

The ESCAPADE

A POST MARITAL ROMANCE

BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS
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SYNOPSIS.

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 tilt, caused by jealousy, Lord Carrington and his wife each made charges of faithlessness against the other in continuation of the quarrel. First objecting against playing cards with the guests, Lady Carrington agreed to cut cards with Lord Strathgate, whose attentions 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 L. O. U. and his honor, Carrington winning. The incident closed except that a liking for each other apparently arose between Lady Carrington and Lord Strathgate. Additional attentions of Lord Carrington to Lady Cecily and Carrington and her husband, Deborah, an American girl, met Lord Strathgate at two a. m., he agreeing to see them safely away. Ellen Strathgate, who had been attempting to take her to his castle, but she left him stunned in the road when the carriage met with an accident. She and Deborah then struck out for Portsmouth, where she intended to sail for America.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Suddenly Carrington thought of the door not often used that opened into the hall from her bedroom. He cursed himself for a fool for not having thought of it before. He ran thither at once in spite of the fact that his conduct was attracting the attention of the servants passing to and fro about their various duties.

He tried the handle of the door, which was shut, and found it was unlocked. He threw it open. The bed had not been tenanted, yet Ellen had certainly undressed, for the gown and other things she had worn the night before lay in a tumbled, confused heap on the floor just where she had kicked them off.

My lady's desk stood open before him. A piece of paper caught his eye. He dropped the slipper, darted toward it, opened the paper, which was addressed to him, and read the following:

"The enclosed pays my last debt to Lord Carrington. When he reads this, I shall be on the way to my own land. With the money which he won, he can buy himself Lady Cecily without the formality of a marriage ceremony and in her arms he can forget the woman he shamed, whom he once loved and who once loved him."

From the paper as he had torn it open, an inclosure had fallen. He stooped and picked it up. It was the cheque on Ellen's name for twenty thousand pounds. My lord's brain reeled as he stared from the cheque to the note. It was as if he had been struck some powerful blow over the heart and was for the moment paralyzed. He sank down in a chair and gazed stupidly about him in great bewilderment.

And then he heard his name called. "My lord, my lord!"

It was the aged butler coming up the stairs, white-faced and panting. "What is it, Jepson?" cried Carrington, confronting the man. "Speak out. What has happened?"

"One of the footmen, Thomas, my lord, has just come in from the stables. He says that he found the three stable boys who were there last night bound and gagged."

"What?" cried Lord Carrington.

"That's not all, sir," continued the faithful Jepson, "the coachman—"

"Has he gone?" queried the earl.

"No, my lord. He was bound and gagged, too, in the coach house."

"Who did it?"

"He says the earl of Strathgate."

"Impossible!" protested Carrington, fighting against the awful suspicion that entered his heart.

"It's quite true, my lord."

Carrington dashed back madly into his wife's room. He had known that she had hanging in her closet the sailor's suit which she had worn on her cruises with him. A dark suspicion had come to him. He tore open the door of the closet and tore from the hooks one after another the gorgeous dresses which hung there. He did not find what he sought. She had evidently worn it away. He turned from the room, ran through the hall and down the flight of stairs to the library. The coachman awaited him.

"Who was with Strathgate when he bound you last night?"

"A young man, I take it, my lord," answered the coachman. "The room was dark, with only the firelight, and I couldn't see very well. Lord Strathgate threatened me with a pistol, or I'd have made outcry and resistance. He kept me covered with my head turned away. The young man handed him straps to lash me."

"You coward!" cried Carrington, fiercely turning on the man.

"I beg your pardon, your lordship. I'm afraid of no man who comes at me with his fists, but that pistol."

He threw open the door and the three boys came in.

"Who was with Lord Strathgate last night?" questioned Carrington fiercely.

The stable boys shuffled uneasily.

"By heaven!" cried Carrington in tones of thunder, "answer me or I'll have you flogged all over the place."

"'Twas a slight young man," said one of them, finally. "We didn't recognize who it was," he continued, boldly lying. "Lord Strathgate is a very imperious man and he covered us with his pistol and swore if we made a sound he'd blow our brains out, and the young man tied our hands and the two of 'em gagged us."

"Couldn't you see who the young man was?"

"No, my lord; not in the dark."

"Which team did they take?" said Carrington, cutting in.

"The bays, my lord."

"The bays! The best team in the stable! and the traveling carriage?"

"Your lordship, yes, sir," returned the coachman.

"That will do. Go you and saddle Sailor and the best rider among you boys saddle the best horse left in the stable and make ready to come with me. See that your pistols are in the holsters."

A moment later there was a timid knock on the door and at Carrington's bidding the woman who looked after Mistress Deborah entered.

"Your lordship, Mistress Slocum's room is empty."

The maid disappeared, only to give place to Admiral Kephart.

"What's the trouble, my lad?" said the admiral, rolling into the room, giving evidence in the disorder of his costume of the haste in which he had made his toilet.

"Lady Carrington has gone. She left me this."

He drew from the pocket of his waistcoat the note, added the cheque to it, and extended them to the admiral.

The old man took them, read them slowly, folded them up and returned them to the injured husband.

"Carrington," he said, "you've been a fool."

"I know it," returned the other.

"The idea," said the admiral, "of your giving a lady to that painted old coquette, when you had such a woman as Lady Ellen for your wife."

"You can't say anything too harsh for me, admiral."

"I'm glad you are awake to the situation. Now the thing to do is to clap on sail in chase, overhaul her,

bring her to, make your apologies handsomely and fetch her back to anchor under convoy. Then we'll clear out this crew."

"There's Seton," ejaculated Carrington, peering through the window. "Charlie!" he called. Seton turned. "Come here quickly, bear a hand."

There was that in Carrington's voice which indicated some grave emergency. Seton ran across the lawn and vaulted right through the window.

"Lady Carrington's gone," said Carrington, bluntly. "Did you know anything about it?"

"You insult me!" cried Seton, fiercely. "How should I know anything about it?"

"You've been hanging around her ever since you came here. I've caught you a dozen times alone together."

"Lord Carrington," cried Seton, "I'll not be catechized and insulted this way another moment."

"It was you or Strathgate," continued Carrington, hotly, "one or the other of you, but Strathgate got ahead of you. He's gone and Lady Ellen with him."

"Great heavens! You can't mean it!"

"I shall start after them," said Sir Charles. "If I come across them first, I shall send word to you, and I trust that you'll do the same by me."

"Don't fear," answered Carrington as the other turned and dashed out of the room.

"You'll find me at Portsmouth, Carrington," said the old admiral. "I'll be glad to render you any assistance in my power. You won't fail to call upon me, will you?"

"I will not. Will you tell the duke and duchess and the others that they may take their own time in departing, but that they better be out of the house before I get back."

"God help and God bless you!" said the admiral as Carrington ran out of the room.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He tore open the door.

hours before a muddy, blood-stained man, riding horseback upon a coach horse from which the traces and other parts of harness had been cut, had passed the gate on the way to Carrington castle at a gallop that bade fair to kill the horse. Strathgate had recovered consciousness after awhile, and thinking that the two women would go back to Portsmouth by some means or other, had mounted the less tired of the two horses, somewhat refreshed by the half hour's rest, and had galloped in that direction.

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Sunday School Lesson
Specially Arranged
for Oct. 25, 1908
for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Psalm 130. Golden Text.—"If thou shalt confess thy sin, he will forgive thee."

VERSE 1. "My soul is full of grief."

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