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THE INTERLOPER
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By Carol South

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"Your lordship, this gentleman is Mr. Johnson," announced the agent.

Lord Clavering rose slowly from his chair and bowed. Johnson noticed that it did not occur to him to extend his hand. The old man, with his white, flowing beard and flashing eyes, his bowed shoulders and sense of being one with the historic past of his race, presented a pitiful spectacle.

"Sit down, sir," said Lord Clavering. "Mr. Jones," he added to the agent, "will you please call Lady Elinor?"

But it was not necessary for the agent to stir, for at that moment there came into the room the most beautiful girl that Johnson had ever seen.

"This gentleman is Mr. Johnson," said Lord Clavering to his daughter, and Lady Elinor bowed. Again Johnson noticed that it did not occur to her to extend her hand.

The agent cleared his throat. "Hum! This is a little—painful, your lordship," he said. "I am making this statement by your wish."

"It is the only condition upon which I will consent to sell Mr. Johnson my estate," answered Lord Clavering.

The agent cleared his throat again. "Mr. Johnson," he began, "when you announced your desire to purchase his lordship's Scottish estate, then in the market, you understood that Lord Clavering was only disposing of it under strong necessity."

Johnson bowed.

"His lordship has lived here all his life. He has no other home. His lordship sells only on the understanding that you permit him and his daughter to occupy the lodge at your gates."

Johnson stared at the agent and felt the blood dye his face. He had

not understood that Lord Clavering was so poor, though he knew that his debts were heavy enough to eat up the price of the sale. He half regretted having been inclined to purchase.

It is one thing for a young Chicago man of 27 to decide to buy a Scotch estate with the money left by his Scotch father, always eager to return to the land of his ancestors and dy-



The Most Beautiful Girl That Johnson Had Ever Seen

ing before the wish could be realized. But it is another matter to discover that the dream can be achieved only by causing sorrow to others.

"I would make a suggestion," faltered Johnson. "If Lord Clavering and Lady Elinor will remain here as my guests until—until—" he went on vaguely, and came to a standstill. How long? Was he intending to invite them to be his guests forever?

"Quite impossible," broke in Lord