

Cynthia's Chauffeur

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wilds. If desirable, we can always return to town by train. By the way, chauffeur, what is your name?"

For an instant Medenham hesitated. Then he took the plunge, strong in the belief that a half-forgotten transaction between himself and Jimmy Devar would prevent that impecunious warrior from discussing him freely in the family circle.

"George Augustus Fitzroy," he said. Mrs. Devar's brows knitted. She was regaining her self possession, and a sarcastic smile now chased away a perplexing thought. She was about to say something, when Cynthia Vanrenen broke in excitedly:

"I declare to goodness if the hotel people have not fastened on our boxes already! They seem to know our minds better than we do ourselves. And here is the man with the wraps! Please be careful with that camera. Yes, put it there, with the glasses. What are you doing, Fitzroy?" for Medenham was discharging his obligations to the boy in buttons and a porter.

"Paying my debts," said he, smiling at her.

"Of course you realize that I pay all expenses?" she said, with just the requisite note of hauteur in her voice that the situation called for.

"This is entirely a personal matter, I assure you, Miss Vanrenen."

Medenham could not help smiling; he stooped and felt a tire unnecessarily. Cynthia was puzzled. She wrote that evening to Irma Norris, her cousin in Philadelphia, "Fitzroy is a new line in chauffeurs."

"By the way, where is your trunk?" she demanded suddenly.

"I came away unexpectedly; so I have arranged that it shall be sent to Brighton by rail," he explained.

APPARENTLY there was nothing more to be said. The two women seated themselves, and the car sped out into the Strand. They watched the driver's adroit yet scrupulously careful dealing with the traffic, and Cynthia, at least, quickly grasped the essential fact that the six cylinders worked with a silent power that held cheap every other vehicle passed or overtaken on the road.

"It's a lovely automobile," she murmured with a little sigh of satisfaction.

"Quite an up to date car, I fancy," agreed her friend.

"I don't understand how this man Fitzroy can afford to use it for hiring purposes. Yet, that is his affair, not mine. I rather like him, don't you?"

"His manners are somewhat offhand; but such persons are given to aping their superiors. George Augustus Fitzroy too—it is ridiculous! Fitzroy is the family name of the Earls of Fairholme, and their eldest sons have been christened George Augustus ever since the beginning of the eighteenth century."

"The name seems to fit our chauffeur all right, and I guess he has as good a claim to it as any other man."

Cynthia was apt to flaunt the Stars and Stripes when Mrs. Devar aired her class conventions, and the older woman had the tact to agree with a careless nod. Nevertheless, had Cynthia Vanrenen known how strictly accurate was her comment she would have been the most astounded girl in London at that minute. The Viscountcy, of course, was nothing more than a courtesy title. In the cold eye of the law, Medenham's full legal name was that which Mrs. Devar deemed ridiculous. As events shaped themselves, it was of the utmost importance to Cynthia, and to Medenham, and to several other persons who had not yet risen above their common horizon, that Mrs. Devar's sneer should pass unchallenged. Though that woman herself was not fashioned of the softer human clay that expresses its strenuous emotions by fainting fits or hysteria, some such feminine expedient would certainly have prevented her from going another hundred yards along the south road had some wizard told her how neatly she had guessed the truth.

But the luck of the born adventurer saved Medenham from premature exposure. "I Dare All" was the motto of his house, and it was fated to be tested in full measure ere he saw London again. Of these considerations the purring Mercury neither knew nor cared. She sang the song of the free highway and sped through the leafy lanes of Surrey with a fine disregard for Acts of Parliament and the "rules and regulations therein made and provided." Soon after one o'clock, however, she was compelled to climb the road to the downs in meek agreement with two lines of toiling wagonettes and labor-

ing motors. Just to show her mettle when the opportunity offered, she took the steep hill opposite the stands with a greyhound rush that vastly disconcerted a policeman who told Medenham to "hurry up out of the dip."

Then, having found a clear space, she dozed for awhile, and Cynthia, like a true born American, began the day's business by giving the answer before either of her companions even thought of putting the Great Question.

"Grimalkin will win!" she cried. "Mr. Deane told my father so. I want to play Grimalkin for ten dollars!"

CHAPTER II.

The First Day's Run

THOUGH Medenham was no turf devotee, he formed distinctly unfavorable conclusions as to the financial stability of the bawling bookmakers near at hand. "If you wish to do any betting, Miss Vanrenen," he said, "give me the money and I will invest it for you. There is no hurry. The Derby will not be run till three o'clock. We have an hour and a half in which to study form."

For the life of him he could not imitate the complete annihilation of self practised by the well bred English servant. The American girl missed the absence of this trait far less than the other woman; but by this time even Mrs. Devar began to accept Medenham's good humored assumption of equality as part of the day's amusement.

Cynthia handed him a card. She had bought three while they were crawling up the hill behind a load of jeering Cockneys. "What will win the first race?" she asked. "Father says you men often hear more than the owners about the real performances of horses."

Medenham tried to look knowing. He thanked his stars for Dale's information. "I am told Eyot has a chance," he said.

"Well, put me a sovereign on Eyot, please. Are you playing the ponies, Mrs. Devar?"

That woman, being quick witted, took care not to offend Cynthia by pretending not to understand, though it set Medenham's teeth on edge to hear a racehorse called a pony. She opened a gold purse and produced a coin. "I don't mind risking a little," she tittered.

Medenham found, however, that she also had handed him a sovereign, and his conscience smote him; for he guessed already, with accuracy as it happened, that she was Miss Vanrenen's paid chaperon during the absence of the girl's father on the Continent.

"Personally, I am a duffer in matters connected with the turf," he explained. "A friend of mine—a chauffeur—mentioned Eyot—"

"Oh, that is all right," laughed Cynthia. "I like the colors, Eau de Nil and white. Look! There he goes!"

She had good eyes, as well as pretty ones, else she could not have distinguished the silk jacket worn by the rider of a horse cantering at that moment along the cleared course. Crowded coaches, four rows deep, lined the rails near the judges' box, and the gay hued parasols of their feminine occupants almost completely blocked the view, a distant one in any case, owing to the width of the intervening valley.

MEDENHAM raised no further protest.

He walked to a stand where a press of people betokened the presence of a popular layer of odds, found that Eyot's price was chalked up at five to one, and backed him for four pounds. He had to push and elbow his way through a struggling crowd. Immediately after the bet was made, Eyot's quotation was reduced by two points in response to signals ticktacked from the inclosures. This, of course, argued a decided following for Dale's selection, and these eleventh hour movements in the turf market are illuminative. Before he got back to the car there was a mighty shout of "They're off!" and he saw Cynthia Vanrenen stand on the seat to watch the race through her glasses.

Mrs. Devar stood up too. Both women were so intent on the troop of horses now streaming over the crest of the six-furlong course that he was able to stare his fill without attracting their attention.

"I like Cynthia," he said to himself, "though I shall be in a deuce of a mess if I meet her anywhere after this piece of masquerading. Not much chance of that, I expect, seeing that Dad and I go to Scotland early in July. But what a bore to tumble across Jimmy's mater! I hope it is not a



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