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Kennedy Buggy Co.

The Ring of the Matterhorn.

By JOHN J. a'BECKET.

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"Don't mention the name of that miserable creature to me ever again," she cried with indignation. "I will swear to you, if you would like it, that I will never wed the—oh, I cannot even speak his odious name! I saw him in London, and he insulted me afterward by calling on me. Then he insulted me further by writing a letter, evidently meaning to disgust me more than ever with himself. He said he was willing to marry me if I wanted him. And you suggest the possibility of such a vile thing to me as that! Have you no decency? You may repudiate your own paper and become a thief, uncle," she said violently, "but how is it possible for you to fall so far as to mention the name of any woman relative of yours in the same breath with that cur?"

Uncle Josiah was having a great deal of enjoyment over this fiery niece of his. His taste in enjoying such things was unquestionably bad, unworthy an uncle of his years and with a really charming niece, when she was treated with any kind of fitness. But he did enjoy seeing her in a hot, indignant mood.

"So you didn't take to Carrington, not even when he said he was willing to marry you? He may have wanted to put himself on record as being willing, because if he were to refuse you would get the money. What did you do to him?" he asked quickly.

"Told him 'No' in a way that could leave no doubt in his mind," replied Miss Rodney. "Don't talk about it any more. The whole sickening business has made me hate the very name of Carrington. But you need not despise him so much. After all, he was within his right, and you are refusing to do what justice and your own honor demand. There is no use of talking about it any more," she concluded, rising to go.

"Well, give me time to make the arrangement," said Uncle Josiah, with a cajoling air. "You don't expect me to go right down to the bank and get it now! Besides, you ought to bring on Strandham, Scanlon—what was his name?—to prove your statement. You could advertise for him in the London Times. Say he will hear of something greatly to your advantage if he comes forward and says that he found you without a chaperon on the Matterhorn."

His niece disdained further remarks. She rose and left the room. The next day Uncle Josiah, who had not doubted her word in the least, made arrangements for transferring several blocks of gilt edged stock to her. In his odd way he said nothing of this. He rather hated to see his plucky niece, whom he secretly admired very much, become absolutely independent of him, even though she owed such freedom to himself.

Miss Rodney kept her peace and treated her uncle with an unvarying reserve after this. It tried him more than she realized. But she felt how mean and unjust his conduct was, and could not or would not make any attempt to cajole him into doing his duty and redeeming his promise to her. One thing she noticed, and Mrs. Rodney also remarked it—Uncle Josiah did not complain and comment as much on expenditures where his niece Florence was concerned. He seemed to take these more tranquilly than those which concerned Mrs. Rodney or Rose. Florence felt that this showed some sense of what he owed her on the old man's part. She concluded to say nothing until the year was up. Then the objection which her uncle had urged could not exist, for her aunt's money would go irretrievably to her dissolute stepson.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWS OF GUY STADLEY.

The summer had come. Mrs. Rodney after the usual "time" with her brother had got money to take herself and Rose to Narragansett Pier. Florence remained with her uncle. He insisted on one of his two nieces being with him, and they divided this domestic enjoyment between them. The old man very much preferred having Florence with him, and, as if with the desire to retain her, showed the pleasantest side of himself. When he felt the need of some outlet for his soul, strained with such continued sweetness, he would comment in his caustic, sneering, jocular way on Mrs. Rodney or Rose.

One day, about a month before the year appointed by the Countess of Carrington in her eccentric will was up, Miss Rodney burst into an exclamation of surprise and her face lit up with pleasure. She had just been reading a letter from Rose.

"What is the matter?" inquired Uncle Josiah. "Has Rose got some fool to ask her to marry him?"

"No," said Miss Rodney. "Listen to this." She read from the letter:

"There has been such a lovely Englishman here for a week. No one seems to know much about him, but I have heard that he goes with the swellest people in Newport and brought a lot of letters with him. Mamma has felt a little shy about my receiving his attentions, because we know so little about his means or family. But he was presented to me at a casino dance, and he certainly is a perfectly lovely waltzer. He seemed to take quite an interest in me. He wanted to know if I had any sisters and then asked if you were younger or older than I. Then he asked me if I knew a Miss Florence. He said laughingly that his principal object in coming to America was to discover this Miss Florence. When I wanted to know why he had such a romantic interest in a girl of whom he knew so little apparently, he said that last year he met her on the top of the Matterhorn. He is so quiet and unenthusiastic you would never think of his climbing such an awful mountain. Well, he did, and on top of the Matterhorn he met this Miss Florence. He said he was never more surprised in his life, for it was a jolly good pull for a mountain practiced man. Well, I gather that he was'—Miss Rodney skipped a few lines here and went on farther down. "When they got back to the hotel in the little town where they started from, he bade her good night, expecting to see her the next morning. He didn't, and instead got a telegram saying that his brother was dangerously ill and could not recover. He had to tear off, but left a note for Miss Florence with one of the men at the hotel, giving his London address, and why he had to go so suddenly, and begging her to let him know when she came to London, as he would then have the ring for her"—

"Why, was he engaged to the girl already?" asked Uncle Josiah, interrupting his niece.

"Wait and you'll see," said Miss Rodney. Her cheeks were flushed, and she seemed pleasantly excited over her sister's letter. She went on reading from it again:

"This is another romantic thing in this story—when they were on top of the Matterhorn, this Florence girl asked him to chip off a piece of rock from the very tiptop and said she would like to have it set in a ring and keep it as a souvenir. He knocked off two pieces and begged her to let him have them both put into rings, and then she could have one and he the other. 'She was such a plucky girl, you know,' said he, 'that I would be proud to have such an association with her. She was so jolly, and no nonsense about her. Of course there couldn't be in a girl who could climb the Matterhorn.'

"But it seems the girl took no notice of his letter, which he thought a little odd, because she had appeared so nice

"There!" said Miss Rodney. "Do you hear? There is Guy Stadley."

and friendly and wanted the ring so much. But I suppose the air of the Matterhorn made her friendly. It is lonesome enough up there to make the unexpected sight of another climber a grateful thing.

"He seemed quite interested in you—that is, he wanted to know if you looked like me and what sort of a girl you were. Of course nothing very unusual, only it was different from an Englishman. But he is a charming man. I wish you could see him. He told me that I looked like the girl on the Matterhorn, and when I thoughtlessly asked if she was pretty he said quite warmly, 'Oh, more than,' etc." Here Miss Rodney hummed again until she struck something else and went on distinctly:

"I hope he will be here when you come down, but I'm afraid he won't. He said he had to be in New York for some time and would have to leave here soon. I forget to say his name is Guy Stadley."

"There!" said Miss Rodney triumphantly to her uncle. "Do you hear? There is Guy Stadley!"

"He must have a habit of going up the Matterhorn," retorted Uncle Josiah skeptically. "You say he met you up there, and here is another girl he ran across on the same old peak. I wonder if he uses it as a place of rendezvous."

"Oh, I am Miss Florence!" replied Miss Rodney, laughing. "I started to tell him my name and got as far as 'I am Miss Florence' when the guide interrupted me. I meant to correct this later on and forgot it. Then he went away so suddenly there was no chance. I wondered why he left no word, and it never occurred to me till that moment that he had, but to Miss Florence. Now I can get his testimony. I will write to Rose at once to send his address, and then, you can write to him. You see, there can be no collusion in this way. Will you do it, uncle?"

The old man's eyes took on their cunning twinkle.

"It looks like a put up job," he said. "He has come over here and makes up to Rose and instantly begins to ask about a Miss Florence and tells the little fool this yarn about the Matterhorn so innocently, apropos of nothing. Can the rock in the Matterhorn be known as such? And, even if it could, he may have been there. There is nothing impossible in that. I believe those fool Englishmen think they are enjoying themselves when they risk their lives climbing."

"What a villain you seem to think I am," replied Miss Rodney, letting her hands fall with a gesture of despair. "I shall have to leave you to your own sense of honor. But I hope I will see this young man. I want that ring. No matter what you do, it will be the glory of my life that I did climb that awful mountain. I have had nightmares over it since, I can assure you."

"I think you want to see the young man for his own sake, or rather for your own sake," said Mr. Gardner, with a chuckle. "He is the kind of man you would fall in love with. That sort of mountain gymnastics is more than fox hunting, or tennis playing, or any other play work. So you would like to go to Narragansett Pier to meet him, would you?"

"I should like to get the ring, but I would rather go to Newport than to Narragansett Pier."

"Well, you can go if you won't stay more than a fortnight," said Uncle Josiah benignantly. He felt his niece deserved some reward for her good nature and also for her temper. He had enjoyed the few ebullitions of temper which he had succeeded in evoking. So he packed Miss Rodney off to Newport, making her promise that she would write to him twice a week.

The day after she got there there was a polo game to be played. A man who knew Miss Rodney took her to it on the box seat of his coach.

"I understand that one of the teams has taken on a young Englishman for the games this afternoon. He has been here only a short time. Nobody knows how he will play."

When the teams came out on their fiery little ponies, Miss Rodney gave a movement of delight and clapped her hands. She recognized Guy Stadley at once.

"I know that Englishman," she said. "He is a charming fellow. I don't know how he plays polo, but I'll wager you his side wins."

"A dozen gloves to a box of cigars," laughed her friend.

"Done."

Miss Rodney won her bet. Stadley carried the game for his side. His play was as bold as it was full of judgment, and he stuck to his pony like a bur. Nobody seemed to know anything more about him than that he had arrived only a few days ago and had letters of introduction to the best people.

"It is odd," said the gentleman; "but, although I haven't met him yet, I have seen two or three girls, and they have each remarked on the earnestness with which he inquired if they knew a Miss Florence. They suspect a romance. Altogether it is amusing, but there is no doubt about him. I know several of the fellows over there who gave him letters, and they are first class men."

"Where is he staying?" asked Miss Rodney.

"At the Ocean House."

As soon as Miss Rodney got back she sent a note to Guy Stadley, asking him to kindly meet her in the casino grounds at 2 the next day. "And please bring my ring," she added. She signed the note "R. Florence."

The next day she put on her best gown and repaired to the trysting place pretty sharply on time. She wanted to see how prompt Mr. Stadley would be. She had hardly made her way to a seat in a retired spot when she saw him almost running toward her.

"Miss Florence," he exclaimed, with great heartiness, "this is an immense pleasure. I have been cursing myself for having lost track of you. Quite a contrast this to the Matterhorn!" He cast a glance around on the fresh English aspect of the greensward and the casino building. "Why did you not answer my note—the one I left at the hotel at Zermatt? I was called away suddenly by a telegram, and I left a note with my London address and begged you to let me know when you passed through."

"I never got the note," said Miss Rodney smilingly.

"How beastly stupid of those people! I directed it plainly enough."

"Well, I can account for the mistake. It is all my fault. I am a little late in correcting it. I had started to give you my full name in return for yours, when the guide interrupted me. You supposed it was Miss Florence. I meant to correct it later. But I forgot it. And when I 'came to' I could not find you. I was the stupid one, not to think that you might have left some message for Miss Florence. But I am very glad to be able to correct it now. I am glad to see you again. Have you brought my ring?"

"Yes." He pulled a little box out of his pocket and opened it. The tiny fragment of the mighty Matterhorn had been imbedded in a plain band of gold.

"Mine is exactly like it," he said heartily, holding up his hand with a like ring on the little finger. "Yours may have to be altered a little. Let me put it on for you."

Miss Rodney pulled off her glove and extended her right hand. He tried it on each finger, but it fitted none.

"That is a pity," he said regretfully. "Let me try the other hand. One hand is often smaller than the other."

Miss Rodney extended the left hand with smiling good nature. The ring exactly fitted her third finger.

"There!" he said with his boyish enthusiasm. "It exactly fits."

"Yes. But I can't wear it on that finger," she remarked, with a light laugh. She felt wonderfully at home with the young fellow, he was so frank and straightforward, with a nice sense of dignity withal.

"Why? Oh, the engagement finger!"

"Never mind. I will keep it and arrange about it somehow. I am extremely obliged to you. It makes such an odd,

"And please bring my ring," she added.

pretty ring, and the association makes it unique. I don't suppose there are another man and woman in the world who have met upon the Matterhorn. I don't think anything would tempt me to try it again." She shuddered a little.

"Oh, don't say that. I have thought several times during these months, when I could not find you, that I would gladly scale it again if I knew you were on the top."

Miss Rodney colored with a delightful sensation of pleasure.

"That is so flattering that it can hardly be quite true," she said gayly.

"'Pon my honor, it is, though," he replied with great earnestness. "I never heard of so plucky a woman. There is only one other that I can think of in comparison with you at all. Do you know a Miss Rodney?"

"There are two Miss Rodneys," she answered smilingly.

"This is the elder. Her name, I believe, is"— He stopped short, and a look of the strangest wonder seemed to fix his face. Miss Rodney laughed outright at his confusion.

"You have not told me your name yet," he stammered—"the real name, you know."

"Florence—Rodney," she said simply, fixing him with her smiling eyes.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "Tell me," he inquired eagerly, his eyes large with earnest wonder, "did you, while you were in London, meet—the Earl of Carrington?"

It was Miss Rodney's turn to be amazed.

"Yes," she said quickly. "But in justice to myself I hasten to add that I met him only to conclude as definitely as possible and once for all a matter of which I cannot think even now without a blush of shame. I hope I may never see or hear of him again."

"I am glad to tell you that you will never see him again," the young Englishman replied, with an indescribable air, rather of severity than solemnity. "He is dead."

"Dead!" cried Miss Rodney. "When did he die?" She was startled.

"A month ago," he answered simply.

"How strange it all is!"

"This is all strange," said Miss Rodney. "What did the poor wretch die of?"

"He had used himself up completely. He had had a sort of stroke of an apoplectic character some weeks before he met you. He had another that settled him a month ago."

"You do not suppose that I could have helped to precipitate it, do you?" cried Miss Rodney, an expression almost of awe coming into her face.

"No; he precipitated it himself," the young fellow replied, with a mournful contempt. "He had only himself to thank for it. Do not let this trouble you for a moment."

"But how did you know of this?" asked Miss Rodney. "I hope my name did not come out in connection with it. Any association of my name with that of Carrington will always be without any fault of mine."

"Oh, don't say that, please!" he replied, with quick protest. "I mean that you are too fair to link a man's vileness with a name that others may have borne honorably and which others again may redeem. I know that is what you'd mean. But let us drop the subject. I did not like the man myself."

"But how did you know this? I hope you were not a friend of his!"

"No; I was not a friend of his, and he had no liking for me. But it was my odd fortune to be present once when Carrington, in an excess of drunken rage at the recollection of your treatment of him, spoke of it and mentioned your name. Now that this matter is explained, let us forget the man. I admire you more than ever."

"Pray, understand that I am ashamed of that page in my history. But if you could have seen the insulting letter that he wrote me! And I had been insulted grossly enough once before on this man's account. I would tell you this only that it seems a little strange to be so confidential with a—almost a stranger."

"I shall be glad to hear anything that concerns you, my dear Miss Rodney. I have something to tell you myself which is confidential, but with your permission I will defer that."

"Let us defer it all," she answered. "It is too painful, and meeting you is pleasant. I do not want to have it marred by such an association. How long are you going to be in Newport? Is this your first visit to America?"

"The first. I will tell you frankly, Miss Rodney, that one great thing that drew me here was the hope that I might find the plucky girl I met upon the Matterhorn. Now that I have found her, I confess with equal frankness that I think my stay in Newport will be as long as"— He stopped and smiled ingenuously.

"When do you expect to leave here?"

"In a fortnight. I expect to join my mother at Narragansett Pier."

"Oh, I met your sister there. It is a delightful place. I shall probably revisit it later."

He said this with such a palpable sense that the time would be coincident with that in which Miss Rodney would be there that she smiled, and he lapsed into a short laugh himself.

Guy Stadley devoted himself to Miss Rodney with the most earnest and constant attention. By the end of ten days he had offered her his heart and all that he had. Miss Rodney accepted it with a beautiful directness. She knew that he was the man she wanted for a husband. His fine, strong, simple, clean manliness shone out as evidently, as unmistakably as an electric light illumines a globe with its splender.

It was with a sigh of content that he placed upon her finger the ring of the Matterhorn. She passed her hand over it lovingly when it was in position, and then, raising it to her lips, kissed it.

"Now," said Guy, looking into her beaming face with strong love in his own honest eyes, "I have got to tell you something. First, you love me for myself, do you not? This man," and he struck his chest with his powerful right hand, "Guy Stadley?"

She bent her head and said "Yes" softly, but with intense conviction.

To be continued.

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No 1* 11:35 p m	..Fast Train..	No 2* 4:00 a m
No 3* 6:23 a m	Thro Express.	No 4* 9:02 p m
No 21 6:00 p m	....Clipper..	No 22 9:25 a m
No 23† 9:20 a m	Local Express	No 24† 8:10 p m
No 91† 1:45 p m	..Way Freight.	No 92† 11:00 a m
No 71† 4:15 p m	Thro Freight.	No 52† 2:10 p m

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No. 322 9:05 a.m	...†Passenger...	No 321 6:05 p. m
No. 352 1:45 p.m	....†Freight....	No.351 3:00 p. m

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9:30 a m No. 4 Chi. & Burl'n Pass.....9:35 p m
3:10 a m No. 6 Chicago & St. Louis Ex. 3:30 a m
12:20 ngt No. 8 Chicago Fast Express. 12:27 ngt
No. 18 Burl. & Davnp't. Pass 4:00 p m

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7:35 a m No. 1 Minneapolis Pass.....8:05 a m
12:10 p m No. 3 Rockford Passenger.....3:30 p m
12:03 ngt No. 5 Minneapolis Express..12:20 ngt
5:45 a m No. 13 Chicago Passenger.
11:45 p m No. 19 Chicago Passenger.

No. 1—Free chair car and coaches to Albert Lea. No. 5—Pullman sleepers and coaches to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

DECORAH DIVISION.

8:10 p m.....Decorah Passenger.....8:30 a m
9:20 a m.....West Union Passenger.....3:40 p m
4:05 p m.....Decorah Freight.....6:20 a m

IOWA FALLS DIVISION.

8:00 p m.....Iowa & Minnesota Pass.....8:15 a m
12:20 ngt..Minnesota & Dakota Pass..12:30 ngt

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12:10 p m.....Burl. & Ia City Pass.....4:00 p m
7:50 p m.....Clin., Ia City, Dvpt Pass.....7:15 a m
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