A DAUGHTER OF THE MARIONIS

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

The ceiling was cracked and black with smoke, and the faded paper was hanging down from the top of the wall. There was not a single article or spot in the room on which the eye could rest with pleasure. It was an interior which matched the exterior. Nothing worse could be said about it.

The visitor took it all in, and raising his hand to his head, closed his eyes. Ah! what a relief it was to blot it all out of sight, if only for a moment. He had known evil times, but at their worst, such surroundings as these he had never met with. A strange nervousness was creeping slowly over him, the presage of disappointment. He dropped his hands, and walked restlessly up and down, striving to banish his fears. Might not all this be necessary—a form of disguise—a clever mode of concealment? Poverty alone could not have brought things to this strait. Poverty! There had been no poverty in his day. Yet he was full of forebodings. He remembered the wonder the evasions, almost the pity with which his first inquiries in Rome had been met. He could not expect to find things exactly the same. Twenty years is a long time, and there must be many changes. Why had he not stayed in Rome a little longer, and learned more. He could easily have obtained the knowledge which he desired there. It would have been wiser, surely it would have been wiser.

The door opened in the midst of his meditations, and he looked eagerly up. Again his heart fell. It was not such a man as this that he had expected to see. Ah! what a day of disappointments it was!

The figure which, after a moment's pause in the doorway, now advanced somewhat hesitatingly towards him, was that of a man a little past middle age. He was of medium height, but stout even to corpulency, and his cheeks were fat and puffy. His hair was grey and his thick stubbly mustaches, which had evidently once been black, were also changing color. His dark, shiny coat was ridiculously short for him, and his trousers terminated above his ankles. He wore no necktie, and his collar was ragged and soiled. In short, his whole appearance was not only untidy but dirty. His gait, too, was slouching and undignified.

"You wished to speak to me," he said in a thick tone and with a foreign accent. "My name is Bartlezzi—Signor Alfonso Bartlezzi."

"Yes, I wished to speak with you."

Signor Bartlezzi began to feel uncomfortable under his visitor's fixed gaze. Why should he look at him so intently? He had never set eyes upon him before—and what an odd, shrunken little figure it was. He coughed and shifted his position.

"Ah! yes. I am ready, as you see. Is it anything to do with my profession?"

"I do not know what your profession is."

Signor Bartlezzi made an effort to draw himself up, and assumed a military air.

"I am a master of fencing," he announced, also a professor of Italian—Professor Alfonso Bartlezzi, at your service. I am fairly well known in this neighborhood. If you have pupils to recommend, sir, or if you are thinking of taking lessons yourself, I should be most happy. My services are sometimes made use of as interpreter, both in the police-court and privately. I should be happy to serve you in that capacity, sir."

Signor Bartlezzi, having declared himself, folded his arms and waited. He felt certain that his visitor must now divulge his name and mission. That, however, he seemed in no hurry to do.

"You are an Italian?" he asked presently.

"Certainly, sir."

"May I ask, have you still correspondents or friends in that country?"

The professor was a little uneasy. He looked steadfastly at his visitor for a moment, however, and seemed to regain his composure.

"I have neither," he answered sorrowfully. "The friends of former days are silent; they have forgotten me."

"You have lived in England for long, then?"

"Since I was a boy, sir."

"And you are content?"

The professor shrugged his shoulders and looked around. The gesture was significant.

"Scarcely so," he answered. "But what would you have? May I now ask you a question, sir?" he continued.

"Yes."

"Your name?"

His visitor looked around him, mournfully.

"The day for secrecy is past, I suppose," he said sadly. "I am the Count Leonardo di Marioni."

"What!" shrieked the professor.

"Count Leonardo di Marioni—that is my name. I am better known as Signor di Cortegi, perhaps, in the history of our society."

"My God!"

If a thunderbolt had burst through the ceiling of the little sitting-room, the professor could not have been more agitated. He had sunk down upon a chair, pale and shaking all over with the effect of the surprise.

"He was a young man?" he faltered.

His visitor sighed.

"It was five and twenty years ago," he answered slowly. Five and twenty years rotting in a Roman prison. That has been my fate. I was a young man then. You see me now."

He held up his arms, and let them drop again heavily to his side. It was a gesture full of sad dramatic pathos, but in that little room there was no one to observe it, no one to pity him for those white hairs and deep-drawn lines. But that was nothing. It was not pity that he wanted.

There was silence. Both men were absorbed in their own thoughts. Signor Bartlezzi was thunderstruck and completely unnerved. The perspiration stood out upon his forehead, and he could feel his hands and legs shaking. This was a terrible and altogether unexpected blow to him. It was not the thought of that 25 years' lonely captivity which was oppressing him, so much as the fact that it was over—that the day of release had come, and that it was indeed Count Marioni who stood before him, alive and a free man. That was the serious part of it. Had it not been proclaimed that the imprisonment was for life? That had certainly been the sentence. A gleam of hope flashed in upon him. Perhaps he had escaped from prison. If so, the sooner he was back there the better.

"Was not the sentence for life?" he gasped.

The count assented, shaking his head slowly.

"Yes, for life," he answered bitterly. "That was the sentence, imprisonment for life."

"Then you have escaped?"

The same slow shake of the head. The professor was bitterly disappointed.

"No. At five and twenty years a prisoner with a good conduct record is restored to liberty. My time came at last It was a weary while."

"What evil fate kept him alive all that time?" the professor muttered under his breath. "Men are buried deep who pass within the walls of an Italian prison. What had kept this frail old man alive?" Before the night was over, he knew!

The professor sat on the edge of his chair, limp and dejected. He was quite powerless to frame any speech of welcome or congratulation. Fortunately, it was not expected. His visitor was deep in thought, and some time passed before he appeared even to notice the presence of Signor Bartlezzi. At last, however, he looked up and spoke.

"I fear that all things have not gone well with us!" he said sadly. "On my release, I visited the old home of our society in the Piazza di Spiola at Rome. It was broken up. I met with no one who could tell me anything about it. It was doubtless because I knew not where to go; but I had fancied—I had hoped—that there might have been some one whose memory would not have been altogether dulled by time, who would have come to meet me at the prison gates, and welcome me back into the living world once more. But that is nothing. Doubtless the day of my release was unknown. It was the hot season at Rome, and I wandered wearily about, seeing no familiar face, and unable to hear anything of our friends. I might have had patience and lingered, but it seemed to me that I had been patient so long—it was all exhausted. From there I went to Florence, with the same result. At last I came to London, and by making cautious inquiries through my bank, I discovered your address. So I have come here."

"Ah, yes, yes," answered the professor, with blinking eyes, and still completely bewildered. "You have come here Just so. Just so."

"The numbers have fallen off, I suppose? Yet you still have meetings?"

"Oh, yes; certainly. We still have meetings," the professor assented spasmodically.

The little old man nodded his head gravely. He had never doubted it.

"When is the next?" he asked, with the first touch of eagerness creeping into his voice.

Signor Bartlezzi felt a cold perspiration on his forehead, and slowly mopped it with a red cotton handkerchief. The calmness of despair was settling down upon him. "He must know," he thought. "Better get it over."

"Tonight," he answered, "in an hour—perhaps before. They'll be dropping in directly."

"Ah!" It was a long-drawn and significant monosyllable. The count rose to his feet, and commenced pacing the room. Already its meanness was forgotten, its narrow walls had expanded. The day of his desire had come. "What are your numbers now?" he asked.

The professor drew a long breath, and kept his eyes fixed upon his visitor. The thing was narrowing down.

"Four," he answered; "four besides myself."

The count started and appeared perplexed.

"Four on the acting committee, you mean, I suppose?" he suggested. "Four is the old number."

The professor shook his head doggedly.

"Four altogether," he repeated.

The old man's eyes flashed, but the angry light died almost immediately away. After all, there might be grave reasons, of which he was ignorant, for restricting the number.

"Four desperate and brave men may be much," he mused, half aloud. "One will do enough for my purpose."

There was a ghastly humor in that speech which was nearly too much for Signor Bartlezzi. He was within an ace of collapsing, but he saved himself by a quick glance at that worn old man. His visitor was living in the light of five and twenty years ago. The awakening would come. It was at hand.

"Signor Bartlezzi," the count said, pausing suddenly in his restless walk, "I have a confession to make."

"So had he," Signor Bartlezzi mused, though his would keep.

"Proceed," he begged, with a wave of his hand and a touch of his old bombast, which had collapsed so suddenly. "Proceed, I am all attention."

To be Continued Tomorrow.

FEMININE CHAT AND CHATTER

GOSSIP AND ADVICE FOR THE WORLD OF WOMEN.

Marriage and Disparity in Age—Years Are Such Decitful Things. They Mean Less Than Almost Anything Else—Some Women Are Old at Thirty and Some Are Young at Forty.

BY WINIFRED BLACK.

Well, my dear, what do you want me to say, and I'll say it, for really you are going to do just as you wish about it after all, aren't you? And why shouldn't you, pray tell?

You love the man and he loves you. He is able to take good care for you. You are unhappy away from him and he wants you with him. What is there for you to do but marry him and say no more about it?

Six years older than he? Is that the objection? Not half such an objection as if he were just the right age for you and drank, or if he were dishonest, of if he likes one kind of life and you like another. There is always something, but this matter of a few years' difference in age is not one of the really serious objections to marriage, after all.

The most miserable woman I know married a man just five years older than she was. She is as pretty as a picture and as good as gold. But the man is dead in love with an elderly widow, and the wife's heart is broken.

Six years older, are you? In years you mean, of course; but how much older are you in all the things that count? Years are such decettful things. They mean less than almost anything else.

Some women are old at 30, some are young at 40. Some men are boys at 30 and some boys are men at 20. What sort of woman are you and what kind is the man you love?

Another woman I know married a man four years younger than herself. He looked 10 years younger, for the woman had much responsibility, much care and much sorrow in her life.

When they were married all the men said, "He's making a mistake," and all the women said, "She'll live to regret it." As a matter of fact, it is turning out to be a much happier marriage than some of the marriages made by the people who criticised it as "unsuitable."

The man and woman who started four years apart are just about even now, for the woman is a vital sort of person, strong, full of life and energy, active and fond of all that living means.

The man is quiet, gentle, fond of routine. He'd rather stay at home every evening of the week than to go to the finest play that ever was acted. The woman would rather go to the play than do anything else. They compromised by going once a week, and the man stays at home and reads in comfort the other six, while the woman entertains herself with her own friends in her own way.

So it has all turned out for the best. The woman who was four years the older on the wedding day is 10 years the younger now. Simply a matter of disposition and temperament, that's all. She's the sort that stops growing old at 30; he's the sort that stops being young at 35. And there they are—very comfy, thank you, and highly amused at the idea that there could be anything unsuitable about their marriage.

When a man falls in love with a woman he isn't thinking of her age—he's thinking of the woman and of himself, and age hasn't a thing in the world to do with it.

Brains, character, taste, education—these are far more important than a mere matter of a slight difference in age.

How goes the old rhyme?

"If he knows not the language of flowers,
If he loves not to hear the blast blow,
If he dote not on ruins and towers,
My own Araminta, say No."

Nothing about the age limit there, you see—not a syllable.

Marry the man you love if only six years divide you, and if you are not happy together it will not be the difference in age that will bring you sorrow.

Bless you, my children. Bless you. If you never have anything more serious to worry about than those six little years you'll be more "suitably" married than many.

BAKED CHOCOLATE PUDDING.

Soak a cupful of freshly grated bread crumbs in two cupfuls of milk, melt an ounce of unsweetened chocolate over hot water, add half a cupful of sugar, half a cupful of milk drained from the bread, a tablespoonful of butter and when well blended pour over the beaten yolks of two eggs. Add the bread mixture, a fourth of a teaspoon of ground cinnamon. Flavor with vanilla. Bake about 30 minutes in a moderate oven.

Sauce for Pudding—Boil half a cupful of sugar and a fourth of a cupful of water until it spins a thread, then pour over the beaten whites of two eggs. Flavor with vanilla.

PRESSING TROUSERS.

To press trousers place them flat on an ironing blanket, fronts upward.

Dampen the knee portion thoroughly. Let stand a half hour; cover with cloth and press dry.

Now fold in crease, dampen and press in the usual way.

The bulging appearance about the knees will have entirely disappeared and the cloth will be shrunken to the original shape.

Trousers pressed in this manner will hold their own three times as long as those pressed in the usual way.

SOUR PUDDING SAUCE.

One quart of water, one and one-half cups sugar, one tablespoon vinegar, one yolk of egg, one heaping tablespoon butter, salt and nutmeg to taste. Bring to a boil, then take one and one-half tablespoons flour in a little water and stir in slowly. Serve cold or hot.

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For real dressy afternoon wear, or for evening, the short draped wrap of velvet is very chic. Collars and Cuffs of fur and fancy buttons for trimming.

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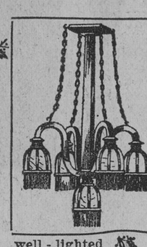

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SIX-CUP PUDDING.

Sift a cup of bread crumbs, put in a bowl with a cup of flour, a cup of sugar, a cup of finely shred beef suet and a cup of orange marmalade, also a pinch of salt. Mix all thoroughly. Add a teaspoonful of baking powder to the mixture, moisten the whole with a cupful of milk. Turn into a well-greased dish and tie a cloth over. Boil three hours.

GRAHAM PUDDING.

Melt one-fourth cup of butter, add one-half cup of molasses, one-half cup milk and one egg. Mix and sift together one and one-half cups of graham flour, one-half teaspoon soda, one teaspoon salt and one cup of raisins, seeded and cut. Add this to the first mixture and steam two and one-hour hours in well-buttered molds. Use any good sauce.

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Remaining in Baltimore Postoffice January 5, 1913.

[Published by Authority.]

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Bear Daisy
Beatty Sally J
Beckman Mrs M M
Bemes Mrs Dora
Bender Mrs Matty S
Benham Mrs T W
Benjamin Mrs Mary
Bennett Bertha
Bennett Clara
Berkige Mary
Bessagno Mrs Minnie
Bias Annie
Bispham Mildred F
Black Mrs Reeba
Blackson Mrs Emma
Blummer Mrs Sydney Weatherall
Rodman Miss
Bolling Anna D
Boogle Dorothy
Brace Mrs Edison
Bradley Miss M Eleanor
Brady Annie
Branham Lucy
Brause Sophie
Brendel Mrs F L
Brenner Regina
Bridgman Ruth V
Briggs Mrs Mannie
Broenf Mrs K
Brooks Mrs Milliam
Broughton Nettie
Brown Agnes
Brown Mrs Geo
Brown Mrs Geo Sr
Brown Helen
Brown Jennie B
Brown Jean
Brown Mrs Lena
Brown Mrs Louisa R
Brown Mrs Nellie M
Brown Mrs Roxie
Brown Mrs Stanley
Brumbaugh Mrs A K
Brunner Mrs C J
Buchanan Miss
Buchanan Mrs R C
Bunnell Mrs F E B
Burke Ida E
Burnett Mrs W A
Burns Edith F
Burns Lillian
Burton Maybell
Burwell Mrs Armistead J
Bury Mrs Celia
Byrne Miss M H
Byrne Sarah
Cabell Mrs Gustavia
Cabell Mrs G B
Caldwell Elizabeth
Cameron Mrs Alvina
Cambell Mary H
Candler Mrs L C
Card Mrs Wm T
Carmen Miss E M
Carroll Miss
Carroll Miss
Carter Mrs Alberta
Carter Mrs Florence
Carter Sara
Cassard Mrs Ida L
Cassel Mrs A
Challow Stella
Chenoweth Jess
Chesley Mrs S Russell
Christian Miss
Church Mrs Jean
Church Christiana
Claggett Edith
Clark Daisey
Clark Eva
Clark Laura
Clark Mary A
Clark Mrs N E
Clay Ruby
Clements Mrs J A
Cline Mrs Wm
Cloke Sara M
Cole Nanie
Cole Mary
Coleman Miss H M
Coleman Mrs L
Collins Mrs Bell
Conant Dr Mary C
Conklin Alice J
Conley Mrs Geo
Cook Alice
Cook Mrs Fred H
Cooke Mrs Mary L
Cooper Mrs Amelia
Cooper Carrie
Cooper Lara A
Copeland Lva
Corbett Mrs M Quay (2)
Corbin Hounter
Corcoran Mary G
Cornelia Alice
Cornish Mrs Lillie
Correll Mrs C F
Cotton Grace
Councilman Mrs Emma C
Counselman Nettie E
Crawford Elenor
Crawford Molly
Cross Ellen H.
Cross Lena
Crummell Reba
Cummings May
Cunningham Miss A
Cunningham Mrs Julia
Cutherell Eliza
Damon Geraldine
Dante Miss
Darrell Miss
Dashiels Mrs Fannie
Davis Mrs Alla M
Davis Amy
Davis Eleanor
Davis Elva
Davis Mrs Jos
Davis Miss M Elizabeth
Daye Miss Josie
Dean Emma
Decker Mrs C E
Deckinger Winifred
Denmead Mrs Talbot
Deplanque Mrs Wm
Devries Hilda (2)
DeWitt Ella
Dieter Louise
Dietrich Dorotha
Diffinbaugh Miss B F
Dixon Betty
Dixon Polly
Dolenan Myrtle
Doll Carrie
Doll Mrs Julia
Dorittee Mrs Ellen G
Dorsey Mrs Anna L
Dorsey Mrs E L
Dorsey Stannie
Driver Mrs G C
Duhme Marie
Dukes Catherine
Dunaway Annie
Dunham Ethel
Dunston Victoria
Dwinell Mrs Ethel
Dyer Mrs Eliza
Eastan Mabel
Edge Mrs Walter S
Edmondson Miss A
Edwards May
Eldred Mrs
Elliott Mrs Bertha
Engel Dorothy
England Margaret
Eweng Mrs Mary C
Fait Mrs C J
Fay Mrs W G
Federman Mrs M E
Fisher Edna
Fisher Mrs Kate
Fisher Mrs M
Fisher Mrs Martin
Fisher Mrs Steller
Fitzgerald Miss
Flaherty Winnie
Fleet Mrs J T
Flinn Lillie
Floon Anna
Floyd Mrs Fannie
Foote Mrs Mary
Ford Mrs B F
Ford Jesse
Ford Mrs Estelle
Ford Mrs F V
Forester Della
Forsythe Mrs Robert W
Foster Mrs Mabel
Franz Mrs Etta
Freeney Aloe
Frick Dorothy
Frist Julia O
Frozee Clara E
Funk Mrs
Furman Evelyn
Gambel Minna
Gambriell Mrs Melville
Gamble Mrs R H
Gamble Mrs Robt
Gant Elizabeth
Gant Mrs Madge
Garber Mrs Jno A
Gardner Carrie
Gasken Mrs Manie
Gaskins Manie
German Mrs Irvine
Gibbs Harriet
Gilbert Mrs V Turner
Gilmor Mrs Andrew
Goavins Mrs Bessie
Goetz Mrs Elsie
Goodman Ruth
Gossage Mrs Edith
Grady Mrs Helen P
Graham Mary
Gray Clara
Gray M Selicia
Green Irene
Green Nonine
Griffin Mrs Mary G
Griffin Mary B
Jaeques Mrs
James Mrs
James Mrs Kate M
Jameson Miss
Jarrett Lizzie
Jefferson Mrs Granville
Johnson Mrs Chas
Johnson Mrs Della
Johnson Mrs Geo
Johnson Mrs Lucy
Green Alvierter
MacInnes Minnie
Macomber Lizzie
Macrae Edith
Madden Mrs Martha
Madison Mrs J F
Manning Miss M L
Manson Mrs H H
Marchell Mrs Laura
Markes Mrs Annie
Marks Mrs M
Marney Catherine
Marowitz Lillian
Mason Mrs Harriett
Mates Mrs Mary
Mayne Estelia
Mazzo Mrs Sarah E
McAllister Miss
McCarty Mrs Richard J Jr
McCarty Stella
McCleish Hellen A
McConnell Mrs Arthur
McCubbin Mrs Lo
McDermytt Mrs Corine
McDonald Mrs Harry
McEvoy Mrs Nannie
McGlyn Rose
McGrath Miss A L
McHarry Isabel
McKenzie Bessie
McKenzie Sallie P
McKinney Evelyn
McManus Mrs Sarah
McGuinn Mrs M L
McRae Gertie
McCall Eva
Meekins Mrs Maggie
Mein Ronir
Mercer Florence
Merrick Bertha V
Miller Alice W
Miller Mrs Carmelite
Miller Helen (3)
Miller Mrs Hevelyn
Mitchel Mrs
Mitchel Joseph
Moan Mary
Monkton Nellie
Monroe Mrs Henry
Montag Mrs May
Montague Mrs Annie
Moody Mrs Bettie
Moody Ruth M
Moore Annie
Moore Estelle
Moore Mrs J F
Moore Lulie C
More Miss Reven E
Morgan Mrs C S
Morgan Queen
Mortimer Beatrice
Mosby Mrs T T
Mowbray Ray
Musgrave Mrs Barbra
Muller Mrs Alice
Muller Mrs Nellie
Murdock Miss
Murdock Caroline
Murphy Mrs Annie
Murphy Mrs I R
Murphy Minnie
Murray Mrs Mable F
Murray Regina
Murrell Alice
Myers Mrs Albert
Myers Mrs Carroll E
Myers Katherine
Neal Louisa
Neal Mrs Thos
Neill Mrs J A
Nelson Mrs Jeanette
Nelson Mrs Mary
Nelson Mrs S B
Nevber Mamie
Newlen Burnie (2)
Nichols Mrs Ellen
Nixon Mrs P M
Norment Frances S
Norris Mrs G W
Northam Mrs E B
Norton Edmonia
Nyne Mollie
O'Dea Miss A M
Ogle Mrs Richard L
Ore Mrs Jas A
Oreson Nellie
Ortt Marcella
Owen Mary
Owings Florence E
Palmer Addie E
Park Esther
Parsons Mrs Sarah A
Paulson Mrs Mary
Patten Mrs Wm F
Paul Emma
Payne India B
Peck Miss A M
Peck Mrs Sarah Jane
Pennington Marie
Perry Mrs A H
Peters Dorothy
Peterson Mrs
Phelps Mrs
Pilini Mrs Keidi
Pindall Carrie
Platt Mrs Rosee
Pleasant Lou
Poe Sarah S
Pollack Mrs
Potter Bessie
Powell Ruth G
Preston Achsah C
Price Mrs Sarah E
Price Sidney
Pumphrey Elizabeth
Purner Mrs
Purell Mrs Lytleton
Puntnam Mrs Florence Mase
Putnam Mrs Otis E
Pyne Miss
Queen Armanella
Quinn Lucie M
Quirenburg Miss E
Ramsey Mrs Jos W
Randall Fanny
Randell Maybelle
Randolph Mrs B M
Reamer Bertie
Reed Mrs Anna
Reed Mayle
Reese Miss H Mabel
Reeve Lillian Marsh
Regester Elizabeth
Reiser Helen
Reynolds Etta
Reynolds Mary
Reynolds Mrs Wilber F
Riber Mrs Marta
Rice Mrs Nannie
Rich Polly
Richards Elise
Richardson Mrs
Ricketts Stella M
Riebe Mrs Helen
Robb Mary C
Roberson Martina
Roberts Mrs Abell B
Roberts Mrs Ella
Robinette Rebecca
Robinson Blanch
Robinson Mrs Carrie
Robinson Eva A
Robison Mrs Tinie
Robson Dausy
Rodenhi Mrs Louise
Robinson Mrs Tinnie
Rodgers Mrs Robert
Rogers Mrs G R
Rose Marie
Rose Mrs May S
Rose Mrs R M
Rose Mrs Valena R
Roy Mrs Rosalie
Russell Chas
Rutledge Mrs C E
Ryan Maud
Sanford Miss K
Sausay Mrs Josephine
Sausman Carrie
Sac Mrs Sallie
Schaefer Maggie
Schaefer Mrs Nellie
Schaffer Mrs
Schaum Catherine
Schell Beulah
Schleiner Emilie
Schley Lizzie
Schley