

The RING and the MAN

WITH SOME INCIDENTAL RELATION TO THE WOMAN

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEARBORN MELVILLE

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SYNOPSIS.

A foolish young tenderfoot becomes enamored with the bold, artful wife of a drunken prospector in a mining town. They prepare to elope in a blinding blizzard but are confronted by the prospector's wife. He is shot by the wife, but the chivalrous boy pins a note to the body taking the crime railroad station. In their flight to the snow drift and ride on a half-frozen train, the woman thrusts her foot into the snow drift and the man, Gormly, is a multi-millionaire in New York. He marries the woman, a beautiful and wealthy settlement worker, and co-operates with her in her work. Gormly becomes owner of the Gotham Freight Traction company. An automobile accident brings the Haldanes to his country home. Gormly announces that he will be mayor of New York and the next morning is elected. Mr. Haldane in a long desired interview with Gormly, makes an indirect proposition to compromise the news of the latter's having won the nomination against the Gotham Traction company, and which Haldane is suspected of being the head. Gormly hotly announces his plan of campaign to Haldane. Gormly rides to Haldane's place, carrying word of the auto accident. The next morning he refers to the ride of the night before as mild compared to one he experienced in his boyhood days. The papers announce his candidacy for mayor. The political declaration of the merchant prince produced a tremendous sensation. The minority party, seeing in him a possible Moses, make overtures looking to the endorsement of his candidacy by the "outsiders." Gormly, however, rejects all proposals. The "Ring" is held at the Haldane Home. Many political dignitaries and henchmen are present and ways and means are advanced to dampen Gormly's majority aspirations and sidetrack his candidacy. The Ring mayor and the merchant have a critical moment. The detective force reports a valuable clew. Miss Haldane congratulates Gormly on what she terms a new Declaration of Independence, and he makes an unexpected declaration of love. He is shocked by the confirmation of his suspicions that her father is the head and backbone of the notorious traction company which he is attempting to overthrow. Public sentiment turns overwhelmingly against the party in power and the Sachem Society. Miss Haldane informs her parents of Gormly's declaration to her, which they characterize as impudence and insolence.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"I don't know what they are."

"Well, I think I do," returned the young man.

"What are they?" his sister asked him with great eagerness.

But young Haldane was not quite prepared to declare what things they were.

"On second thoughts," he said, evasively "I don't know. At any rate I want to talk so matters over with father."

"Financial matters, my boy?"

"Political."

"Very well. If your mother and sister will excuse us, we will go into the library."

"Certainly," answered Mrs. Haldane, making virtue of necessity.

"If they concern me or my relation to Mr. Gormly," said Eleanor, "I should like to know them immediately."

"They concern us all," he answered. "And, by the way," he added, "I was going to withhold it; but I might as well give it to you now. Here's a letter to you from Mr. Gormly. He asked me to give it to you when I saw you. I was going to talk to father about this other matter before I gave it to you; but you can read it over while we are gone."

"What was it you wished to say to me, Livingston?" began the older man as they entered the library.

"Father," returned his son with bewildering abruptness, "I learned at headquarters today that you were the head and front of the Gotham Freight Traction company and all the rotten lot against whom we are fighting."

"From whom did you learn this?" asked the older man quietly.

"From Gormly himself."

"Does anybody else know it?"

"It isn't generally known, if that's what you mean."

"And suppose that I am—er—interested in the traction company?"

"To what extent are you interested?" asked the younger man.

"Well, that was not the question I asked you."

"But it is the question with me, father."

"I recognize no right that you have to put such questions to me."

"I may not have any right; but I am doing it just the same. I know and we all know just what the Gotham Freight Traction company is. We know that it is robbing the people. And for that reason I want to know how deeply you are interested in it."

"Go back to Gormly and find out!" thundered his father, intensely angered at the young man's scathing denunciation.

"No, sir, I'm going to find it out from you before I leave this room."



"Go Back to Gormly and Find Out!" He Thundered.

I must see the man, and you must arrange it. Come, are you my son, or are you not?"

"I am your son all right," answered the younger man; "but I tell you frankly that I have cast in my lot with Gormly and this isn't going to make any difference. Perhaps we can stave this off or—"

"At any rate I must see Gormly, and you must help me. For God's sake, don't stand there arguing with me, but arrange in some way to bring Gormly and me together secretly and without delay!"

"Let me think a minute," said the younger man at last, impressed by his father's terrible insistence. "I have it. The car is at the door fortunately. I'll run down and tell Gormly you want to see him about this cursed business. I don't know whether I can persuade him to meet you or not; but I'll do my best. Then you go over to Louise Stewart's at once."

"Hurry then, and don't tell your sister or your mother anything of this," said Haldane as he rose to end the interview.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Desperate Position of Haldane.

At this crucial moment there was a knock on the door. Bidden to enter, Eleanor came in, followed by her mother.

"Father," she said, proffering him

an open letter, "the emergency which we discussed has come upon us sooner than we anticipated."

The girl was very nervous and excited, her hands trembled as she held out the paper.

"What! What do you mean?" gasped Haldane, his own agitation not less evident.

Could it be possible that his daughter had already heard of this revelation?

"Here is the letter from Mr. Gormly, which Livingston just brought me, wife."

"What answer shall you give him, sir?" asked her brother, intensely interested.

"I haven't made any yet," was the reply. "But I can only repeat what I said the other night; that while I respect and admire Mr. Gormly exceedingly, I do not love him."

"At least," questioned the older Haldane, "you don't dislike him, do you?"

"Dislike him, father? Not at all. I have just said—"

"Well, give me the letter then, and—"

At this moment the footman, bowing before the open door, entered. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but a party by the name of Liffey is waiting outside to see you."

"Charley Liffey!" exclaimed the son of the house. "What is he doing here now?"

"Why," said Eleanor in great surprise, "that is the grand chief of the Sachem society and the most notorious—"

"Yes, yes, I know," interposed Haldane quickly. "You will kindly leave me for a few moments, all of you. Where is Mr. Liffey?"

"I've got him waiting in the hall, sir."

"Tell him I will see him here. Livingston, do you carry out my instructions at once. Eleanor, say nothing to Mr. Gormly about this proposition until I have seen him. Now leave me."

"But, Beekman—" began Mrs. Haldane.

"Father!" protested his daughter.

"Eliza," said her husband, "not another word! Eleanor, I am tried now beyond endurance. Please go!"

When Liffey entered the library,

Things ain't so black as they seem. I've got a little piece of news that'll discount yours all hollow.

"It's this," said Liffey, coming closer and sinking his voice to a whisper lest he should be overheard by any one.

"All but sure of it. We'll know definitely in two days. Men are verifyin' the tale, and Connell and I are expectin' a telegram any time. There's no doubt about it, though. It's a sure thing. All you've got to do now is to keep this revelation you're tellin' me about out of the papers for two days, and then they can talk their mouths off. It won't affect us a bit. Can you do it?"

"I'll do it," answered Haldane resolutely. "If it kills me. I have an appointment, or at least I expect to have one, to see Gormly inside of an hour, and I must go now. You will excuse me?"

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Mr. Haldane. We're goin' to win the biggest victory against the biggest enemy that New York has ever seen, you mark me, Goodby."

In half an hour Haldane, in answer to a telephone message from his son, was bowling along upper Fifth avenue in his own electric toward the Stewart home. Miss Stewart herself admitted him.

"Yes," she said in answer to his eager question, "Mr. Gormly is here. Livingston brought him. I was just coming into the house, so I let them in myself."

"Is Livingston here also?"

"Yes. He is in the small drawing room with Mr. Gormly."

"I want you to amuse him while I talk with Mr. Gormly. Don't let any one disturb us."

"Not for the world," said the girl, throwing open the door of the little reception room as she spoke. "Here is Mr. Haldane, Mr. Gormly. Livingston, you are to come with me."

"I intend to be present," answered Livingston firmly, "at this interview."

"You will pardon me," said his father with equal resolution, "but I intend to see Mr. Gormly alone."

"Go, Haldane," said Gormly. "If there is anything that you ought to know, I will tell you what it is later."

"But I would—"

"Livingstone," said Miss Stewart, "this is very ungalant and unkind toward me."

"Your father and I both wish to be alone," said Gormly sternly, whereat the young man, with very bad grace, he it admitted, retired and shut the door.

Gormly waited for the older man to begin.

"Mr. Gormly," said Haldane at last, "my son has told me that you have discovered my connection with the Gotham Freight Traction company."

"I told him so this afternoon."

"Why did you tell him?"

"To give him an opportunity to withdraw from his association with me before I published the story of the corrupt corporation, and because I have a sort of chivalrous, old-fashioned feeling that compels me to warn you of what I am going to do before I do it."

"Mr. Gormly," said Haldane, "you this day addressed my daughter and asked her to be your wife?"

"I did, sir."

"Why today?"

"Because I intended all along to do so, and I preferred to do it now rather than after the publication of the news that will be made tomorrow. I shall repeat my offer tomorrow."

"And you wish to marry her?"

"It is—it was—the dearest wish of my heart."

"Was, sir?"

"Yes, and so far as I am individually concerned it still remains so; but there are things higher than our own personal wishes, Mr. Haldane, as I have been finding out, and to be mayor of New York for the purpose of serving the people is now my chief ambition."

"But you love my daughter, I understood her to say."

"She could not possibly say how much I care for her, or how proud I should be to make her my wife."

"Mr. Gormly," said Haldane, lowering his voice and looking about him, "it is not beyond possibility that your desires in that direction might be gratified."

"Do you carry a message to me from Miss Haldane?"

"No, not exactly. She, however, placed the matter in my hands. I have your letter here." He drew it forth. "And, in short, it is possible that she might be induced to favor your suit. Of course," he added very slowly in a mere whisper, during which he kept his eyes carefully averted from the other man's face, "you will understand that if you were a party to this—er—revelation to which you have alluded, that would render any alliance impossible."

"You say," asked Gormly slowly, "that Miss Haldane is not privy to your decision, that you do not make this proposition by her authority?"

"Certainly not. She knows nothing about it; but I am sure that with my wish and your own determined and—er—most agreeable personality, the matter can be brought about," he paused, significantly—"on conditions."

"What conditions?"

"I leave that to your own perspicacity."

"By the living God!" burst out Gormly, furiously throwing off all restraint in his indignation and resentment. "If I treated you rightly, I would kick you out of the house. I would expose you not merely for your connection with that thieving octopus, but as a father who tried to barter his daughter to secure his own immunity."

"Sir, sir!" exclaimed Haldane furiously, but Gormly was not to be interrupted now.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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The Hero's Lament.

Achilles lamented his vulnerable heel.

"It means my wife will always make me wipe my shoes off when I come in the house," he cried.

Left Him Far Behind.

Childish standards of greatness are interesting—perhaps because they are at once so like yet so unlike the standards of grown folk. Many an adult, for instance, has been proud with no more reasonable basis than that which little Johnnie displayed in attempting to "top" the boasting of a juvenile comrade.

"I've got a real railroad train, with an engine that goes, an' a real, live pony, an' a really, truly gun, an'—"

"That's nothing!" interrupted the lad's disgusted listener. "Once I knew a boy that sat up until 11 o'clock twice in one week!"

Qualified Player.

Marion's mother was ill, and the aunt who took her place at the head of the household plied the children with unaccustomed and sometimes disliked articles of diet. One day, after being compelled to eat onions, Marion refused to say grace.

"Then you must sit at the table until you are ready to say it!" was the aunt's stern judgment. An hour or so later, when the brilliant sunshine and impatient calls of her comrades together comprised an irresistible appeal, Marion capitulated—thus:

"Oh, Lord, make me thankful for having had to eat horrid old onions, if you can do it. But I know you can't."

Order of Independents.

Larry O'Neil had no love of discipline save as he administered it. When he decided to "fine the p'rade," he breathed defiance with every order issued by the military leader.

"Here, you! Look out for yer feet!" muttered the man next him. "Keep shtep, can't you?"

"Get along wid yer sheeps" said Larry, turning on him. "I've a shtep of me own, an' I'll take it or lave the p'rade to get on widout me."—Youth's Companion.

Contagious.

Gayboze—When my wife saw the condition I was in when I got home from the club last night it just staggered her!

Martini—I'm not surprised. You know you drank enough for two, old man!

A HIT

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A family in Minnesota that now enjoys Postum would never have known how good it is if the mother had been discouraged by the failure of her first attempt to prepare it. Her son tells the story:

"We had never used Postum till last spring when father brought home a package one evening just to try it. We had heard from our neighbors, and in fact every one who used it, how well they liked it."

"Well, the next morning Mother brewed it about five minutes, just as she had been in the habit of doing with coffee without paying special attention to the directions printed on the package. It looked weak and didn't have a very promising color, but nevertheless father raised his cup with an air of expectancy. It certainly did give him a great surprise, but I'm afraid it wasn't a very pleasant one, for he put down his cup with a look of disgust.

Mother wasn't discouraged though, and next morning gave it another trial, letting it stand on the stove till boiling began and then letting it boil for fifteen or twenty minutes, and this time we were all so pleased with it that we have used it ever since."

"Father was a confirmed dyspeptic and a cup of coffee was to him like poison. So he never drinks it any more, but drinks Postum regularly. He isn't troubled with dyspepsia now and is actually growing fat, and I'm sure Postum is the cause of it. All the children are allowed to drink it and they are perfect pictures of health." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

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