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HIS REPUTATION

By Andre Tridon.

Estelle Dumantel finally wrenched herself away from the grip of a nightmare; her ears were still ringing with the deafening explosion which must have made every wall of the villa topple down. . . . Another report. . . . . She sat up in bed, listening. Of a sudden a white phantom climbed into the room through the open window, rolled on the floor and whispered beseechingly:

"Estelle, don't speak a word or I am a dead man"

Gasping with fright, she hid herself under the bed clothes. Gradually she began to understand. The ghost was Raymond de Lourques, her fiance. Then she heard angered voices, the rustle of steps on the leaf-strewn garden paths, calls.

"He must have got in here; see that footmark on the flower bed."

Some one rushed toward the house door. She felt she must speak.

"Raymond, please go. They must not find you here."

"I cannot go. That idiot Granville has a gun.

"Granville? Isn't he in Paris?"

"No; he came back unexpectedly."

"And he found you with . . ."

There was a knock at the door; some one tried the knob.

"Estelle, open. This is mother."

Estelle, shivering, suddenly grasped the whole situation. Raymond and Madame de Granville. If she betrayed him that meant a scandal, a divorce, the breaking of their engagement, a duel.

"Mother, don't insist; Raymond is here."

"How long has he been there?" a booming voice asked.

"Since—since—I—retired."

A deep silence behind the hostile door; a loud sob; steps that endeavored to be noiseless dragged awkwardly along the corridors. . . .

"Estelle, I don't know how to tell you. . . ."

"Don't come near me. Go away—please go."

When his naked foot disappeared over the window sill, Estelle fell back on her pillows, faint, exhausted, moaning hystericaly.

At 6 o'clock she was dressed; in the hall she met her mother, who, very pale, simply said: "We leave on the 7 o'clock train."

The next day, the maid brought in Raymond's card. Madame Dumantel left the drawing room. Raymond entered, stylish and commonplace, apologetic but firm. He was leaving that very night for Bangkok; the minister has been kind enough to cable to the legation and hasten matters.

"In two years (attaches, you know, are given no furlough for twenty months) we shall see how our friends are judging that painful—incident. . . . It may be that they will have forgotten it altogether . . . or surmised the truth of the matter."

He silenced all possible objections by adding:

"Estelle, you wouldn't wish to compromise my career. A diplomat cannot marry a woman whose past might—er—owing to—er—unfortunate . . ."

Her eyes aflame with tragic irony, she rose and motioned to the door.—Mirror.

NEW BILL AT THE EMPRESS.

The new bill which opens with a matinee next Wednesday promises much that is new and original. Heading the list is "Louis' Christmas," which tells a homely and trite little story and is exceptionally well played by the Joe Maxwell players. Others on the bill are, Edna Aug, presenting her latest creation, "Folks Is Folks;" The Three Dancing Mars, in a terpischorean fantasy; "All for a Kiss," Houghton, Morris & Houghton, sensational exploits on motorcycles and bikes, Adelyne Lowe & Co., in a flash of novelty and daring; Leo Beers, in songs and piano selections and the Mutual Weekly with new views.

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