THE COURT OF ST. SIMON

By ANTHONY PARTRIDGE

Author of Passers-By, The Golden Webb, etc.

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CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

"I have had the most absurd ideas," she went on. "If I could dress as a boy and go into whatever country you go, if I could be in the same town, even, I should expect so little. I want nothing more. Oh, you must understand!" she cried. "You must understand that you cut into my heart when you speak of a husband and children, and all those things. Do you suppose that one loves to order, even among my class? Do you suppose that after six months with you, even though your kisses have touched only my forehead, I could think of any other man?"

He moved a little in his seat. She clutched at his sleeve. "Do not be angry," she begged. "It is not that I expect anything more from you. I don't! I know that it would be useless. But I want to keep myself as I am, always, because I have known you. Is there anything wrong in that, anything to make you angry?"

He turned towards her. There was an unaccustomed softness in his tone. "Dear Josephine," he said, "I am sorry. My experiment has not been a success. I forgot that in every creature of your sex there is always the woman's heart to be reckoned with."

"If only men had hearts, too!" she moaned.

He looked away into the trees. "Are there any men who haven't?" he asked. "We do not carry them upon our sleeves, you know, Josephine. I speak to you now in return for your words. It is the only kindness I can show you. I speak to you as I have spoken to no other human being, not even my sister, who loved me. There was a time when I felt as you feel, but alas! towards no human being. You find me, Josephine, a little hard, unaffectionate. It seems strange to you, perhaps, that I have never desired the things which other men desire. I wonder if you will understand me when I say that it is not my fault. I have spent years of my life hoping that that thing would come to me which comes to most men. And it doesn't. It passes me by. I never learned the art of pretending to care, Josephine, and the real thing doesn't come. So I grow older every day. Other men are caught up into Heaven. I suppose to love in that way is a gift, a gift which has passed me by."

"You mean to say that you have never loved?" she whispered.

"Foolish child!" he answered. "To have once loved is to love for always."

Presently they found themselves once more on the great highway to Paris.

"Tomorrow I leave for England," he said, breaking a long pause.

She held out her hand. "Tonight, then, we say farewell," she replied steadily. "I think that you have made it easier for me, somehow, because you have told me what I am sure you have never told any one else."

He handed her out.

"Josephine," he began—for there was something else which he would have said to her. She looked swiftly into his face and he was silent. She flitted away and was lost in the throng. Valentin stepped back into the automobile.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLISH COUNTRY LIFE.

Valentin turned with relief from the dusty road on to the soft green meadowland. The end of his pilgrimage was very close at hand. He walked for a hundred yards or so across the meadow, starred with yellow buttercups and cowslips, through the long grasses, past the sleek Alderneys that gazed at him with brown, unwinking eyes. Presently he reached a low ring fence, over which he climbed. Before him was the gray stone front of an old English country house, with its sweep of gravel, its flower-beds brilliant with color, its deep, rich lawns, with here and there a cedar tree. On his right was a bed of blossoming rhododendrons—a brilliant patch of color; on his left, a cedar tree, from under whose shade came a murmur of pleasant voices, the soft tinkling of spoons. Valentin gave a little sigh, knocked the dust from his shoes, and bending back the branches presented himself in the open space from which the sounds came.

"Fortunate as usual, my dear Helen!" he murmured, advancing towards the woman who was seated behind the tea-tray. "You see, I took my chance of finding you all at home."

Lady Carlingford was tall and fair, with some of her brother's good looks but without his distinction. With a cream jug in one hand and a cup in the other, she looked at him in blank surprise.

"Valentin!" she exclaimed at last. "It is really you, then! Why do you play us such tricks?"

He smiled and, taking her hands in his, kissed them. "Dear Helen," he said, "you must not be angry with me. The day before yesterday I had no idea of coming. Last night it seemed to me that there was nothing I desired so eagerly on earth as to sit under your cedar trees and smell your roses and hear your hay-cutting machines make music. Certainly I am more English than French."

"You are a most amazing person, although you are my brother," she declared. "Let me present you to Lady Margaret Simes, Mrs. Henecker, Miss Doris Fielding, Mr. Clarence Gray—my brother, the Vicomte de Souspennier."

Valentin acknowledged his sister's introductions and threw himself into a chair by her side. "Helen," he exclaimed, "this is Paradise! England seems to me more beautiful every time I visit it."

She poured him out a cup of tea. "I don't suppose you will drink it," she remarked. "You want absinthe or some such horrible drink, I suppose." He shook his head reproachfully. "My dear Helen," he protested, "how could you think me guilty of such an anachronism as to ask for absinthe in such an exquisitely English scene! It is in the miserable quarters of the world that one drinks absinthe. Here—well, tea is more suitable. And how is my esteemed brother-in-law?"

"Charles is well but busy," she replied. "Today he is at an agricultural show about 20 miles off, where he is one of the stewards. He has to judge things, and I am sure I don't know what time he'll be home."

Valentin, who tolerated his brother-in-law, sighed gently. "And you others? he asked. "Is this a little house party? De I hear voices on the tennis courts?"

"Very likely," his sister answered. "Some of the young people from the neighborhood are playing. Lady Simes is staying with me, and Mr. Gray. I am afraid you won't care about our bridge."

"Bridge!" Valentin repeated. "I shall not touch a card. Tonight, after dinner, I shall wander in your rose garden. I suppose you can put me up?"

"What an irresponsible person you are!" she declared, with a laugh. "Your things are at the station, I suppose? I will send a car for them. You might at least have sent a telegram and spared yourself the long dusty walk."

"I liked it," he answered. "I enjoyed every step of it. The country here is wonderful."

"The country around Souspennier is beautiful enough," she remarked.

"Beautiful, but in a different way," he declared. "French country always seems to me to be imbued with a note of theatricality. One is conscious of the artist's touch. Even the elm trees are grouped to let the sunlight come through. It's fancy, of course, but after all, you see, I am an Englishman, and I suppose this sort of thing appeals to me more."

The others drifted away. Valentin was alone with his sister. She was still a very handsome woman and in her youth they had been considered alike. Somewhere or other, however, their lives had parted company. There was little likeness now between the satisfied, well-preserved woman of 40, and the hard, tired-looking man a few years younger.

"What does it mean, this sudden visit to England?" she asked him curiously.

"A whim, dear sister," he replied, plucking a piece of sweetbriar from over his head and holding it to his nostrils. "Paris does that sort of thing to you. She takes all you have to give. Then she throws you away as I do this bruised leaf."

"The pity of it is she ever calls you back again," Lady Carlingford remarked, a little severely. "There is no proper country life for you in France. You should buy a small place here and marry."

He shook his head. "I should like to marry," he admitted, "but I have too much sense of humor."

"I don't in the least see why a sense of humor should be a reason for not marrying," objected Lady Carlingford. "I am sure Charles says very droll things sometimes, and we have always got on together remarkably well."

Valentin smiled as though at some thought. It was queer to come back into a world like this! "In any case," he said, "fate has treated me a little hardly in that one respect. I have had very many charming friends among your sex, friends of all sorts, but I have been left outside the orbit of this wonderful thing you call over here love. I am English enough to want it. A marriage after the French methods seems to me to have in it the very elements of savagery. Dear me," he went on, "how English I am becoming! I am talking of marriage and love as though they were inseparable."

She sighed. Like all the world who knew him, she loved this restless, dissatisfied brother of hers. "You mean to say really, Valentin, that you've never been in love at all?"

"On my honor, no!" he answered. "Doubtless the fact accounts for the wrinkles on my face. They say that it is love alone which keeps a man young."

She sighed. "And you are 37," she remarked.

"Thirty-eight next birthday," he corrected. "You know how bad it is for a child to dispense with scarlet fever and come out with it at 21. Fancy what a terrible thing if, after all these years, the more mysterious ailment should come to me!"

"If it were only the right woman," Mrs. Carlingford said decidedly.

"It never would be," he replied, getting up. "Come and show me over the gardens, Helen. I want to smell your roses again, and your pinks. Have you still that great bed of lavender? Do you know, a month ago, in the small hours of the morning in a little restaurant, the atmosphere of which would have terrified you, I suddenly thought that I could smell the Carlingford lavender. I think that was the beginning of my homesickness."

She took up her lace parasol and they strolled across the velvety lawn. Valentin drew in a long breath of the flower-laden air.

"It is true," he murmured. "It must have been this which was calling me!"

It was a very small house party and Valentin was a somewhat notable addition to it. At dinner time he was always amusing, sometimes brilliant. Charles Carlingford, who secretly admired his brother-in-law more than any man of his acquaintance, chose to call him flippant, but he listened enviously to the stream of light banter of which Valentin was always a perfect master.

To be Continued Tomorrow.

HER PUNISHMENT VERY SEVERE

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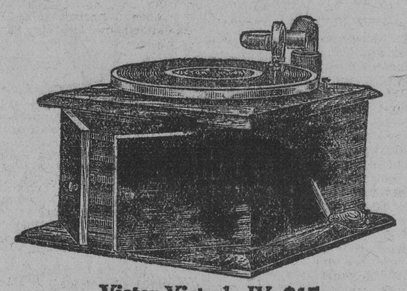

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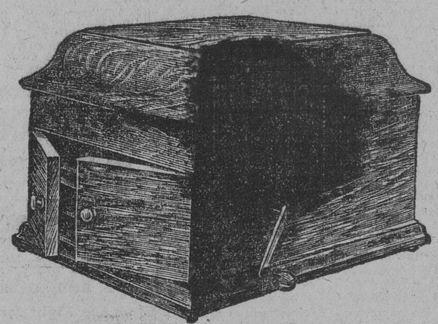

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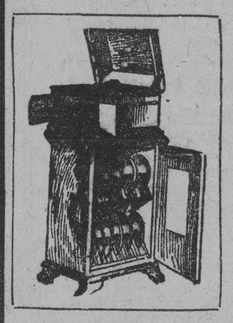

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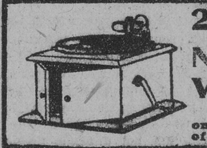

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FEMININE CHAT AND CHATTER

GOSSIP AND ADVICE FOR THE WORLD OF WOMEN.

The Fate of the Light o' Love—She Is Now a Disillusioned Woman With Hardly a Chance for Reasonable Happiness Left for Her on Earth—How Could She Expect to Hold a Man Who Could Be Held by Honor?

BY WINIFRED BLACK.

Yesterday I saw her again, the Light o' Love.

It was five years ago that I saw her first, and, oh, how I hated her; it was all I could do to keep from giving her an open insult, for she was stealing my friend's husband away.

My friend was a sweet woman, a good woman, a clever woman and pretty—and she loved her husband dearly. But she was not well, and she took up with a sect of strange teachings, and became so absorbed in following out those teachings that she didn't quite realize what she was doing to her own happiness.

She went to meetings, and she read books and practised "rhythmic breathing," and "voiceless praise," and "soul sympathy," till it really was quite trying to be with her very much. And the Light o' Love took advantage of these things and stole the husband of my friend away from my friend.

She was pretty, too, the Light o' Love, and witty, and light of heart, and she was well, perfectly well, and full of the pure joy of living. She saw a great deal of my friend's husband when my friend was away at a "cure," breathing deep and "soul sympathizing," and my friend's husband was quite fascinated. And the pretty, witty, clever, foolish, head-strong, light-hearted girl was a sweet woman no more; she was, poor thing, poor, foolish thing, a Light o' Love.

My friend's husband was very devoted he was never happy out of the sight of the Light o' Love; he showered her with flowers; he wrote her letters aglow with what he thought, I suppose, was love; he wrote poems to her; he sent her wreaths to wear and soft fabrics for his special delight, and the Light o' Love was at first secret about it, and then triumphant, and then defiant.

And we all hated her and wished her no good, we who loved my friend and wished to like the husband and think well of him.

And my friend found the whole wretched affair out and almost died, and it was very miserable and very tragic, and some of us who looked on wished something dreadful would happen to put a stop to it all.

That was five years ago and yesterday I met her, the Light o' Love.

She has just come back from Rome where she went to study art. Some say the man who made her a Light o' Love sent her there to get rid of her. Some say she went there to get away from him herself, and some say that the wife made the man send her.

At any rate, here she is at home again, poor, foolish, head-strong, vain, selfish Light o' Love, a disillusioned woman with hardly a chance for reasonable happiness left for her on earth.

The man doesn't care for her any more; she isn't as pretty as she was, nor as witty, and she doesn't laugh so easily. I thought she was rouged a bit yesterday when I saw her, and I know there were lines about her mouth.

She asked me about my friend. First she tried to get me to speak of her without being asked, but I would not, so at last she spoke her name. "How is she these days?" said the Light o' Love, speaking of the good wife whose heart she came so near breaking.

"She is well," said I, "very well. I saw her and her husband off to Japan the other day, and really she looked like a bride."

The flickering light went out of the Light o' Love's poor shallow eyes, and I think she paled a little.

"Have you seen the children since you came back?" I asked. "They are dreams. Little Mary is exactly like her mother, so her father says, and the boy is his father over again. Isn't it lovely?"

"Ye-es," murmured the Light o' Love, and I felt sorry for her, poor, foolish thing. Why didn't she learn the lesson sooner, before it meant so much of bitterness to her

Five years she gave to that man—five feverish, restless, desperate years—and now he has gone on his second honeymoon to Japan with the wife he had fallen in love with all over again.

And the Light o' Love, what will become of her. Faded, worn, shadowed with whispered disgrace, what man will make her his wife? And yet when we first knew of it we all felt sorry for the wife—and did not pity the Light o' Love at all.

Sorry for the wife! And the wife is always the winner, always the one who triumphs in the end.

Over and over have I seen it thus. The children, the home, the respect a man feels for the woman who bears his name—nothing can stand against all these forces togther, nothing, nothing, nothing.

We always see the other side in the plays and the stories. I wish some one would write a play that tells the truth—the simple, practical, real truth—about these affairs of the Light o' Loves. I'd like to take every pretty woman on earth to see that play and bid her learn the lesson it teaches.

So you thought you had him, did you, Light o' Love? You thought it was the wife's heart that would break and not yours? Blind, blind! What did you have to hold him with, a man who could not be held by honor How could he give up all that his wife meant to him—home, children, the respect of his friends, peace of mind, self-respect—all for you?

Yes, you were pretty, witty, light of heart. But there are thousands like you at every turn of the road.

Those children of his, did he pick them up by the wayside? The home he built with so much pride and care, every stone in it spoke to him of the wife of his youth. Did you think you could win in any such battle as that? No, no, Light o' Love! My heart has softened to you; you are punished already for your selfish, cruel folly.

God speed you on your second honeymoon, good wife and faithful mother! Every heart that knows or even suspects your story will warm to you and wish you every joy.

The man? Oh, he's only third in the story. Nobody really cares much about him. Why should they? Except the children—to them he is a great man, a splendid Bayard without fear and without reproach. So may he always be.

DAILY FASHION HINTS BY MAY MANTON

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For the 6-year size the dress will require 4¾ yards of material 27, 3 yards 36 or 2⅝ yards 44 inches wide, with 4½ yards of insertion, 2 yards of edging and ⅝ yard 18 inches wide for the yoke, to make as shown in large view; 4¼ yards of flouncing 11 inches wide, with 1 yard of plain material 36 inches wide to make as shown in small view.

The pattern 7724 is cut in sizes for girls from 4 to 8 years of age. It will be mailed to any address by the Pattern Department of this paper on receipt of ten cents.

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CAUTION.—Be careful to give correct number and size of pattern wanted. When the pattern is bust measure you need only mark 32, 34 or whatever it may be. When in waist measure, 22, 24, 26 or whatever it may be. When misses' or child's pattern write only the figure representing the age. It is not necessary to write "inches" or "years."

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