

# The Escapade

By Cyrus Townsend Brady.

his collar, drew forth the locket, and handed it to Dr. Nevinston. It contained a picture of his wife. Ellen recognized it as one she had given him in the early days of their married life. Parkham's inspection of the other combatant had developed nothing.

"I presume," said Strathgate, with an evil laugh, "that the victor takes the locket and the lady."

"This," began Parkman, his face flushing at the insult, "is most unusual and improper, and I appeal to you, Lord Blythedale."

"You're right, Parkman. Damn ye, Strathgate!" cried Blythedale, hot and angry. "I never heard of such conduct. Another remark like that and I refuse to act in your behalf. You have your sword. Here you want him, before your sword's point. You can let that talk for you in the future."

"Give yourself no concern as to what Lord Strathgate says, Parkman," said Carrington, coolly. "He hasn't much time to talk, and I'm disposed to let him enjoy his remaining opportunities to the full."

How grand and noble looked my lord in crouching Ellen's eyes then!

Strathgate did not seem quite so pleased with himself as he had been when he made the unlucky remark.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" said Blythedale, looking from one to the other.

"Ready!" said Strathgate, stepping lightly forward with upraised sword. Carrington said nothing, but grimly came to position.

"My principal desires no saluting," said Parkman, stepping between the two men.

"Very good, we are satisfied," returned Blythedale. "Lieutenant Parkman will give the word 'Engage,' and after that ye may go at it when ye will."

Blythedale drew his own sword and stepped near the two combatants, facing each other for all the world like two tigers waiting to spring at each other's throats. Parkman also whipped out his sword and took position opposite Blythedale. The doctor straightened up and peered curiously at the little group.

Ellen's heart stopped its beating. She and Deborah lay side by side as close as they could get staring through the leaves.

Parkman looked from one to the other. Strathgate had a little smile upon his lips. He bore himself gallantly. There was no denying that. His air was one of indifference, as if he were slightly bored by the proceeding, although his eyes were shining. Carrington, on the contrary, was very pale. His lips were compressed, his brow wrinkled. He looked the personification of determination and in his eyes, too, was a light.

The two men stood up, each with his sword turned downward, the point resting on his right foot, which was slightly advanced and at right angles to the left foot. Each man had his left hand behind his back.

Parkman drew a long breath and cried sharply:

"Engage!" On the instant two flashes of light split the air. The next moment there was a sharp ring of steel, and the men stood facing each other with knees bent, right arms extended, left arms lifted high and the two blades pressing like stone walls.

"Pray now, Debbie," whispered Ellen, "as you never prayed before!"

This time neither woman hid her face. The prayers were all in the heart. Save for that ejaculation not a lip moved between them. They stared as the bird charmed by the snake stares at his tormentor.

Carrington was a stronger man than Strathgate. He had lived in the gay world at times, as the other had, but there had been long periods on the sea. He had gained a power of wrist that the other trembled to feel as the blade pressed heavily against his own. But battles with swords are not necessarily gained by strength of arm. The victory is not always to the strong, sometimes it goes to the swift.

With incredible quickness Strathgate engaged his point and lunged desperately forward. Carrington parried with all the swiftness of which he was capable, and just managed to ward the blow. The blade of his adversary's sword ripped through the side of his shirt, but no blood followed the thrust. He had escaped unharmed.

Strathgate smiled.

"The next time!" he said softly to himself under his breath.

The next instant he warded easily a furious return attack by Carrington, and thereafter for perhaps a minute there followed a succession of thrusts and parries with marvelous rapidity.

Ellen knew something about sword play. She was no mean fencer herself, and she saw with an anguished heart that Lord Strathgate was forcing the attack, and that her husband had all he could possibly do to keep from being spitted upon his adversary's nimble sword. Rumor had not exaggerated Strathgate's wonderful mastery. His blade was like a lambent flame and played like lightning about her husband's weapon. Desperate as was the task, however, Carrington just managed to avoid these deadly thrusts. His shirt had been cut in half a dozen places, and a thin spout of blood showed where one of the thrusts had grazed the skin, but

he was practically scatheless.

He confined himself after that first return to defense, not from choice, but because there was nothing else to do. Strathgate pressed him unmercifully and gave him no opportunity whatsoever for a return. It was thrust, thrust, thrust! With the rapidity of thought itself. Indeed, so fierce, so sustained, so desperate was Strathgate's attack that the perspiration beaded upon his forehead, his breath came quick.

Ellen, who had eyes for everything, noted it, so, too, did Carrington. As for my lord, he had stood to it like the man and sailor that he was. He had not given ground one instant, and although in the excitement of the contest Strathgate had pressed him harder and approached much nearer, my lord had stood as if he were rooted to the spot. It was a magnificent example of determination coupled with a high degree of skill, for no mean fencer could have stood at sword's points with Strathgate without having been thrust through a dozen times, unless his skill had nearly matched the other's or equalled it.

The two men approached so closely that further fencing became impossible. With a swift movement Strathgate forced aside Carrington's sword and sprang back out of reach. He dropped his sword for a moment and stood panting slightly.

Carrington spoke now.

"Has my lord exhausted his attack?" he said softly.

Strathgate's answer was a resumption of his guard and another hard and direct lunge for his enemy's heart.

Carrington smiled as he parried. He had been in some doubt as to his ability to sustain Strathgate's attack. He was no stranger to the field of honor, but he had never faced a sword so imbued with venomous life as that that alivered along his blade this morning.

Yet he imagined that Strathgate had done his best. He had shot his bolt. He could do no better than he had done, and there began to come into Carrington's mind a sense of mastery.

Again he met Strathgate's furious attack. This time it seemed to Carrington that the onslaught was less rapid and less dangerous. Probably this was a misapprehension and the fact that Carrington parried the vicious thrusts more easily may have been due to a growing sense of familiarity with Strathgate's method.

But Strathgate was not yet spent. There were certain dangerous thrusts he knew of, dangerous in that they exposed the one who used them to a counter-attack, and dangerous from their unexpectedness to one against whom they were made; consequently, Strathgate was usually doubtful about employing them, but Carrington had confined his attention simply to parrying, save the first thrust, and Strathgate, thinking rapidly, determined that it would be safe to employ this unusual stroke. After a marvelous burst of speed in which he seemed to have regained all his power, he suddenly dropped almost upon one knee, leaving his body uncovered, and thrust terrifically upward.

If Carrington had been returning stroke for stroke, that moment had been Strathgate's last. As it was, the parry was rather slowly executed and Strathgate's point got fairly home in Carrington's side. It was not a thrust through the body, nor was it a graze. It was betwixt the two.

Strathgate sprang violently backward as Carrington made an ineffective reply with his weapon.

The two faced each other once more. "Stop, gentlemen," cried Blythedale and Parkman in one moment, intervening between the two.

"Nevinston!" called out Parkman.

The surgeon came bounding forward.

"'Tis naught," cried Carrington, waving them aside. "See!"

"Only a flesh wound," said Nevinston, examining it quickly.

"Back, gentlemen, you are giving Lord Strathgate a breathing space."

"I am of the opinion that enough has been done," began Blythedale, "for honor."

"Not while one of us lives," answered Carrington.

"My lord speaks for me," cried Strathgate; "away, gentlemen!"

And once more the two men fell on guard.

Why Ellen had not fainted at that moment she could not tell. The world swam before her vision, but by an effort she commanded herself. The battle was not over, and she must see it until the end. She had confidence yet. My lord's wound was not a serious one and certainly now Strathgate had shot the bolt.

But no, Strathgate attacked as furiously as ever, but this time my lord's tactics were different. As if the sight of his own blood had maddened him, he was not content to parry, but he himself assumed the offensive. Like diamonds the points of the blades sparkled in circles of light. The ring of steel on steel and the grating as one blade fell upon another blade was continuous. It was bewildering to Ellen, bewildering to everyone except the two men. Blythedale and Parkham stood staring as if their eyes would be strained from their heads. Their breaths came shorter and shorter. Even the cool, phlegmatic doctor came forward and stood gazing. Ellen and Deborah had long since passed the stage of expression. They lay scarcely breathing, their eyes following as they could every movement of the straining men, of the flashing sword.

There was no advantage for either of the combatants yet, save that thrust of Strathgate's, that is, no outward advantage; but Strathgate was beginning to pay the penalty of his life and of his desperate endeavors in the commencement of the attack. His breath came shorter, the sweat stood

thick upon his brow. Carrington grew cooler after the first flush of passion consequent upon his slight wound. His strength grew greater. He pressed Strathgate harder. But the earl was not yet done. Nervous himself, summoning all his resolution to his aid, in a series of brilliant onslaughts he sought to bring to a sudden end an affair for which, if it should be much more prolonged, he knew his strength would be unequal.

But Carrington met him with a wrist of steel and a blade quicker than the light itself. How it was done, no one could see, but after a series of rapid thrusts and disengagements, the spectators saw Strathgate suddenly throw up his arms. His blade fell wavering to the ground. Those who stared saw two feet of bloody steel thrusting out from his back. Carrington had seized an opportunity and had lunged with such force and power and directness that the quillons of the hilt of his rapier had actually struck the breast of Strathgate as he ran him through the right shoulder over his guard. The thrust just grazed the lung. Carrington strove to withdraw his weapon, succeeded partially, when Strathgate collapsed utterly and crashed to the ground, snapping off the projecting end of the blade behind his back as he fell upon it.

He strove horribly for a moment to rise and then settled back biting his lips to stifle a groan of agony. Carrington stood over him with hand upraised. Which had the whiter face it would be hard to say.

"Strathgate!" cried my lord, bending over him.

"Carrington," murmured Strathgate in his agony, fairly wrenching the words from his lips, "you're a damned fool. The woman loves you—not me!"

He stopped. By this time Blythedale and the doctor were by Strathgate's side. Parkman also woke to action. He ran to Carrington's side and drew him back.

"A damned fool!" cried my lord, hoarsely, "ay, that I've been."

Parkman said nothing. He fetched Carrington's coat, waistcoat, sword and shoes and assisted him to put them on.

"We had best go now, Bernard," he said when Carrington was clothed. "Find out how he is yonder before we leave," said Carrington, looking toward the group bustled about poor Strathgate.

Presently Parkman came back with news.

"He's desperately hurt. Your blade just grazed the lung."

"Will he pull through?"

"Nevinston doesn't know. He hopes so. God! it was a terrible thrust. I thought he had you at first. I never saw such play, but, man, you were his master."

"I was his master because he was a villain," answered my Lord Carrington. "He nearly had me undone at first, but I knew he couldn't go the pace, and a clean life and an honest heart wore him down at last; and yet I don't know which is much the worse, the damned scoundrel or the damned fool! I hope he'll live. Somehow, when I saw him there helpless on the grass, my sword through his breast, a good deal of the enmity went out of me. If I could get my wife now, I'd be satisfied. A damned fool!" my lord laughed nervously as he turned away.

Yes, if he could have gotten his wife then, he would have been satisfied, and his wife would have been satisfied, too. But Ellen lay in the bushes in a dead faint. The relief of the denouement had been too much for her. And there was horror at the picture of Strathgate, blood spurting about the blade of the sword where it entered and where it left his body, reeling, his hands in the air, white-faced, desperate, crashing down at her husband's feet.

Debbie, in a like state of collapse, but not quite insensible, not knowing what to do, not daring to do what she knew, if she had known.

## CHAPTER XX.

### My Lord Is Arrested.

But Lord Carrington was not to go very far in his present path, for two carriages which had galloped rapidly across the park toward the one which had brought him thither stopped suddenly before Carrington and Parkman. The door was thrown open and Sir Charles Seton and a naval officer in full uniform alighted from the first. From a second a sergeant and four marines, completely armed, descended to the ward.

The marines instantly fell in ranks and stood at attention. The naval officer looked back toward them. The

sergeant saluted and declared himself ready for the business on which he had come. Seton had taken a step toward his friend, when the latter, his pale face suddenly flushing, darted at him.

"Seton," he said in a low, fierce voice, "where's my wife?"

In the intensity of his passion he seized Seton by the shoulders and shook him slightly.

Now, Sir Charles had come there with a great pity for Carrington in his heart and a willingness to forget and forgive the other's insults and threats, but the soldier was as quick tempered as the sailor, and his own face answered the ruddy flag in Carrington's cheek.

"Take your hand off me, Lord Carrington," he cried, wrenching himself free and springing backward, his own hand upon his sword.

"I've had one man's blood on my hands this morning," returned my lord, savagely, "and I don't want to have another's, but, by heaven, if you do not instantly declare to me what you did with my wife, I'll strike you where you stand!"

"And I swear to you," cried Seton, whipping out his blade, "that if you come near me again I'll run you through without benefit of clergy."

"Sir Charles Seton," began my lord, evidently mastering his feelings with great difficulty, "little do I care for your threats, but I must have an answer to my question. Lady Carrington is known to have boarded that merchant ship which was overhauled. I have no doubt, by the Britannia. Knowing our navy as I do, I have no hesitancy in believing that Lady Carrington was taken from that ship; that she was brought back to Portsmouth on the Britannia, and has been, or is now, under your care. Where is she?"

"Lord Carrington," returned Sir Charles, standing upon a punctilio, "I recognize no right in you to question me and I decline to give you any reply in your present condition."

"Will you reply to my sword's point?" exclaimed my lord, passionately.

"With pleasure," said Sir Charles, proudly, "but perhaps I may say this much. I don't know where your wife is, or Mistress Slocum, either. I wish to God I did. She isn't under my protection as you insinuate."

"That's a lie!" burst out my lord, fiercely.

"Good God!" cried Sir Charles, stepping forward menacingly.

"Charles," said Carrington with a sudden change of manner, "you were once my best friend, for God's sake, tell me where my wife is?"

"You've insulted me publicly," cried Seton, a man of slower temper, but of quite as hot a disposition, once aroused, as his former friend. He recked nothing of my lord's appeal. He saw only the fearful insult that had been hurled upon him. "Draw your weapon!" he exclaimed, extending his own blade so that the point almost touched Carrington's breast.

My lord suddenly seized Seton's sword by the blade with his naked hand, and although the sharp edge bit into his palm, with a quick jerk he tore it from the surprised baronet, who was naturally not expecting an act of that kind.

"Tell me, tell me!" he cried. "You may kill me after that, or I may if needs must be, but where is my wife?"

"Bernard, you're beside yourself," said Parkman, picking up Sir Charles' sword, "let me apologize to you, Sir Charles, for my principal."

He bowed gravely and extended the hilt toward Sir Charles. But Sir Charles would not be pacified.

"Tell your principal to make ready at once," he continued, "or I shall feel justified in cutting him down."

"This can go no further, gentlemen," now interposed the naval officer who had come with Seton.

"And what business is it of yours, McLearn," cried my lord, laying his hand on his sword hilt and quite desperate at the situation in which he found himself. "I take it that you have no interest in this quarrel unless it is to perform a friend's office for Sir Charles Seton with whom you came."

"Have I not?" said McLearn, sharply. "Nay, never menace me with your blade, Lord Carrington. I'll take charge of it."

He stepped closer and extended his hand for my lord's sword.

"On these," answered McLearn, equally determined. As he spoke he hauled out from his pocket a folded paper.

"This an order of arrest from Admiral Kephart for disobedience of orders, failure to rejoin your ship, insulting language to your commanding officer. Admiral Kephart's sign and seal, sir." He shook the paper forth as he spoke. "Now, your sword."

"As a gentleman and I make no doubt a man of honor yourself, Lieutenant McLearn," continued Carrington, glancing at the single epaulet on the officer's shoulder, "you will, I am persuaded, grant me a few moments respite in which this gentleman and I may continue our debate."

"What, and run the chance of having to carry back a dead body to the admiral? No, sir," returned McLearn peremptorily. "I have orders to bring you to the Britannia in your proper person."

"And if I refuse?"

"Sergeant," McLearn turned to the marine, "if Lieutenant Lord Carrington does not hand me his sword before I count ten, you will advance your men and take it from him by force."

"Parkman, will you see this thing done?" cried my lord as McLearn, who was a man of great determination, began to count.



"On These," Answered McLearn.

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### STATEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE LIVINGSTON LOAN AND BUILDING ASSOCIATION.

Of Plattsmouth, Nebraska, on the 30th day of June, 1908.

**ASSETS:**  
First mortgage loans.....\$65,798.91  
Stock loans.....9,672.50  
Cash.....4,325.94  
Delinquent interest, dividends, fines and dues.....272.63  
Other assets, insurance and taxes paid and advances.....881.92  
Real estate contracts.....4,326.80  
Total.....\$85,529.00

**LIABILITIES:**  
Capital stock paid up.....\$88,224.00  
Reserve fund.....1,583.09  
Dividends declared.....25,661.91  
Total.....\$115,509.00

### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES for the year ending June 30, 1908.

**RECEIPTS**  
Balance on hand July 1, 1907.....\$ 543.25  
Dues.....27,490.00  
Interest and fines.....9,557.07  
Loans repaid.....14,626.00  
Membership fees.....224.25  
Transfer fees.....18.25  
Insurance and taxes paid and advanced.....209.35  
Real estate contracts.....2,399.99  
Bills payable.....7,240.68  
Total.....\$62,356.45

**EXPENDITURES**  
Loans.....\$54,405.00  
Expense and salaries.....1,600.07  
Stock redeemed.....14,810.20  
Cash on hand.....4,325.94  
Real estate contracts.....50.00  
Insurance and taxes paid and adv.....35.25  
Bills payable.....7,240.68  
Interest on bills payable.....27.54  
Total.....\$88,224.00

STATE OF NEBRASKA, ss. I, Henry R. Gering, Clerk of said County, do solemnly swear that the foregoing statement of the condition of said association, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.  
HENRY R. GERING, Secretary.

Approved:  
D. E. SMITH, President.  
C. A. MARSHALL, Directors.  
WILLIAM HOLLY, Secretary.  
Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 1st day of July.  
THOM. WALLING, Notary Public.

### Two Boats Missing at Omaha

Deputy Sheriff Manspeaker received a telephone message yesterday, saying that two boats were missing from Omaha and to be on the look out for them. It was not said whether the boats had been stolen or had only drifted away. Eli is on the look out for the missing crafts.



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