

blow for his wrongs of the past might even lead her to consider such a thing as personal harm to those innocents.

The mere thought sent a cold chill straight to his heart, as though a hand of ice had been pressed upon it—ye gods, sooner than have such a terrible thing occur he would sacrifice anything, yea, even the grim resolution that had buoyed up his soul these years.

Thus her charming children might yet be the bulwark destined to stand between the captain's wife and the fulfilment of Jack Overton's vow.

There have been cases before now where the interference of an outside party has united the warring factions of a family or clan.

Besides, another element worked towards the same end, and this the influence of Mazette was having upon the heart of the marquis.

Should he ever have occasion to realize that he sincerely and truly loved the little miniature painter his lofty ambition looking toward satisfaction for his merciless treatment of the past must fall in ruins about his ears.

Some days had passed since his adventure with the men who sought to strip him of his valuables upon the streets of London.

The marquis had been a busy man. He had secured a capable body-guard whose presence might pass unnoticed.

Besides, the McGregor had been taken in hand and given a position that called for sterling honesty and a big salary, attended with little work, it being the donor's evident intention to attach the canny Scot to his personal fortunes in such a way that he would be on hand in case his assistance was needed.

And, indeed, the McGregor had already proved himself to be such a tower of strength that any man might place reliance upon him in time of need without feeling his confidence was misplaced.

Then came the day when the marquis found he could no longer blind one pair of eyes at least.

Mazette had remembered. Step by step she sounded the recesses of her mind to discover why so many things about this new-found friend and patron seemed so familiar.

It was a miracle why she had not guessed the truth before, and yet sometimes we are apt to overleap the mark in our eagerness to reach a certain goal—so with Mazette, who had not dreamed of such a marvellous thing until suddenly the astounding truth broke upon her, as the avalanche of the Alps descends upon the unwary Swiss traveller.

The marquis was taken by surprise when, upon entering the little studio, he found Mazette in tears.

"Come, what has gone wrong?" he exclaimed in dire dismay, for, like all men, he felt his utter impotence under such conditions.

She came toward him, smiling through her tears—there was upon her face reproach, delight, and keen artistic disappointment.

"Why did you not tell me before?" she asked, as he took her hand in his.

"Tell you—indeed, if I only knew what you meant I would only be too glad—that is, I—then you have discovered all?" for it dawned upon him that she was no longer blind.

"Oh, Jack, how dreadfully cruel of you," as she dropped her head in order that he should not see the tears of mortification.

"To conceal my identity all this time—yes, in one sense it was, but I had an object in it all, I assure you," he declared sturdily.

She looked up troubled.

"What does it all mean—I hope, I pray you are doing what is right—that is—" and there she stopped confused.

Upon which he laughed almost boisterously and possessed himself of her other hand—they were such good friends, such old friends, there could be no harm in this natural and innocent action.

"Have no fears, little woman—my patent of nobility was issued in the regular way at Madrid, for the usual round sum—I am the genuine article, the Marquis of Montezuma. As to my wealth, you have heard that I possess amazing gold mines in the New World, I assure you, my money has all been honestly acquired and also taken from mother earth, a present from the old Montezumas of Aztec time."

"But—are you really as rich as they say, Jack—it is hard for me to believe it?"

"No wonder," he laughed again, "remembering as you do what my chronic condition used to be in those old days in Paris. But, nevertheless, it is perfectly true, Mazette—I have money to burn. I doubt whether the wildest guess has hit a mark beyond my limit."

"I am glad for your sake, Jack, and yet—it is a terrible humiliation to me."

"In what way—you astonish me." "Consider," she went on bravely, having succeeded in freeing her hands, "what I have been foolish enough to believe while accepting your pay for these things—stop, let me finish, sir, before you apologise—you gave me to understand it was the quality of my artistic work that necessitated your paying such extravagant prices, and now it is cruel to learn that all this time while I indulged in air castles connected with my future I have in reality been a mere object of charity."

"Charity," he exclaimed, "that is a cold word, and can never cover any dealings between yourself and the Marquis of Montezuma, little woman. Why, I owe you and your good old aunt more than I dare ever hope to repay. Who was it stirred my better nature on countless occasions—whose modest home always opened to receive me so warmly—why, the memory of you alone has saved me from despair when tempted to believe the whole world a sham and every woman in it false to her heart. Don't talk to me of charity—there is nothing I own in this world but what I would gladly devote to your benefit. Why, I haven't even begun to pay up the appalling debt I owe you."

The warmth of his words made her flush at first and then grow pale.

"Jack, tell me the truth—was it you who wrote this?" and she held up a

piece of paper with a ragged edge, upon which had been scribbled: "Accept this from a friend—hope for brighter things in the future—trust in God."

His manner betrayed him. "Yes, you confess it. Oh! Jack, can you—will God ever forgive me for having sunk so low as to attempt to end our misery with our existence?" she moaned.

"Don't mention it to me again—that is your secret—God has forgiven, and not a living soul shall ever know from me. I shall never cease to thank God that He led me to my old little studio that day to renew my vow and look upon the scene where my ambitions died. Now let us turn to brighter things. You fear I do not appreciate your work—why, they are marvels of delicacy and exquisite natural that one fancy he looks upon the originals."

Then, as their eyes met, both laughed.

"I am forced to confess that your family is the most remarkable one I ever saw," she said.

"And the most amiable looking, don't you think so? Well, it cost me considerable labour to collect such a prize lot of homely people. You see, I didn't wish to appear vain in the selection of close relations. Tell me you forgive the little deception, Mazette, knowing as you do the spirit that animated the deed, and make up your mind that if I choose to pay any amount for a miniature you shall not demur. Men like the Marquis of Montezuma are expected to be unique, and my hobby you know is miniatures. No one must dare to run contrary to their wish—that is the privilege of a Croesus."

"Well, I beg of you, if I must obey orders, to make a change and select something on a different order."

"Ah! you are tired of reproducing such homely old rogues; nor can I blame you. Who cares to see an ugly face on ivory? I have one in mind that I wish done, but you must promise the very best work on it possible, as I am determined to pay five hundred pounds for it, and should you refuse, some one else will get the job. Give me your solemn pledge."

"It seems—extortion."

"Your pledge."

"And you say if I decline—"

"Some one must accept."

"Under such conditions it would of course be folly to disappoint you, Jack."

"Then you accept?"

"Well—yea."

"Positively?"

"I shall do it. Bring me the picture. I am sure it must be some lovely lady. Surely it cannot be—Fe-dora?"

She had uttered the name almost without thinking.

He laughed bitterly.

"Hardly. You remember that I utterly destroyed my masterpiece of her, nor do I ever wish to possess anything to remind me of that accursed episode in my past life. Rather would I live for the future, which heaven may perhaps soften a little for one who has suffered so much. You ask for the picture I desire reproduced—there it is."

He snatched a photograph from a little stand on the mantel and tossed it before her.

Mazette flushed scarlet again, for it was her own portrait he had selected. "Oh!" she exclaimed.

"Not one word in protest, I hold you to your solemn pledge. It is my desire, and as I said a moment ago, the will of an American nabob must

Turning Gray?

Gray Hair is Starved Hair
Ayer's Hair Vigor
Feeds the Roots of the Hair.



Old at Thirty-five

Nothing tells of age so quickly as gray hair. Do you derive genuine comfort from looking old before your time?

If not, then get rid of this telltale sign of age. Bring back to your hair all the richness and color it had when you were in your early teens. Ayer's Hair Vigor will certainly do this for you.

Thin, Short Hair

If your hair is thin, too short, or splits at the ends, it is being starved. Then why not feed it? Why not give it something from which long, rich, thick, dark hair may be made? Why not give it the great hair-food, Ayer's Hair Vigor? You will be perfectly satisfied with it, we are sure.

Ayer's Hair Vigor

Always Restores Color

You don't have to wait long. In a couple of weeks the old color begins to return, and soon you have again all the rich, dark color of early life. Look in the mirror today and take a glance at your gray hair. Then use Ayer's Hair Vigor for a couple of weeks and look again. You will look ten years younger.

All Druggists and Perfumers.