was not at all necessary to the reception of a visitor that its owner should care for his so-

ciety. No person entered Penrhuddyn, in the character of guest, without bed and board being offered him.

But an additional advantage to be derived from his visit had been revealed to Mr. Wylie since his arrival in the country. While waiting at the inn for the carriage to be got ready, he employed the time in questioning the landlord about the present inhabitants of the Castle and learned from him that a young artist gentleman had arrived there the day before. Mr. Wylie asked eagerly if he knew the visitor's name.

"It was John Tregarth, the hostler, that told me," answered the landlord. "I think he said it was some such name as Stafford."

Here was a splendid discovery for our schemer—the very man he most desired to meet with. No opportunity could be more propitious for putting his designs into execution.

Daniel carried the card up to Mr. Penrhuddyn, who was, as usual, in his library among his books. The name of Wylie was totally unknown to him.

Mr. Wylie, with a low bow, softly entered the room. Sir Launce rose cautiously, and bade his visitor be seated, wondering, meanwhile, what business this repulsive looking stranger could have with him.

"I have to apologize, Sir Launce, for intruding upon your privacy at what is, perhaps, an unreasonable hour," began Wylie, "and I should at least have waited until the morning before I presented myself, had not the time at my disposal been so extremely limited. I started from London this morning. Not to keep you in suspense, I am a relative of Miss Grierson's—one of the executors of her mother's will—with which lady I have recently and accidentally heard that your son, Mr. Arthur Penrhuddyn, is about to form an engagement."

"Such a thing has been spoken of," replied Sir Launce, coldly; "but nothing has been definitely arranged."

"Precisely, Sir Launce," replied Wylie; "nothing could be arranged without my concurrence."

"Am I to understand that you are opposed to such an alliance?" inquired Sir Launce, freezingly.

"Oh, no, Sir Launce," hastily replied Mr. Wylie; "there is nothing that would give me greater pleasure than the honor of such an alliance. I am related to Miss Grierson on the mother's side. We ourselves come of an ancient and honorable stock, although a foreign one—the De Soissons of France."

Sir Launce started, and a strange look came into his face at the mention of that name. Neither the start nor the look was lost upon his visitor.

"You have, doubtless, heard the name?" he said, quickly.

"I have heard the name," replied Sir Launce, with something of discomposure.

"I must discover why this iron-looking man betrayed such emotion at the mention of that name. It must be a powerful reason to relax his features," mentally observed Mr. Wylie. "You will, therefore, perceive," he continued, aloud, "that on one side Miss Grierson is of a family not inferior to your own. But the name and the blood is all we have left to boast of now. The Revolution reduced the De Soissons to beggary and exile. Poverty induced my cousin Arabella, Constance's mother, to accept the hand of a rich man of low origin, a match which, through the remainder of her life, she never ceased to deplore. But I perceive that you are still at a loss to comprehend the precise motive of my visit. I will explain myself, without further delay. You have been, I understand, already waited upon by Mr. Robert Grierson. Now, I must inform you that although, as I have said before, I am joint executor and guardian, I have never once been consulted upon the subject, nor even directly informed of the proposed event. Under such circumstances, I considered it my imperative duty to wait upon you, in order that I might understand the precise situation of affairs."

"The matter is left entirely to the choice of my son," remarked Sir Launce.

"He writes me that the young lady is in every way fitted by beauty, manners and education to become the future mistress of Penrhuddyn; but no formal proposal has yet been made by him. As I before said, if you or any of the rest of the family see the least objection to such a proposal, I will at once telegraph to my son that all is broken off."

"But Miss Grierson holds the mortgage deeds of the estate?" cried Wylie, who could not forbear putting this extreme test to his host's sincerity.

"Mr. Wylie," answered Sir Launce, rising from his seat and drawing himself up haughtily to his full height, "that would not make the shadow of a difference in my views. If I cannot preserve the lands of my ancestors with honor, let them go. I make no humiliating bargains."

The stolid pride of the man kindled a spark of admiration even in the cynical heart of Mr. Wylie. Although the main object of his journey was to break off the match, yet now that he perceived how easily it was to be accomplished, he preferred a little delay. It did not suit his purpose to at once quit Penrhuddyn; and were he to take the owner at his word, he could have no possible motive to prolong his stay.

"But," continued Sir Launce, "suppose we defer any further discussion until the

morning. You must be weary with your journey, and I expect a letter from my son by the first mail to-morrow, which may materially affect the position of the case. Moreover, I desire, after what I have heard, some little time for reflection. If you will accept the hospitality of Penrhuddyn during your stay, I shall be most happy to afford it to you."

Mr. Wylie expressed his thanks for the offer; and Sir Launce, summoning Daniel, told him to conduct the guest to certain apartments, and to see that he was properly cared for. Then by a distant bow, and a wave of the hand, he indicated that the interview was over.

"Perhaps, before another six months, I shall be seated in that chair, Sir Launce," muttered Wylie, inaudibly, as he followed the old servant; "then it will be my turn to condescend and to smile. But I wonder where Stafford is. I suppose he has not left. By the bye," he said aloud, turning to his conductor, "have you not a gentleman, an artist from London, staying here?"

"There be such a one staying here," answered Daniel, shortly. "He was in the picture gallery a few minutes back."

"Have the kindness to show me the way to the picture gallery?"

With a grunt of dissatisfaction—for the servant was no more agreeably impressed with Mr. Wylie than was the master—Daniel led him through the long corridors that conducted to the gallery.

Stafford was rapidly sketching the portrait of Eleonore de Soissons; a water color drawing of the head of Circe lay beside him.

"Mr. Stafford," said Wylie, approaching him, with his softest smile, "I am delighted to renew your acquaintance; you will doubtless remember meeting me at Harley street."

Stafford did remember him, perfectly well; but like everybody else who came in contact with the gentleman, it was not a cherished memory.

"He has come down here to settle the preliminaries for Constance's marriage," was his first thought; "perhaps, even now, I shall arrive in London too late."

This thought did not conduce to a cordial acceptance of Mr. Wylie's advances; but before he could make any answer to his greeting, an exclamation of astonishment suspended the words, and carried his thoughts into another channel.

The exclamation came from Mr. Wylie, who was gazing upon the picture of Circe with such an expression of unaffected amazement as had never before been beheld upon that crafty and usually emotionless face.

"How could that picture have come here?" he involuntarily ejaculated.

"Do you know anything of it?" eagerly inquired Stafford.

"Do you not recognize the wonderful likeness to Constance Grierson?" cried Wylie.

A chill struck to the young man's heart at this confirmation of his own thought. Wylie could not for a time remove his eyes from the picture, and while he gazed, busy thoughts were teeming in his brain, new schemes, new combinations, new advantages to be gained by this discovery. From Circe's eyes wandered to that other strange face beside it. That, also, seemed to excite his curious attention.

"Whose portrait is that?" he asked, turning to Daniel.

"One that's got no business to hang there!" growled the old man; "but willful people will have their own way, and go on a tempting of Providence, until it's too late. And that be your learned people, too, who fancy they know everything. Thank heaven, I ain't learned! Yes, Madame de Soissons, after nigh upon two hundred years, you've got among the family at last. And who on earth shall help it now? For the old Penrhuddyns will pass away, as surely as this day's passing now."

Tears dropped from the old man's eyes as he spoke those words; they were the outpouring of thoughts which haunted him night and day.

"What name was that you said?" cried Mr. Wylie, eagerly. "Did you say De Soissons? You called that portrait Eleonore de Soissons. What do you know of it?"

"What I know of it I shall keep to myself. I don't tell family secrets to strangers. If you want any information, you'd better ask Sir Launce," replied Daniel, surlily, for he was vexed with himself for having said so much.

"Look here. Tell me the story of that picture, and I will give you a sovereign," said Mr. Wylie, taking out his purse.

Daniel stood looking at him for a moment, and at the sovereign held temptingly between his finger and thumb, with an air of supreme disdain. "And you call yourself a gentleman, I suppose?" he said, at last. "A pretty sort of gentleman that would tempt a servant to tell his master's secrets! You've made a mistake this time, sir; we don't do them things at Penrhuddyn."

A servant refuse a bribe! In all his London experience Mr. Wylie had never encountered such an extraordinary phenomenon! With a shrug of the shoulders, and a malicious grin, he put back the sovereign into his purse without a reply.

"Mr. Stafford," he said, turning to the painter, who had been watching the scene, "when you have completed that sketch, would you favor me with a few minutes' private conversation? I have something of importance to say to you. I have not, as yet, the slightest idea as to where my rooms are situated; but when you are at leisure, this honest man will, doubtless, be able to conduct you to me. Remember; do not fail, or you may regret it."

Without waiting for a reply, Mr. Wylie passed through a door at the further end of the gallery, Daniel leading the way.

(To be continued.)

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Law of American Desert.

"One of the oldest humane laws in this country," said E. J. Sanford, "is in force in Nevada. In that section of the American desert which lies in Nevada travelers in distress may flag the limited passenger trains and compel the train crews to give them water to drink. The law makes it a felony to refuse to comply with the traveler's request."

Mr. Sanford said numerous instances were known in the earlier days when travelers took advantage of the protection this law afforded, but in recent years few persons attempted to cross the desert except by train.—Kansas City Times.

Tokio is a hundred years older than St. Petersburg.

Nearly one-fifth of the students at Swiss universities are women.

"THE MARRYING SQUIRE."

Justice Geo. E. Law, of Brazil, Ind., Has Married 1,400 Couples.

Justice Geo. E. Law, of Brazil, Ind., has fairly earned the title "The Marrying Squire," by which he is known far and wide, having already married some 1,400 couples. Ten years ago he was deputy county treasurer.

"At that time," said Justice Law, "I was suffering from an annoying kidney trouble. My back ached, my rest was broken at night, and the passages of the kidney secretions were too frequent and contained sediment. Three boxes of Doan's Kidney Pills cured me in 1897, and for the past nine years I have been free from kidney complaint and backache."

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"Good-By, Baby!"

The German Empress has been heard to say that the happiest periods of her life were the few weeks following the birth of each of her children, when she was able to retire from public duty and enjoy her new treasure.

It happened when the youngest son of the German royal family was an infant that one of the ladies of the household, upon going into the nursery hastily, discovered the empress kneeling beside her baby's cradle.

Her majesty rose hurriedly, and came forward with her eyes full of tears.

"No," she said, smiling unsteadily into the anxious face of the lady in waiting, "nothing is the matter. I was only saying good-by, baby. You know I have to give him up to-morrow, and it is the last night."

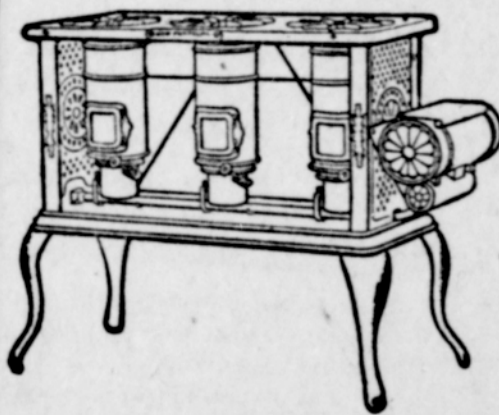
Marriage a Real Lottery Here.

Every year in the Ruman country, in India, a marriage lottery is held, generally in October. The names of all the marriageable girls and of the young men who are tired of bachelor life are written on slips of paper and thrown into separate earth pots. One of each kind is drawn at one time by a local wise man. The youth whose name is drawn out obtains a letter of introduction to the young woman whose name accompanies his, and then all that remains for him to do is to start courtship, with all the ardor of which he is capable. Such fortuitous courtships might not appear at first sight to promise very well for future conjugal happiness; but, nevertheless, in the majority of cases, everything turns out very satisfactory.

A man who used glue to thicken the gravy in the meat pies he sold at Oldham, England, is now serving a three months' sentence in the jail there.

France produces more than twice as many potatoes as the United States. The average price a bushel is 25½ cents.

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