

The Amateur Gentleman

By Jeffrey Farnol

BEGIN HERE TODAY
Barnaby Barty, son of John Barty, former English champion prizefighter, determines to become a gentleman after receiving an inheritance of the wishes of his father and Natty Bell, also a former pugilist. He goes to the name of Barty.

On the way to London he meets Lady Cleone Merton, with whom he falls in love, and finally succeeds in winning her promise to marry him. Her hand is given to him by Captain Slingsby and Sir Mortimer Carnaby. Chichester has a strong influence over Ronald Barty, and the young man's desire to be a gentleman is bounded by Jasper Gaunt, a money lender.

Warned by a friend, Viscount Horatio, that Barty has been extricated because of his misconduct with Lady Cleone, the viscount seeks to pay Gaunt in an effort to keep a promise to Lady Cleone that he will keep her kinman. Gaunt refuses the offer.

Beverly buys a home in London in which he and his wife, Bev, a former peacher, as a valedictorian. He invades the world of fashion and counts among his friends the Marquis of Slingsby and Captain Slingsby.

Bev has a high spirited horse from Captain Slingsby and determines to enter a race. The viscount, however, informs him that Captain Slingsby and Captain Carnaby also are to take part.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

(Continued)

"Oh well, I suppose you see—oh, I'll be shot if I know!"

"You don't love her, do you, Dick?"

"Clemency? Of course not—that is supposed I do what then?"

"Why then she's made a very handsome viscountess, Dick."

"Beverly," said the viscount, staring wide-eyed, "are you mad?"

"No," Barnabas retorted, "I take you to be an honorable man, my lord."

The viscount sprang to his feet, clenched his fists, then took two or three turns across the room.

"Sir," said he, in his icest tones, "you presume too much on my friendship."

"My lord," said Barnabas,

struggling with his breeches, "your humor is surely your friend's also?"

"Sir," said the viscount, with arms still folded, and sitting very upright on the bed, "were I to call you out for that remark I should be only within my rights."

"My lord," answered Barnabas,

struggling with his shirt, "were you to call from now till doomsday—I should come."

"Then, sir," said the viscount, cold and towering, "a whip, perhaps, or a cane might—"

But at this juncture, with a discreet knock, Peterby entered, and, having bowed to the scowling viscount, proceeded to invest Barnabas with polished boots, waistcoat and scarlet coat, and to tie his voluminous cravat, all with that deftness, that swift and silent dexterity which helped to make him the marvel he was.

"Sir," said he, when Barnabas stood equipped from head to foot, "Captain Slingsby's groom called to say that his master and the Marquis of Jerningham are expecting you and Viscount Devenham to breakfast at 'The Chequers' a little higher up the street, sir. Breakfast is ordered for 8."

"Thank you, Peterby," said Barnabas,

and, bowing to the viscount, followed him from the room and downstairs, out into the dewy freshness of the morning. Through all the bustling throng went our two young gentlemen, each remarkably stiff and upright as to back, and each excessively polite, yet walking, for the most part, in a dignified silence, until, having left the crowd behind, Barnabas paused suddenly in the shade of a deserted caravan, and turned to his companion.

"Dick!" said he smiling, and with hand outstretched.

"Sir?" said the viscount, frowning and with eyes averted.

"My lord," said Barnabas, bowing profoundly, "if I have offended your lordship—I am sorry, but—"

"But, sir?"

"But your continued resentment for a fanned wrong is so much stronger than your avowed friendship for me, it would seem—that henceforth I—"

WITH a warning cry the viscount sprang forward and, turning in a flash, Barnabas, saw a heavy bludgeon in the air above him. He saw the viscount meet it with up-flung arm; heard the thud of the blow, a snarling curse; saw a figure dart away and vanish among the jungle of carts; saw the viscount stagger against the caravan and lean there, his pale face convulsed with pain.

"Oh, Bev," he groaned, "my game army, you know. Hold me up, I—"

"Dick!" cried Barnabas, supporting the viscount's writhing figure, "oh, Dick—it was meant for me! No, you must hurt."

"No—nothing to—mention, my dear fellow. Comes a bit—sharp at first, y' know—better in a minute or two."

"Dick—Dick, what can I do for you?"

"Nothing—don't worry, Bev—right as ninepence in a minute, y' know!"

"Why then she's made a very handsome viscountess, Dick."

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(To Be Continued)

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