THE COURT OF ST. SIMON

By ANTHONY PARTRIDGE

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

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CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE ROSE GARDEN.

Valentin's farewell visit to Carlingford Court was not altogether a success. His sister was entertaining a large house-party, and she saw Valentin alone for a few minutes only on the night he had fixed for his departure. She asked him then, without any preamble, the question which had been burning in her mind for the last two days.

"Valentin," she said, "are you going to see Sophy before you leave?"

"No!" he replied.

"But the child," she protested.

"She spent three days with me last week," he answered, his voice wonderfully softer. "We went to Brighton together. It was the best thing I could think of. She seemed very happy. She is devotedly attached to her mother."

"Valentin, isn't there a chance? Of course, there is so much that I don't understand, and I know that Sophy—you see, until the last few years she lived so much in the country and alone—I know that she is a little narrow, perhaps, a little unforgiving, but if you went to her and really tried to make her see things differently, wouldn't there be a chance of patching things up, Valentin? I know what you mean when you talk of going to South America. You pretend to be very gay here and looking forward to it, but I haven't any faith in you. I believe you would just as soon go to Margate, if you were sure of not coming back."

"My dear Helen," he replied, "you are marvelous. Don't let us talk of this any more. You know, my one fault was—my one faunt, note—that I was rather sentimental, or romantic—call it which you like. I went through life, as it seemed ot me, waiting. I suppose I waited too long. When the time came, I expected too much. Of course, the thing is a gamble. Better by far to spread yourself out—an emotion here, a pleasure there; a kiss from one, a kind word from another. All these little joys, Helen, they make up a happy life. To risk everything in one great plunge is foolish."

She looked at him wistfully. She understood him very imperfectly, but in her way she loved him. "Valentin," she said, "you talk lightfully. My own life has been so untroubled that I, perhaps, have not much understanding. And yet you have the look to me of a man whose heart is broken. Are you giving it up without one struggle? Sophy is in London still."

He smiled grimly. "I know it," he answered. "She is waiting until I have gone, to come down here."

"Call and say good-by to her, at least," she begged.

He nodded. "If I have time," he said, "I will certainly leave a card. Here comes your husband."

Their tete-a-tete was broken up. At dinner Valentin excelled even himself. Every one learned of his departure that night with regret. It was August—no weather for railway trains, he declared. He had ordered his motor-car for 10 o'clock, to drive to London in the cool of the night.

He left the table early, with some excuse about his luggage. In the hall he hesitated. If the door into the gardens had not been open, he would surely have gone to his rooms, but not only was it open, but the moonlight lay upon the lawn, and the smell of the roses came traveling in. With a queer little sigh he passed out. The women, bareheaded, were wandering about on the lawns on the other side of the house. Valentin strolled down the terrace, and keeping in the shadow of the shrubs, skirted the rose gardens and drew near to the ring fence which bordered the park. As he walked, he groaned to himself.

"After all these years!" he murmured. "After all these years!"

But indeed he seemed to have stepped back again. It was the same month; the perfumes which came to him with every puff of breeze were strangely reminiscent.

"It is a debauch, this," he muttered. "I shall carry the memory of this away with me and hate it."

He reached the sheltered seat and sank down. The cigarette case which came so naturally into his hands, went back again into his pocket. Here, at least, he was unseen. There could be no soul within sight. The mask might fall for a moment or two. He leaned forward, his face fell into his hands. Even though his eyes were closed, it seemed to him that the acute knowledge of his whereabouts was a thing from which he could not escape. A breath of west wind and the perfume of the lavender came to mingle with those poignant garden scents. Far away in the distance a dog was barking, a woman laughed from the other side of the house, a corncrake commenced its melancholy cry from the long grass before him. It was here that she had come to him; it was here that he sat and thought of her, his last night. Tomorrow, at 11 o'clock, he sailed. He tried to think of the future—there was none. It was no use seeking for that enthusiasm which drives the traveler into strange countries; there was none of it for him. Escape only was what he sought.

The clock from the stables chimed the hour; it was 10 o'clock. A second later he heard the starting of the engine, and his automobile was brought round to the front of the house. This was the end, then! He rose to his feet. For the first time he allowed himself to look across the park. He saw the path along which she had come. He gave a little start. By some curious mockery of fate there was a woman there now, coming nearer and nearer with swift, level footsteps; a woman in white, bareheaded; a woman—He gripped at the back of the seat. It was time, indeed, that he went away. His nerve, which had served him so well, was going; perhaps his brain, too! He covered his eyes for a moment and dropped his hand again. She was still there, this woman, walking with incredible swiftness, looking always towards him. Then his heart began to throb with a sudden fierceness. He was powerless to move; he stood and watched. She came—she even opened the little gate in the fence. He, the most gallant man on earth, took no pains to help her with the rusty fastening. She came on. Her face was clearly visible now, and there was a new, strange thing there.

"Valentin!"

"Sophy!" he murmured.

She held out her hand—she said not another word. She held out her hand and he knew that this was a living world, for her fingers were warm and soft, and they gripped his with all their strength.

"Come," she said.

She led him along. He was content not to speak. Perhaps if he spoke it would all disappear! It was some dream, something which he could not follow or understand, a mirage. If he spoke, it might go. So she led him, step by step, through the tangled maze of the flower garden, past that bed of lavender, whose perfume seemed to strike one more note of reality into those wonderful moments, to the summer-house. When they had reached it, her arms were suddenly around his neck. If he had not held her up, it seemed to him that she would have fallen upon her knees.

"Valentin," she cried, "I have been an ignorant, hard, cruel woman! I have not understood! I have been wicked about everything! I came here because I hoped that if I could find you, if I could bring you here and tell you that whatever you do, whatever you think will always be right, that I love you, that it seems to me I never knew what love was before—if I tell you this and you look into my eyes and you see how true it all is, that perhaps you will forgive."

"Forgive! Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, taking her into his arms.

It was a tangled hour of sensations which followed. Now and then he seemed on earth, and earth was the fairest place he had ever known. And then it seemed unreal again.

"It was Josephine!" she whispered once. "It was she who made me understand."

By degrees his feet felt the earth. He was even able to laugh when he heard them searching for him, heard the motor-horn blow, saw them streaming through the gardens. She thrust her arm through his.

"Come," she said, "this way, quickly. We will go up to the house and the motor-car shall take us home. I have promised Sophy that you shall kiss her tonight before she goes to sleep."

"Of all the extraordinary people!" Helen Carlingford exclaimed, when she saw them coming up.

The guests really understood very quickly. They melted away. It was only Helen who received them. She held out her hands. There was a smile upon her lips and tears of joy were in her eyes.

"Of course, you are both the most amazing people that ever lived!" she said, "but I am glad."

They drove hand in hand through the country lane. The servants at the Old Hall welcomed him without surprise.

"You see, I had faith," she whispered. "I told them that you would be back tonight. You haven't forgotten the way to the nursery? Sophy is sleeping in the room next door."

But Sophy was wide-awake. She held out her arms and welcomed them. "Daddy," she cried, "how lovely! Are you going to stay here until it is our week again?"

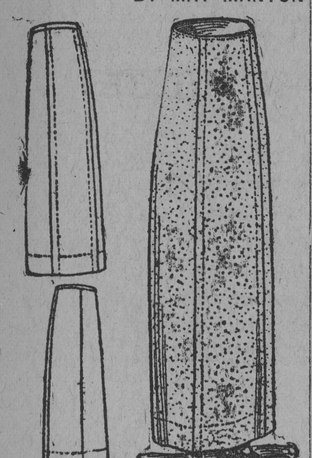
Valentin took her into his arms. "Do you know, dear," he said, "we are afraid that it may interfere with your education to have you moving about so much, so we are going to have the weeks all together, you and your mummy and I."

She kissed them both. Perhaps she understood!

THE END.

DAILY FASHION HINTS

BY MAY MANTON



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FEMININE CHAT AND CHATTER

GOSSIP AND ADVICE FOR THE WORLD OF WOMEN.

Foolish Craze in Women's Dress—Mrs. Woodrow Wilson Is Going to Start the Fashion in Simple, Inexpensive Dress—Men Largely to Blame for Women Who Run Into Debt for Clothes.

BY WINIFRED BLACK.

Oh, Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, can it be true what they tell us? Are you really and truly going to dress on $1,000 a year—and let us all know about it?

Will you really try to show the everyday American woman that she doesn't have to mortgage her very soul to keep up with the fashions, and that it is possible to live even if you have only one set of furs and don't pay more than $20 for your hats?

A Daniel come to judgment—I mean a Portia; and oh, dear Portia, how we do need your calm, sane, level-headed example, your friendly, quiet advice. For we're all going crazy—as crazy as bumble bees in June—over dress, and hats, and shoes, and silk stockings, and dingle-dangles, and fiddle-faddles, and whinwhams, and things that swish, and things that jingle, and things that sparkle, and things that twinkle, and bead, and rattle, and swing, and float, and wave, and cling and reveal, and things that ought to shame every drop of good old American blood in our veins. Do come to the rescue, do.

I met a friend the other day, an old friend—a sweet, modest, gentle, intelligent, well-bred woman. And I didn't know her till she spoke to me and called me by name, and then I thought it must be some horrid dream and that she would presently turn into someone else. But no, it was real. I knew that when she began telling me what bargains there were at So and Sos.

And she whom I knew to be a good wife, a loving mother, a sweet sister and an honest woman on her own clever account, stood there looking like a creature from the Paris pavement and not a particularly fine part of the pavement at that.

Her skirty coats were too tight, too short; her shoes were too small and too low; her stockings were too thin and they had beady things sparkling on them so you just had to look at her decent middle-aged ankles whether you wanted to or not—and she had on a funny little hat made for sweet 16, and her muff was almost as big as my grandmother's feather bed.

And, yes! She was painted, too. You have to paint, they say, to carry off these bright colors and to live up to the general style of the gorgeous dress and the amazing hat and the ridiculous muff. You can't dress like an odalesque out of a harem and wear your own complexion.

And her hair! Was it always as red as that? And, oh the dingle-dangles and the fildals and the dildals—that effect never cost less than a cool $300, anyhow, and five years ago that woman thought a long while before she paid more than $10 for a hat or $4 for a pair of shoes.

And her husband isn't making a penny more now that he was then. I saw him the other day and wondered what made him look so wrinkled and old and anxious.

She has a daughter, my friend, a girl of 16 or so. They tell me her daughter wouldn't think of a hat that didn't cost at least $20, and as for furs, she has to have three sets, one for each street costume.

Where does it all come from, this money to pay for all these things? Are salaries so much higher these days? Shoes six dollars a pair and very ordinary at that—eight is the regular thing—no stockings but silk; a twist of silk around a plain hat, a little knot of something hanging down the back, "twenty-five please," and there you are in debt, worried to death and still behind in the wild scramble for outlandish dress.

Where is it going to end and what are we going to do about it?

Oh, no! you needn't sit back and look martyred, Mr. Mann. You're to blame, too, as much as the woman who runs you into debt with her fine feathers.

You talk about simple clothes, oh, yes! you talk about them, but your wife isn't blind, she sees which woman you look at which one you admire whenever you go out together. It isn't the one with the old hat made over, and the plain neat little gown. You'll pass her by every time for the woman in glitters and dingle dangles. You know you will, and so will every other man in the place.

What was the story Ruskin told about the children's party in the beautiful garden, the lovely flowers, the dancing lights, the soft music, the flowing fountains, and in the midst of all the beauty and the music and the glory, the children at the party were fighting over who could carry home the biggest lot of shiney buttons they'd begun to pick off of things?

And they fought and they fought, and they hurt each other, and they cried, and all the music was drowned in their cries of rage, and all the fountains' soft splash was forgotten, and all the flowers bloomed in vain, because all that the guests at that party could see was buttons, gilt buttons.

"Button, button, whose got the button?" We're all going crazy over the game. Dingle dangle, fingle fangle, blue and silver and scarlet and gold, silk and satin and furs and lace—we'll have them if we have to die to get them.

We'll have them if we have to sell our very souls. We'll have them if we have to drive the man we pretend to love to suicide and starve the little children of their meed of mother's love. Ten dollars a week the stenographer gets, and $8 of it goes for clothes, and such silly clothes at that. Ten thousand a year the man gets whose dictation she takes, and he has to walk down back streets to escape from his duns, all gone for feathers, fine feathers, for a very ordinary bird indeed.

Fuss and finery, shine and sheen and sparkle. Are we all going crazy, or what? Do help us out, Mrs. Wilson. You can do it. Start the fashion in simple, inexpensive dress, and the women of this nation will rise up and call you blessed as soon as they come out of their wild delirium of dress.

"I couldn't think of dressing on less than $10,000 a year," said a smart woman in New York the other day. Couldn't you, indeed, dear lady, couldn't you, indeed? Well, I wouldn't say so much about it if I were you, I really would not; it isn't quite wise or kind or politic.

Some woman whose baby will die because she can't get enough clothes to keep the poor little thing warm might hear you, and then—but what should you care what such a woman thinks? She never had a thousand-dollar frock in her life, so she can't amount to much, she nor her babies, can she?

SLEEP RIGHT AND BE WELL.

There are right and wrong ways of sleeping. Of course, our method of sleeping is almost involuntary—that is, we cannot lie down to sleep and simply by saying: "I will sleep soundly tonight," do so.

But, again, our method of sleeping is not quite involuntary, because there are many things we can do that will regulate it and go a great way toward training ourselves to get the very best there is out of sleep.

So many people are tired after a night's sleep. This is because they did not get rest with their sleep. A person could eat a meal of sawdust and shredded paper and declare he had had a full meal, but he would get no nourishment out of it, just as a person may get a night's sleep without a night's rest. Sleep is for no other thing than rest—absolute rest—just as meals are for no other thing except nourishment.

Most people cannot sleep well because of three reasons—not enough fresh air and deep breathing, not enough exercise and too much on the mind.

In the first place, if you work in an office or at some place where you are indoors and rather quiet throughout the day, and you find your night's sleep does not rest you, take a short but brisk walk just before retiring. Do not stop to look in windows, do not stroll; walk along briskly, head erect, shoulders back, then come back before you have begun to get very tired and go directly to bed. In nine cases out of ten the result will be a good night's sleep.

And another valuable thing to induce you to sleep is deep breathing. If you have stooped over a desk all day.

A CORSET COVER EASILY MADE.

Handmade lingerie is ever a delight to the fastidious woman, and if she is clever enough to fashion the garments herself the saving in this direction will be large.

Noticeable among a collection of French hand-made corset covers recently exhibited was one constructed along such simple lines that the deft fingers of the handy woman could easily duplicate it at little cost. The body of the garment was made of petticoat flouncing of eyelet embroidery, and graduated tucks in the plain part of the material, which were gathered into the waist, formed a fulness over the bust which aided the correct set of the dainty garment. The particular model had no armholes whatsoever, being secured over the shoulder by bands of ribbon, which were tied in bows at the top. If desired, however, it would be an easy matter to cut the material slightly under the arm and turn back the edges, making a V shaped opening, which would allow the underarm more freedom.

Other models were prettily trimmed with insets of Valenciennes lace and strips of embroidery finished off in points, while shoulder straps of embroidery edged with lace and bands of drawn work linen were much in evidence.

TUB SILK SHIRTS.

Tub silk shirts for wear with spring tailored costumes will be accompanied by four-in-hand ties in mannish effect, if Southern style forecasters are to be believed. At Aiken and Asheville women who golf and take long walks for "reducing"—which is always much in vogue about this time of year—wear short skirts of corduroy or tweed above boots of the new washable tan leather which mud does not stain; jaunty Norfolk or Mackinaw coats and soft tub silk shirts with turned back link cuffs, flaring collars and open rather deeply at the throat, and four-in-hand ties of knitted silk. The very latest notion in such ties is the rainbow effect, a broad tie in neutral toned gray silk, having crosswise bands of bright color set midway of the ends. Several colors are used in combination, and the rainbow effect is both smart and gay.

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