

The ESCAPADE

A POST MARITAL ROMANCE
BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BEADY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
RAY WALTERS
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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—The Escapade opens, not in the romance preceding the marriage of Ellen Slocum, a Puritan miss, and Lord Carrington of England, but in their life after settling in England. The scene is placed, just following the revolution, in Carrington castle in England. The Carringtons, after a house party, engaged in a family lit, caused by jealousy.

CHAPTER II.—Lord Carrington and his wife each made charges of faithlessness against the other in continuation of the quarrel.

CHAPTER III.—First objecting against playing cards with the guests, Lady Carrington agreed to out cards with Lord Stratgate, whose attention to Ellen had become a sore point with Carrington. The loss of \$100,000 failed to perturb her, and her husband then cut for his wife's I. O. U. and his honor, Carrington winning. The incident closed except that a liking for each other apparently arose between Lady Carrington and Lord Stratgate.

CHAPTER IV.—Additional attention of Lord Carrington to Lady Cecily and Lord Stratgate to Lady Carrington compelled the latter to vow that she would leave the castle.

CHAPTER V.—Preparing to flee, Lady Carrington and her chum Deborah, an American girl, met Lord Stratgate at two a. m., he agreeing to see them safely away.

CHAPTER VI.—Ellen fled, Stratgate driving. He attempted to take her to his castle, but she left him stunned in the road when the carriage meets with an accident. She and Debbie then struck out for Portsmouth, where she intended to sail for America.

CHAPTER VII.—Hearing news of Ellen's flight, Lord Carrington set out in pursuit.

CHAPTER VIII.—Seton, locating a fishing village, hit the trail of Ellen and Debbie. He then rented a fast vessel and started in pursuit, Carrington pursuing Stratgate.

CHAPTER IX.—Stratgate, bleeding from fall, dashed on to Portsmouth, for which Carrington, Ellen and Seton were also headed by different routes.

CHAPTER X.—Stratgate arrived in Portsmouth in advance of the others, finding that Ellen's ship had sailed before her.

CHAPTER XI.—Stratgate and Carrington each hired a small yacht to pursue the wrong vessel, upon which each supposed Ellen had sailed.

CHAPTER XII.—Seton overtook the fugitives near Portsmouth, but his craft ran aground, just as capture was imminent.

CHAPTER XIII.—Ellen won the chase by boarding American vessel and foiling her pursuers—Stratgate, Seton and Carrington. Carrington and Stratgate, thrown together by former's wrecking of latter's vessel, engaged in an impromptu duel, neither being hurt.

CHAPTER XIV.—A war vessel, commanded by an admiral friend of Seton, then started out in pursuit of the woman fugitives, Seton confessing love for her.

CHAPTER XV.—Flagship Britannia overtook the fugitives during the night, Ellen deciding to return to Portsmouth. They boarded their small yacht, unknown to the searchers, and started out anew.

CHAPTER XVI.—An unsuccessful search of the merchantman is conducted.

CHAPTER XVII.—Seton gave up search for escaping pair and Stratgate and Carrington prepared for the early morning duel.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Debbie and Ellen located Portsmouth safely and put into shore, arriving upon scene of the duel, just before that event took place.

CHAPTER XIX.—Carrington won a bloody contest at sword's point with Stratgate, Debbie and Ellen looking on and praying for the latter's husband.

CHAPTER XX.—Carrington, immediately following the duel, was placed under arrest for refusing to obey his admiral's orders and Ellen, who had swooned during the duel, awoke to find him gone. Sir Charles Seton found the fugitives, proposed to Debbie and was accepted.

CHAPTER XXI.
The Little Man of Windsor.

There was nothing very awe inspiring in the sight of the plain, homely looking little Dutchman walking under the trees at Windsor; nor was there anything more impressive in the figure of the dumpy little woman who walked by his side, but for all that Ellen got down on her knees in the pathway as the two figures approached her, Lady Carrington's example was followed precipitately by Sir Charles and Mistress Deborah Slocum.

"Hey!" cried the little man blinking and peering at the three kneeling figures, "whom have we here?" His eye ranged from Ellen to Deborah and comprehended the baronet kneeling in the background. His dull face lighted with a glance of recognition. He knew the army list by heart and most of the officers appearing thereon, especially those of any degree of rank or station.

"Sir Charles Seton, is it not?" went on the plain little man, "and you are a captain in the Sussex light infantry, Rise, Sir Charles," he continued, "and you may present me to these ladies, your companions."

Sir Charles, glad enough to be released from his uncomfortable position, rose to his feet and stood at attention with a military salute. Then bowing profoundly, he said:

"Your majesty,—for the little man was no less a person than King George the Third,—this is the Countess of Carrington, and this is Mistress Deborah Slocum of the—Massachusetts Bay Colony."

"Of the state of Massachusetts, your majesty," said Deborah, with great spirit.

"My affianced wife, your majesty," continued Seton, hastily, hoping to prevent an outbreak of wrath in his majesty's mind at Deborah's contumacy.

"Not content with stealing my colonies," said the king, kindly, but with

a note of melancholy in his voice, "you Americans"—he choked a little at the word—"must now take the brave officers of my army. Rise, Mistress Slocum, and you, madam."

He extended his hand to Ellen, who was nearest to him.

Poor Ellen, who had come upon a desperate errand, to beg a great gift from the king, made no scruple about kissing the monarch's fat and pudgy hand ere she rose to her feet in obedience to the king's indication.

"Lady Carrington," continued royal George meditatively, "let me see." He knew the peerage too, did this industrious little monarch, almost as well as the army list. "Your name is Ellen, is it not?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"And you, too, are an American. I remember it all now. Lord Carrington was captured by your rebel friends. He was twice captured in Philadelphia, by you, my lady. I recall it all now," cried the king with a sprightly air, greatly delighted at his mnemonic feat. "Yes, my dear,—he turned to the stout little lady who stood quietly by his side—"you remember my telling you all about Lord Carrington's love for this lady. And now—" he stopped and looked about him vaguely.

"And now, your majesty," began poor Ellen, "his wife comes to you with a petition."

"A petition? For what?" asked the king, curiously.

"Lord Carrington is arrested, sir."

"Arrested! And for what?" asked his majesty.

"For—"

Ellen faltered.

"For disobedience of orders, sir," interposed Seton.

"How?" said the king. "Tis a serious charge. And by whom preferred?"

"Captain Careysbrook of the Noble sir."

"And where?"

"Lord Carrington being ordered to report aboard ship, refused to go and the ship sailed without him, sir."

"What reason had he for this disobedience?"

Little George had been a soldier himself, and he was very strict indeed on branches of military etiquette.

Sir Charles hesitated. A pious man was the king, and desperately down upon dueling. Yet the truth had to be told.

"Your majesty," he began. And then he stopped.

"Sir," cried Ellen, taking upon herself the burden, "my husband fought a duel for me."

"A duel?" asked the king, frowning.

"Yes, your majesty."

"And with whom?"

"With the earl of Stratgate, sir."

"What was the result of the duel?"

"Lord Stratgate was severely wounded, sir."

"Not killed?"

"No, your majesty."

"I'm glad of that," returned King George. "The earl of Stratgate is ill prepared to meet his Maker. Proceed, madam."

"That is all, sir. Lord Carrington was arrested immediately after for not having gone aboard the ship. You see, sir, he knew the night before when he received the orders that he would have to fight with Lord Stratgate in the morning, and he couldn't go. The fault is mine, your majesty, and therefore I humbly ask his pardon."

"Explain yourself, madam," returned the king, with a good deal of formality.

"Your majesty," began Ellen, falteringly, "I have been a very foolish woman. I ran away—with—Lord Stratgate."

"What!" exclaimed the king, his face flushing with indignation. "And you have the effrontery to come here and confess it?"

"Lady Carrington does herself an injustice," again interposed Sir Charles Seton. "Tis a long story, sir."

"Long or short," answered the king, "I must have it. How was it, Sir Charles?"

"It began at a house party at Carrington, your majesty." He hesitated and turned to Ellen. "I must make a clean breast of it," he said.

"By all means," cried the king, "conceal nothing, keep nothing back!"

"Lord Carrington was ashamed of his wife, sir."

"And why?" asked the king, with a glance of admiration at Ellen, now clothed simply, but in the proper habiliments of her sex, and who certainly looked lovely enough and sweet enough for any man on earth.

"Because, sir," said Ellen, answering the direct question, "I would not gamble; I could not dance; I was ignorant of the accomplishments of the day."

"Hum!" growled the king. "Proceed, Sir Charles."

"There was a lady there who sought to encourage my Lord Carrington in his foolish and wrong estimate of his wife."

"Who was the woman?"

Sir Charles hesitated.

"I command you, sir, by your allegiance, that you tell me her name in-

stantly."

"It was Lady Cecily Carrington, your majesty," answered Deborah, who had no scruples at all in the premises.

"The hussy!" ejaculated the queen, to whom Lady Cecily's person and reputation were equally well known.

Sir Charles, at a nod from his majesty, resumed his tale.

"Thinking herself betrayed, as well as despised and mocked, my lady fled by the aid of Lord Stratgate."

"But, your majesty," interposed Deborah again, with astonishing boldness, she felt quite equal to any king that walked the earth, being a free born American citizen and she wished

shall be frightened out of his wits and yet have you in the end. I shall arrange it. Sir Charles, take the ladies to Windsor. Mistress Deborah, when you marry this young soldier here, you become my subject. How likes your hot American blood that, mistress?"

"Your majesty," answered Deborah, rising to the occasion and putting for the nonce her Americanism in her pocket, utterly reckless of what Elder Brewster might think, "since you have acted with such royal generosity to Ellen—Lady Carrington and her husband I mean, I can view the prospect with equanimity."

She courted deeply before him as she spoke.

The king laughed again. He was in high good humor.

"Take care of her, Sir Charles. These Americans are of a rebellious breed, you know."

"Your majesty," said Ellen, "I think this will be a peaceful couple. The affair began by the reading together by the two of Baxter's 'Saints' Rest.'"

"Tis a goodly volume, well writ, and by a learned and godly man," said the king, gravely, "and 'tis a good omen. You may kiss the queen's hand, if you will," he continued, and this was the sign manual of George's approval of the two women, for had he believed Ellen other than she was he had never allowed her to approach his homely but beloved little wife.

"Now, Sir Charles," he resumed, after the obsequies had been performed, "take the ladies to the castle and await my return. Send one of my gentlemen-in-waiting to me by the way, after you reach the castle. Ladies, I wish you good morning."

The king, like the little gentleman he was, doffed his hat gallantly to the two ladies as Sir Charles, saluting profoundly, led them away.

A great weight was taken from Ellen's heart. The king, who possessed the power of life and death over his soldiers and sailors, had promised to free her husband and restore him to her arms. Punishment, trouble, difficulty, were to intervene, but the end was certain and Ellen was content to wait.

The gentleman-in-waiting presented himself to the king, who had stood quietly under the trees talking animatedly with his wife and chuckling with pleasure at the idea that had come to him.

"The Britannia arrived in the Thames last night, did she not?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"And my message directing Admiral Kephard to present himself was transmitted?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"The admiral is at Windsor?"

"He is, your majesty."

"Bid him to come to me here under the trees. I have something to say to him."

"Yes, your majesty," returned the equerry, bowing and withdrawing rapidly.

And presently old Admiral Kephard, in full uniform, attended by Captain Beatty and Lieutenant Collier, came rolling along the walk. As the admiral and his subordinates saluted and prepared to kneel, the king motioned to them to rise. If were a cruelty to make a fat old man like Kephard, trussed up like a turkey cock in tight uniform, kneel down on the ground out in the open air.

"You need not kneel, admiral, nor you, gentlemen," said the king, extending his hand to Kephard, who bent over it and kissed it heartily with every evidence of appreciation of the king's ineffable condescension.

"How do you find yourself this morning?" continued his majesty.

"Very well, your majesty," said Kephard.

"And you, Captain Beatty, and you, sir?"

The gentlemen addressed bowed profoundly.

"We are all fit for service against any of your majesty's enemies now, as always," returned Kephard, with another salute.

"I know that," said the king, kindly. "You have had a pleasant voyage?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"You brought with you on your ship a prisoner?"

"Subject to your majesty's pleasure, of course," returned Admiral Kephard.

"And what are the charges against Lord Carrington?" asked the king.

"Disobedience of orders, sir," returned the admiral.

"Hath he been tried yet?"

"Not yet, sir. A court-martial is ordered for to-morrow on the Britannia."

"And what will be the result of their deliberations?"

"He is sure to be found guilty, sir," answered Kephard, gloomily.

"Hum!" said the king. "And the punishment?"

"Suspension, degradation, dismissal, unless your majesty should be pleased to mitigate the sentence."

"And what were the circumstances of the disobedience?"

Admiral Kephard coughed and looked embarrassed.

"Out with it," said the king, bluntly.

"He stayed from his ship to—ah—fight a duel."

"How does he bear himself now?" continued the king, to Admiral Kephard's surprise.

He had expected a violent outburst from his majesty, who thoroughly disapproved of dueling.

"Gloomily, your majesty. In short, sir," the admiral burst forth, "he's been a damned—I beg your majesty's pardon, and yours, madam. Tis an old sailor's habit," he stammered in great confusion.

"Proceed, Kephard," said the king, smiling, "but no more of that."

"Carrington has been a fool," resumed the old warrior, flushing deeply under his tan, "he had the sweetest wife on earth and was ashamed of



"I Hastened Here to Take the Blame Upon Myself, Sir."

that Elder Brewster could see how she was bearing herself now, "I went with her."

"Good!" exclaimed the king, with evident satisfaction in his voice and manner, "but pray, why did you go away with a person of Lord Stratgate's reputation?"

"Your majesty," answered Ellen, "I knew naught of it. He had been kind to me. I told him that I wanted to get to Portsmouth and take a ship for the United States. He promised to take me there, but instead started to drive me to his own estate. Mistress Slocum and I escaped from him, took a boat by the sea shore and made the best of our way to Portsmouth harbor."

"We paid for the boat we took, your majesty," interposed Deborah again.

"Well, what next?" asked the king, smiling a little at the American girl.

"Lord Stratgate pursued us to Portsmouth by shore and Lord Carrington followed him. They met. My husband knew that I had gone with Lord Stratgate. Words passed between them. There was a challenge and a week ago they fought at Blythe dale hall. Mistress Slocum and I were there, and—"

"Did they fight in your presence?" interrupted the king.

"We were concealed in some bushes whither we had retreated for rest until we could arrange to continue our journey, sir."

"And you saw the duel?"

"Yes, your majesty," answered Ellen. "He fought like a hero, sir, and for me."

"Then what happened?"

"Then he was arrested and taken back to the Britannia—"

"And what next?"

"I hastened here to take the blame upon myself, sir," said Ellen, sinking again to her knees, "and to beg that you will pardon my lord and restore him to duty."

"Hath he had lesson enough, think you?"

"I'll answer for it that he has, your majesty," said Sir Charles.

"And have you had lesson enough?" demanded little George, looking down quizzically into the upturned face of the woman kneeling before him.

"Yes, your majesty," answered Ellen, "enough to last me all my life."

"Why, here's promise of a pretty reconciliation," said the king, with a rising inflection in his voice, turning to his wife.

The old woman nodded.

"Forgive him your majesty," she said kindly. "I will warrant he will not forget the experience."

King George was not a very brilliant man. Even Ellen, anxious to view him in the most favorable light because of her petition, could see that, but he had a brilliant idea at that moment. He stood thinking, his plain face brightening with a smile, and when he smiled he was really quite winning. He looked so honest, so true, and so good, if he were stupid, that Sir Charles and Deborah could not help smiling with him; beside, 'tis etiquette to smile and to frown with the king, whether he be wise or foolish.

Ellen did not smile. She had too much at stake. She waited in lovely appeal, tears trembling in her eyes, color wavering in her cheeks, her bosom heaving, her hands outstretched.

"I have it," said the king, at last. "Rise, madam; your husband shall suffer for nothing worse than a reprimand and a frown."

"Lord Carrington is a brave man," said Ellen, "you couldn't frighten him, sir."

"Not even with the prospect of losing you?" returned the king, rather shrewdly.

"But, sir, that would break my heart. I want him pardoned that I may have him again," exclaimed the poor wife, piteously.

The king threw back his head and laughed a truly royal laugh.

"So you shall, my dear," he cried, reaching his hand up and patting her on the shoulder, for she was taller than he. "Leave it to me. My lord

ner and flirted with another woman who couldn't hold a candle to her, and she ran away, in her innocence getting Lord Stratgate to assist her. Stratgate's motives were—well, your majesty will understand. She escaped from him. Carrington pursued him. They fought."

"So I have been informed," said the king.

"Very well, your majesty, then there's nothing for me to do but to beg you to be merciful to the young man. I think he's heartily sick and sorry of it now, and only wants his wife. He's one of the best officers in the service, it would be a pity to degrade him, and, to tell the truth, I love the lad dearly. Won't your majesty be a little easy with him—a nominal punishment? We can't afford to overlook the affair entirely."

"Hark ye," admiral," said the king. "Gentlemen—" he turned to the other two sailors—"I commit her majesty to your tender offices. Admiral Kephard and I will have a word or two alone. Come, admiral."

The king turned as he spoke and walked out of ear shot, the admiral lumbering along in his wake. They consulted together animatedly for a few moments, the king smiling, not to say grinning, if so unroyal a word may be used about majesty. Suddenly the old admiral burst into a roar of laughter. He lifted his hand and slapped it down on his leg. For a moment the king had thought in his enthusiasm he meant to clap him on the shoulder.

The admiral bellowed out in a voice that could have been heard a half mile away in a gale of wind: "Fore God, your majesty, 'tis a noble idea, a royal jest!"

"Think you it will work?" said the king as he walked back to the other group.

"Excellent, in faith—"

"And you will carry it out?"

"To the very letter, sir. To-morrow, your majesty."

"And let no inkling of your purpose come to the prisoner."

"None, sir, and the lady, your majesty, what of her?"

"I reserve to myself the pleasure of telling her," returned the king.

"And have we leave to withdraw now, your majesty?" asked the admiral, as they approached the other group.

"Go, and go quickly, Kephard," said the king, extending his hand again. "I would that I could be there and see the denouement."

"But your majesty can see some of it at least," said Kephard, "if you will board the Britannia any time to-morrow, and indeed you would vastly honor us; the men would be like to die for joy at such a visit. You could at least watch the prisoner take his departure."

"I'll do it," said the king. "At what time?"

"At your majesty's convenience, of course; but the tide ebbs at 11 o'clock and that would be a suitable time for—"

The king raised his hand.

"At 11 o'clock, six bells, you call it, don't you?"

"Yes, your majesty."

"I shall be there. Don't betray me."

"By no means, your majesty," returned the admiral.

And making their salutations and obeisances to their majesties, the little party withdrew, leaving the king in high glee as he explained to his grim little consort the details of his sportive plan.

(To be concluded next week.)

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