



CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"Well, Deff, what do you think of it? I knew it was only a question of how much."

"You'll never be mad enough to go?"

"I shall, and you will, too. Bah, man, are you going to be frightened about a little negro juggery? They are childish, and their acts the same."

"But you heard what she said. Those who fight against the serpent die."

"If they let him sting, of course. But we shall not do that. Deffard, I have won. The day is not far off when I shall be at the head of affairs, and you shall be my most trusted chief. Yes, we will take our revolvers to-night and we will go."

They walked back in silence, while, without heeding the laughter and chatter which sprung up as soon as the two young men were out of sight, Madame sat for a time motionless and rapt in thought, her hand and the scabbard out upon the back of the chair.

A louder burst of laughter than usual brought her back to herself, and she slowly drew in her arm, opened her hand, gazed at the coins for a few moments with her face wrinkled up into a look of disgust, and then deliberately spat upon them.

"A curse upon my money!" she said, hoarsely; "but I was obliged—I was obliged."

She turned the coins over in her hand, and her face softened into a pleasant smile as she seemed to gloat over the money just before taking out a bag, and dropped the pieces in one by one, the chink they gave making her eyes brighten with satisfaction.

"More and more, and more," she said aloud as she replaced the bag, and then, resting her head upon her hand, she sat there thinking, while the laughter outside became more boisterous and louder. But the mirth of the black people who spent so much of their lives basking in the sun-shade outside her veranda did not interrupt her train of thought, which was with Etienne Saintone, and the risks he would be bound to run that night at the feast.

CHAPTER VI.

"Hallo! old fellow," cried Bart Durham, "going out? Phew!" he whistled, "What a dandy!"

"Don't fool, Bart," cried Paul, excitedly. "Thank heaven, you're come."

"My dear boy, what is it? Something wrong?"

"Wrong?" cried Paul. "Read that."

"From your sister," cried Bart, handing the letter handed to him and running through it quickly.

"Left the convent. Staying with a Madame Saintone, at the Hotel Devine—going back to the West Indies at once. My dear old fellow!"

Bart Durham caught his friend's hands in his.

"Paul, old chap," he said, "is it so serious as this?"

"Serious? Man, I love her, and she is going to be dragged away from me perhaps for us never to meet again. I've often laughed with you at these sentimental French fellows, who shut themselves up with a pot of charcoal, but I can feel for them now."

"No, you can't," said Bart, savagely; "and don't talk like fool. You're an Englishman. But, I say, this is very sudden. What are you going to do?"

"Go to the hotel at once and see her. Come with me."

"I—really, old fellow, I don't think—"

"Lucie is there with her."

"Oh," said Bart, quickly, "I'll come. Do I look very shabby?"

"I must talk to her and persuade her not to go," said Paul, excitedly. "She must not, she shall not go."

"Gently, old fellow, gently. Your sister says that the mother has sent for her, and you know it was expected."

"Yes, I know it was expected, but don't stand there talking man. Come on."

Half an hour later the two young men stepped out of a frieze in the Rue Royale, and after sending up their cards they were ushered up into a handsome room, where a tall blonde lady, whose perfectly white hair shaded a thin angular young face, rose to meet them with the cards in her hand, while a pale, fragile-looking girl of about twenty also rose, and looked sharply from one to the other, and, evidently satisfied with the young artist's appearance, let her eyes dwell longest upon him.

"Madame Saintone," said Paul, quickly, and then hesitating slightly, "my sister is staying with you. May I see her?"

"Oh, certainly," said the lady, speaking in French, with a very pleasant accent. "Antoinette, my love, will you ask Mademoiselle Lowther to come?"

The girl gave her head a slight toss, then darted a keen look at Paul, and moved toward a door at the farther end of the room. Bart hurrying to open it for her, and receiving a very contemptuous bow for his pains.

"Your sister is with us for a day or two to try and keep her friend in good spirits. Paah! chil! Mademoiselle Dulau—you'er know."

"Yes, she's well," said Paul, hastily. "I am, I have seen her once or twice, when visiting my sister at the convent."

"Indeed!" said the lady, with her eyes contracting, and her two lips seeming to grow thinner as a thought flashed through her brain.

But at that moment the door was reopened, and Luce entered with her arm round Aube, pale, excited, and trembling.

Luce fled to her brother's arms, and as she kissed him she whispered:

"Oh, Paul, darling; I made her come with me."

"Miss Dulau—Aube," said Paul, as he took both the hands which were resigned to him, cold and trembling, while Aube's dark eyes looked full in his, with a sad, desponding expression that thrilled him to the core.

Paul did not loosen his hold of those hands, but led them over to a settee, while following his example, Bart took Luce's, making her turn scarlet, as she faltered half hysterically:

"You have come with my brother, Mr. Durham?"

"I am afraid I shall be de trop," said Madame Saintone, shrugging her shoulders, and looking meanly at the young couple; her eyes resting longest on Paul with a slight frown; but no one spoke.

"I am a chink," said Mademoiselle Dulau, I hardly, perhaps."

"Oh!" cried Luce, quickly, "we are all very old friends, madame. You need not mind at all."

"Indeed!" said the lady, with a forced laugh. "Ah, well; I will leave you then."

for a little while. I shall be in the next room if you want me. No, no; do not disarrange yourselves;" and she swept out of the room, her magnificent silk rustling as if the leaves on the carpet were real, and dead.

"Thank heaven!" said Paul to himself. Then, leaving Aube for the moment, "Bart, old fellow," he whispered, "keep Luce with you. I must win my darling now, or I shall go mad."

"Trust me," said the young doctor, hoarsely; and then to himself: "And if I don't make much of my chance I'm an ass. I only wish though that she was ill."

Paul was back on the settee, and Luce not unwillingly allowed Bart to take her hand, as if he were about to feel her pulse, and lead her to a chair in a window recess, where they were out of sight of the others.

"My dearest," said Paul, excitedly, as he took hold of the cold hands, and gazed into the wistful eyes again, "tell me, is this all over?"

"Yes," she said, almost in a whisper; "and it seems to me a dream."

"A dream!" he said passionately. "No, it is a terribly real. Aube, I must speak out now. For years—since the first time I saw you with my sister yonder, I have loved you."

"Oh, hush!" she whispered, faintly.

"No, I must speak—as a man should when his happiness is at stake. Ever since then my life has gone on happily, for though I have hardly seen you, I have felt that Luce was with you, my sister, and she has grown to like you."

"Yes—yes," said Aube, faintly.

It was she who sent me your photograph, which has always been near me, so that I could see you and think about you and dare to hope that some day the love which has gone on growing would be returned. No, no, let your hand stay here. Don't tell me it was presumption. For the past year I have felt that I must tell you of my love, but something seemed to say, wait, the time will come. For how could I dare to suggest such thoughts to you in your calm, peaceful retreat. And I have waited, and should have waited longer, but for this dreadful blow. Aube, dearest, give me some hope. Let me feel that some day you will be mine."

She shook her head sadly.

"What?"

"How can I promise you that?" she said in a broken voice. "I have always thought of you as Luce's brother and what is dear to her has become dear to me."

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"To be bowed out like that," cried Paul, as soon as they were in the street. "Oh, I feel as if I could kill that woman. Has she some designs of her own?"

"Stuff, man, stuff! What designs could she have? Come, cheer up, old fellow. Some day perhaps Madame Dulau may come back to Paris and bring her daughter here. She is young, and there is plenty of time."

"Confound you! Dron that wretched stereotyped phrase about patience and waiting. Bart, she loves me. It is breaking my heart to leave me, and as for me I—"

"Look here, Paul, old man. If you talk any stupid stuff about suicide I'll kick you—no, I'll poison you myself, and bring you back again."

"Who talks of suicide?" said Paul, with his face glowing, "when life is opening to him—very paradise which an angel will share."

"What?" cried Bart. "I say, old fellow, do come down off those verbal stinks."

"She loves me, Bart, and this business has made me certain of the truth."

"I wish you would speak plain English," muttered Bart.

"And there will be no parting, old fellow; no more sorrow."

"My dear boy, what do you mean? The poor girl must go."

"Yes, old fellow, and I go, too. In the same boat."

"Hatter's nothing to it," cried Bart.

"You're mad as a March hare."

(To be continued.)

A ROMANTIC MINE.

The Owner Got It Through the Gratitude of an Indian.

A bit of romance will often help the sale of mining property. And it is a poor hole in which some legend or tradition does not attach.

"I think," said Col. J. J. Vroom, "that the most ingenious story to account for the discovery of a mine was told by Col. J. W. Craig."

"Craig," interrupted listener, "was the man who sent out from Fort Union, when he was in the army, a train of four-mule wagons which were never heard from afterward."

"Craig," continued Col. Vroom, "is dead. He was buried with all of the honors. I am not telling his history, but dealing with a picturesque incident in his career. After he left the army he went into grants and mining. He told me that he won the confidence of a Tao Indian by some favor that he had done him. The first full moon of August, the anniversary of the revolt against the Spaniards in 1808, was approaching. This Indian had said to Craig that in return for his kindness he was going to reveal to him what had never been made known to any white man. On the night of the anniversary the Indian came to Craig and asked him to go with him. They went out of Tao to a hill and ascended it. The Indian pointed to fire burning in various directions, some near and some far, but without apparent significance."

"Those fires celebrate the revolt against the Spaniards in 1808," said the Indian.

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