

FICTION OUTCLASSED.

THE ROMANCE OF THE LATE EDMUND SCHERMERHORN.

EDMUND H. SCHERMERHORN, who has just died at Newport, Rhode Island, was a descendant of one of the oldest, richest, and most highly esteemed families in New York, and was worth \$5,000,000. His father was old Peter Schermerhorn, ship-chandler and ship-owner, who for half a century or so carried on a great money-making establishment in South-street.

When he died he left a vast fortune. Just how many millions there were is forgotten, but it was enough to make independently rich every member of his not very numerous family. Edmund's portion amounted to something like £1,000,000, and the inheritance more than doubled because it consisted largely of city real estate. Edmund was not much of a business man, nothing of a speculator, and certainly nothing of a spendthrift.

His youth was without event of note until he fell in love. But the girl whom he loved couldn't or wouldn't love him, and she cast him and his millions aside. Eventually she became Mrs. Maturin Livingston. It must have been that the young millionaire was more sensitive than New York millionaires are, for instead of seeking a young woman who would consent to share his riches, he divorced himself from society and became a crusty, irritable bachelor. No persuasion could tempt him to mingle in feminine society. No face, no matter how lovely, could lure him from home. He grew to be a recluse, shutting himself in his library and devoting almost his entire attention to literature and music.

His home was in a magnificent mansion of the Romanesque style of architecture, occupying two large city lots at 47, West Twenty-third Street, adjoining the residence of his brother William. The two houses are the only remnants of the private residences which once lined Twenty-third Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues. That which was occupied by Edmund Schermerhorn is a mansion of brick and brownstone, five stories high, with porticos and colonnades, and spacious rooms and corridors with vaulted ceilings, lofty walls, tasselled floors, and massive friezes and dados. The woodwork is of solid rosewood and elaborately carved mahogany. It is one of the grandest and richest of the old-fashioned homes of New York.

In this house Edmund Schermerhorn gave some most entertaining private musicales. He had no fondness for women and men of society, but for women and men of song he hungered. Jenny Lind sang there for him, and after Lind came Nilsson, and then Scalchi and Patri and Campanini's voices thrilled through the halls of the grim-fronted home of the eccentric plutocrat. And too, he had come there for him all the great players upon violin and piano who were of or visited that country. His one delight was music, and it seemed as if that alone was what he lived for. His passion brought him before the public a little, and after a while he was made president of the Philharmonic Society.

But there came a time when the millionaire bachelor forsook his artist friends and retired more closely into the shell of his eccentricity. A railroad company obtained a franchise to lay a line of street-car tracks through Twenty-third Street. Mr Schermerhorn fought them as vigorously as he could, but when the street cars, with their clanging bells, began to race by his door he closed up the great house, left it in charge of his housekeeper and went to Newport. That was ten years ago. He lived there ever after. His house was on Narragansett Avenue, and in it he became each year more of a hermit. The grounds are surrounded with a tall stone wall, and the great iron gates are always kept heavily padlocked.

Very few persons ever visited them. Sometimes he would be alone with his servants for weeks without even a relative calling to see him. He seldom appeared in the town and never attended any social parties. His physician, when he called, was obliged to get in through the back gate, and even that entrance was guarded by a savage watch-dog.

And thus lived in solitude the millionaire, whom an unloving woman and rattling street-cars drove from the community of life. More than three score years had placed their weight on him before he left his Twenty-third-street home and ordered its shutters closed—as you have seen them, that forbidding facade near the gay, bill-boarded front of the Eden Musee—and so it is not strange that sickness came to him a few years after he shut himself up in Newport. He became afflicted with kidney trouble and grew weak. Last winter he was prostrated for several weeks with the grip, and about a month ago he caught cold and had to take to his room. He suffered alone in his bed, unless the attendance of a servant can be considered company. But did Edmund Schermerhorn care? Perhaps he did. Perhaps there came to him more vividly than before visions of the fair face of that girl whom in his rich youth he had loved, or he dreamt of the castles he had built upon her love for him. And then, perhaps, he heard again the crash of that dream castle of unreturned love, and with the echoes of its ruin fall there mingled the clatter of the hated Twenty-third-street cars. And he lingered, no one there, at least none of kin, to comfort or care, and lingering he died.

Although Mr Schermerhorn was 74 years old, and although he had been quite dangerously ill for some weeks, his death was a surprise to his relatives. Whether his physician thought it best not to inform them is not known. The doctor, however, was there and so were some of the servants.

A neat bit of proverbial philosophy, said to be of Japanese origin, is: "Be like the tree which covers with flowers the hand that shakes it."

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HOW TO BE POPULAR.

To be popular one must be agreeable. When with others, therefore, always talk of the subject which you find most entertaining—yourself. Make your accomplishments, your hopes, your achievements, a constant theme. In order to preserve that amiability which renders you a desirable companion, consult your own convenience in everything. It is no matter who is inconvenienced, if you are only satisfied. Do not put yourself out to consider other people's feelings. You cannot be expected to know what pleases them or what does not. If you want to say anything say it, no matter whom it hits. If Miss Jones is inclined to be plump, tell her that you adore slender women. When Freddy Brown, who has an impediment in his speech is in your vicinity, relate that exquisitely funny story of the two stammerers who after a brief interview simultaneously exclaimed, 'S sir, you are m-m-mocking m me!' Jeats which depend upon a personal blemish or peculiarity for their point invariably produce an effect, and should always be told in general company. It is not your fault when the cap fits. Talk continually. Fill all the pauses. It is wickd to suffer valuable time to run to waste. Interrupt always when you think best. It teaches people to avoid prostrance. Why should they persist in talking of their stupid selves when you want to chat about the most interesting person in the world? If a man is telling an entertaining story, smile knowingly all through, and just as he has reached the *denouement*, exclaim: 'Oh, I heard that years ago!' It will prevent the narrator from feeling too important, and it is your duty to always cultivate a spirit of animality in—your neighbours. If anyone narrates anything particularly striking, tell a better story, if you happen to remember one. You cannot afford to be outdone. Always contradict an assertion and talk loudly in support of your own belief. No matter if you are proved to be wrong, such a discussion cannot fail to amuse and instruct all who hear it. Toss over the books on the shelves and tables and laugh at your host's favourite authors: the remark that you seldom read trash is particularly soothing to his feelings. Never talk gossip: but when any individual whom you do not quite like is mentioned—heave a sigh, and smile faintly. Sighs in such a case speak volumes! We would rather anybody should preach our degeneracy from the house-tops than to sigh over us. When people begin to sigh over you, you are pretty nearly undone! Follow faithfully these few simple suggestions, and if you fail of being popular, one of two things is certain—you were either born too early or too late, and the world is not in a condition to appreciate the charms of your mind and character. It is impossible that the blame should rest with you.

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