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the road, and thrust his head through the open window.

"Of course, Miss," he said roughly, "you don't know what has happened?"

"No," she said, too greatly surprised to resent his strange manner.

"Well," he growled, "somebody's been nearly killed on your account, that's all!"

"Somebody!" she repeated, and her lips went white.

"Yes, you ought to guess well enough who it is. He and that rotten Frenchman fought a duel this morning on the sands near Calais, and Marigny as good as murdered him."

Dale's heart was sore against her as the cause of his master's plight; but even in his own distress he was quick to see the shrinking terror in the girl's eyes.

"Are you speaking of Mr. Fitzroy?" she demanded. "Are you telling the truth? Oh, for Heaven's sake, man, tell me what you mean!"

"I mean what I say, Miss," said he more softly. "I have left him almost at death's door in a hotel at Calais. That blanked Frenchman—I beg your pardon, Miss, but I can't contain myself when I think of him—ran a sword through him this morning, and would have killed him outright if he hadn't been stopped by some other gentlemen. And now there he is, a lying in the hotel, with a doctor and a nurse trying to coax the life back into him, while I had to scurry back here to tell his people!"

"I mean what I say, Miss," said he more softly. "I have left him almost at death's door in a hotel at Calais. That blanked Frenchman—I beg your pardon, Miss, but I can't contain myself when I think of him—ran a sword through him this morning, and would have killed him outright if he hadn't been stopped by some other gentlemen. And now there he is, a lying in the hotel, with a doctor and a nurse trying to coax the life back into him, while I had to scurry back here to tell his people!"

"Oh, my dear, my dear, Cynthia do you know! It is you who know not. Kind Heaven, let him live! Grant that I may tell him all I know!"

She could not help it; the words welled forth of their own accord; but the nurse touched her arm gently.

"It is a little fever," she whispered with ready sympathy. "Soon it will pass. He will sleep, and, when he awakes it is perhaps permissible that you should speak to him."

"When is the next train to Calais?" she asked.

"At nine o'clock to-night, Miss."

"Oh, Heaven!" she wailed under her breath.

Dale's voice grew even more sympathetic. "Was you a thinking of going to him, Miss?" he asked.

"Would that I could fly there!" she moaned.

He scratched the back of his ear; for it was by such means that Dale sought inspiration. "Dash it all!" he cried. "I wish I had seen you half an hour earlier. There is a train that leaves Charing Cross at twenty minutes past two. It goes by way of Folkestone and Boulogne, and from Boulogne one can get easy to Calais. Anyhow, what's the use of talkin'? It is too late!"

Cynthia glanced at her watch. It was just twenty-five minutes to three.

"How far is Folkestone?" was the immediate demand generated by her practical American brain.

"Seventy-two miles," said the chauffeur, who knew his roads out of London.

"And what time does the boat leave?"

A light irradiated his face, and he swore volubly. "We can do it!" he shouted. "By the Lord, we can do it! Are you game?"

Game! The light that leaped to her eyes was sufficient answer. He tore open the door of the cab, roaring to the driver:

"Round that corner to the right—quick—then into the mews at the back!"

Within two minutes the Mercury was attracting the attention of the police as it whirled through the traffic toward Westminster Bridge. Dale's face was set like a block of granite. He had risked a good deal in leaving his master at the point of death at Calais; he was now risking more, far more, in rushing back to Calais again without having discharged the duty that had dragged him from that master's bedside. But he thought he had secured the best physician London could bring to the sufferer's aid, and the belief sustained him in an action that was almost heroic. He was a simple minded fellow, with marked taste for speed in both animals and machinery; but he had hit on one well defined trait in human nature when he decided that if a man was dying for the sake of a woman the presence of that woman might cure where all else will fail.

CHAPTER XVI.

End of One Tour: Beginning of Another

CYNTHIA found him lying in a darkened room. The nurse had just raised some of the blinds. A dismal day was drawing to its close, and more light was needed ere she could distinguish marked bottles, and doses, and the rest of the appurtenances of dangerous illness.

An English nurse would have forbidden the presence of a stranger; this French one acted with more discretion if less of strict science.

"Madam is his sister, perhaps?" she whispered.

"No."

"A relative, then?"

"No, a woman who loves him."

That heartbroken admission told the whole tale to the quick witted French-

woman. There had been a duel; one man was seriously injured; the other, she had heard, was also receiving medical attention in another hotel; and here was the woman who had caused the quarrel!

Well, such was the will of Providence! These things had been since man and woman were expelled from Paradise—for the nurse, though a devout Catholic, suspected that Genesis had suppressed certain details of the first fratricide—and would continue, she supposed, until the millenium.

She nodded cheerfully. "There is every reason to hope; but he must not be disturbed—not excited, that is," she added, seeing the wan agony in Cynthia's face.

The girl tiptoed to the side of the bed. Medenham's eyes were closed; but he was muttering something. She bent and kissed his forehead, and a strange smile broke through the tense lines of pain. Even in his semiconscious state he felt the touch of those exquisite lips.

"My Lady Alice!" he said.

She choked back a sob. He was dreaming of "Comus"—standing with her in the ruined banquetting hall of Ludlow Castle!

"Yes, your Lady Alice," she breathed.

A slight shiver shook him. "Don't tell Cynthia!" he said brokenly. "She must never know! Ah, if I hadn't slipped, I should have quieted his viperish tongue! But Cynthia must not know!"

"Oh, my dear, my dear, Cynthia do you know! It is you who know not. Kind Heaven, let him live! Grant that I may tell him all I know!"

She could not help it; the words welled forth of their own accord; but the nurse touched her arm gently.

"It is a little fever," she whispered with ready sympathy. "Soon it will pass. He will sleep, and, when he awakes it is perhaps permissible that you should speak to him."

WELL, it was permissible. The age of miracles had not passed for those two. Even the experienced doctor marveled at the strength of a man who at four o'clock in the morning could have a sword driven through the tissues in perilous proximity to the right lung, and yet, at nine o'clock on that same night, was able to announce an unalterable resolution to get up and dress for breakfast next day. That, of course, was a pleasing fiction intended for Cynthia's benefit.

It served its purpose admirably. The kind nurse displayed unexpected firmness in leading her to her own room, to eat and sleep.

For Cynthia had an ordeal to face. Many things had been said in the car during that mad rush to Folkestone, and on board the steamer that ferried Dale and herself to Boulogne she had wrung from the taciturn chauffeur a full, true, and particular account of Medenham, his family, and his doing throughout as much of his life as Dale either knew or guessed. By the time they reached Boulogne she had made up her mind with characteristic decision. One long telegram to her father, another to Lord Fairholme, caused heart burning and dismay not alone in certain apartments of the Savoy Hotel, but in the aristocratic aloofness of Cavendish Square and Curzon-st. As a result, two elderly men, a younger one in the person of the Marquis of Scarland, and two tearful women, Lady St. Maur and Mrs. Leland, met at Charing Cross about one o'clock in the morning, to travel by special train and steamer. Another woman telegraphed from Shropshire saying that Baby was better and she would follow by the first steamer on Sunday. Mrs. Devar did not await developments. She fled, dinnerless, to some burrow in Bayswater.

These alarms and excursions were accompanied by the ringing of telephones and the flight of carriages back and forth through muddy London, and Cynthia was called on to deal with a whole sheaf of telegrams which demanded replies either to Dover or to Scarland Towers in Shropshire.

With a man like Vanrenen at one end, however, and a woman like his daughter at the other, it might be fairly assumed that even the most complex skein of circumstances would be resolved from its tangle. As a matter of curious coincidence, the vessel that carried Marigny to England passed in the Channel its sister ship conveying the grief-stricken party of relatives to France. It happened too that the clouds from the Atlantic elected to hover over Britain rather than France, and when Cynthia stood on the quay to meet the incoming steamer a burst of sunshine from the east gave promise of a fine if somewhat blustery day.

Five pairs of eyes sought her face anxiously while the vessel was warping to the quay opposite the Gare Maritime. They looked there for tidings, and were not disappointed.

"That's all right," said Vanrenen without winking huskiness in his voice. "Cynthia wouldn't smile if she hadn't good news."

"Thank God for that!" muttered the