

The Lady

OF THE
Mount
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"The Strollers"
"Under the Rose"
—Etc.—
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ager efforts when a hand at the door caused her to dash down the pen and spring to her feet. As her aunt entered, Nanette took a few steps forward, and, bending to pick up her work from the floor, turned partly away and thrust the paper into the bosom of her gown.

"I came to tell you supper is ready," said Marie quietly.

At the table with her aunt the girl's manner was subdued and deferential; she observed the nicest proprieties, and bestowed on the other's slightest word a meet of attention calculated to soften the old woman's attitude and suspicions. And possibly succeeded; or, it may be, Marie's own conscience had begun to reproach her; for a number of days had passed and nothing had as yet occurred to justify the early apprehensions she had entertained. Under the circumstances the meal was a little prolonged; the first shafts of twilight had entered the courtyard and had begun to steal into the narrow chamber with darkening effect, ere of an accord the two women pushed back their chairs.

"It gets dark early," said the girl, "or time has passed quicker than I thought. Perhaps it was what you were telling me of the former lady of the Mount. She must have been very beautiful!"

"She was," answered the woman; "and as good as beautiful!"

"Heigh-ho!" Nanette sighed; through the window watched the shadows that like dark, trailing figures seemed creeping up the ancient wall to caress and linger on green leaves of vines, bright flowers and other living things. "But I suppose she had everything she wanted." The girl stirred restlessly. "What sort of a man is Monsieur Beppo, aunt?"

"Beppo?" Recalled as from a long train of recollections, the woman did not seem to notice the abruptness of the inquiry. "Oh, he is an old and faithful servant. For almost as many years as I have been here," with an accent of pride, "has he served at the Mount!"

"And his moral character, aunt?" demurely.

"Monsieur Beppo has a reputation for pety, no doubt deserved!" returned the woman, with an accent of surprise. "At any rate, he seldom misses a mass. But why do you ask?"

"Because I met him today and he invited me to walk with him this evening."

"He did?" Marie's mouth grew firmer. "And you?"

"I didn't exactly know how to refuse! he—looked so old and respectable! I thought, too, you wouldn't mind and—I'm glad you think so well of him, aunt."

In the gathering gloom the listener's face seemed suddenly to grow graver; her eyes, which had returned to the girl's, expressed once more doubt and misgiving. With her glance lifted upward, however, Nanette did not seem to notice this quick change. A start-faint forerunner of a multitude of waiting orbs—peeping timidly down from above the gray, guttural mass of stone, alone absorbed the girl's gaze and attention.

"Where were you thinking of going?" after a silence of some length the older woman asked.

"I don't recall that Monsieur Beppo mentioned," was the low-murmured response. "But, of course, aunt, if you object—"

"I do not know that I do," said the other slowly. "Only, as if the thought had suddenly come to her, 'what were you writing at her ladyship's desk when I went to call you?'"

"Writing?" Nanette regarded her blankly. "I don't understand you, aunt."

"Weren't you writing something that you hid in your dress when I came?"

"No!" The girl looked full at the other; denied point-blank the accusation. "Now that you speak of it, I believe I did dip to the desk, she answered glibly, "to look at some ornament; but as for writing, or darning to I should not have presumed."

A low discreet rap at the door interrupted, and, with a whispered "There he is now!" Nanette cut short further argument by rising.

"She is not telling the truth!" For some time the woman stood looking down in gloomy thought after the two had gone. "What does it mean?" Moving to a peg, she took down a shawl. "What can it mean?" she asked herself again, and, wrapping the garment about her head and shoulders, left the room.

and stood over it searchingly. But when they had gone by, once more he straightened, and, at the same time, the girl looked back. Stalwart, black-bearded, a sailor by his dress, the fellow made a sign, and, apparently in doubt as to who he was vanishing from Nanette's mind; for from the fingers of the free hand she held behind her, something fluttered to the beach.

Leaning to his implement, the man regarded the paper, but not until the girl's low laugh was heard, as she and Master Beppo vanished in the darkness, did he step forward and secure it.

"So! That was it!" Breathless, in amazement, Marie, standing in the black haze of one of the Mount's projections, watched the fellow read and regard carefully the message in his hand; then tearing it, crumple the bits and thrust them toward his pocket as he walked off. "Brazen hussy! But her ladyship shall know; and if she doesn't pack you off, bag and baggage—oh? What is that?" And springing forward, the woman pounced upon something that lay on the sand.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Hesitation of the Marquis.

The day of my lady's riding party dawned; in the east a tender flame burned, and, vanishing, left the heavens an unbroken blue. Shoreward the mists rolled up, until only in the neighborhood of the forts did the white, soft vapor linger. On the Mount itself sunshine held sway; it radiated from the fortifications, "culrass of the rock," and gleamed on the church, "Mara of its majesty." It warmed a cold palace of marble; looked in at its windows, and threw bold shafts to lighten dark nooks and corners.

But my lady, mistress of the Mount, seemed not to feel its beneficent touch; standing in the full glow and looking from her casement she shivered a little. Already was she dressed, and her habit of dark green, fitting close, served to accentuate the whiteness of her cheek which, general absence of color, in turn, made the more manifest certain dark lines beneath the restless, bright eyes.

"Your Ladyship!" After knocking in vain, Marie had entered the room and set down the small tray she carried. "There is something your Ladyship ought to know!" with an air of excitement.

The Governor's daughter half turned. "What now, Marie?" she said sharply.

"It's about Nanette!" My lady made a quick movement of annoyance, impatience. "I did not tell your Ladyship, but I was averse to having her remain here. Your Ladyship does not understand, of course, and—"

"I do understand," said my lady unexpectedly. "And—you need not explain. I overheard you talking with her that night of the banquet!"

"Your Ladyship!" startled.

"And I heard you speak of her father, Pierre Laroche, friend of the Black Seigneur."

"And engaged her—after that!"

"Why not? I could watch—and I have! But you were wrong, Marie. My lady's manner was feverish. Your suspicions were ridiculous. There has been nothing—nothing! And day after tomorrow is the wedding celebration, and the next day, he, the Black Seigneur—"

She broke off abruptly.

Had Marie been less wrought up, less excited, less concerned with the information she had to impart, she could not have failed to notice the odd break in her young mistress's voice; something unusual, almost akin to despair, in her manner. As it was, that which weighed on the old nurse's mind precluded close observation of the other.

But something has happened, my lady!" the woman half stammered.

"Comment!" The girl turned to her sharply. "What? Explain, Marie!"

Disconnectedly, the woman launched into a narration of the events of the night before; my lady listened closely, with an interest and excitement she strove to conceal, half turning so that the other saw no longer her face.

"And here," ended Marie, extending a crumpled fragment of paper, "is a piece of the note she dropped on the bench. The man tore it up, but in thrusting the bits of paper into his pocket this fell out, and, after he walked away, I picked it up myself from the sand. I can't read, as your Ladyship knows, and there isn't much on it—only a word or two! But it may tell something."

My lady's face was now composed; the hand she extended, steady; for several moments she regarded the fragment.

"What does it say?" asked the woman anxiously. "Is it—important?"

Her mistress did not at once answer; twisting the bit of paper in her fingers, stood as if in thought, and the old nurse repeated her question.

"This note might have been intended for some admirer!" said, at length, the Governor's daughter slowly.

"He looked more like an old privateer's man!" murmured the woman.

"And there may be some plot—some plan!"

"Privateer's man!" The girl's manner underwent a change; she shrugged her shoulders. "What could he hope to do at the Mount! You are imaginative, Marie!" lightly. "Nanette is good-looking, and what little is here would seem to signify a rendezvous. There may be no great harm in that."

"I am sorry, my lady, to seem to think ill of my own kin," muttered the woman dejectedly, "but—"

"Think no more of it! You have done your duty. Now leave the matter to me, and—thank you, Marie!"

When, however, the old nurse had gone, all pretense of lightness faded from the face of the Governor's daughter, and, opening the bit of paper, once more she scrutinized it swiftly, intently.

"Tomorrow—Monastery St. Ranu—" she read. "Yes; it must mean St. Ranulph—where we are going. And where Beppo knew we were going! Beppo, she went down on the beach with!" Again she studied the fragment, striving to make out a word that had been blotted and was almost illegible. She frowned as she endeavored to decipher it. "Lady E." She gave an exclamation. "That refers, of course, to—but why?" She kept asking herself the question. "Why?" she repeated, when suddenly the brown eyes widened—changed; a new light shone in their depths. "It must be they intend to—what else?"

The sound of horns—signal for the party to gather—broke upon the air, and, nervously crushing in her palm the piece of the message, she stepped to the table, to the unmet breakfast. Like one in a dream, who yet feels the need for haste, she poured out the coffee; with unsteady hand raised the cup and drank; started to serve herself again; as if forgetful of the impulse, paused.

"And I?" she said with deeper breath. "To ride to the ambush they have so cleverly planned? Allow myself to be taken prisoner by these desperate men? No; no; I could not! And yet—"



The Sound of Horns—

tainly she lifted her head; looked around her; then mechanically stepped forward and left the room.

A scene of animation greeted her in the court, alive with lords and ladies, for the most part already in the saddle and waiting.

"Hail to Diana, who will lead us in the forests!"

"Fair nymph, let us away!" and the Marquis extended his hand.

With a seemingly merry nod she acknowledged their greetings; put out a foot, and lightly sprang to her place on the back of the nervous thoroughbred. But ere giving the signal to start, the girl's glance swung around to a window opposite, where stood an austere figure, imperturbably looking down to watch them ride off.

"Au revoir, mon pere!" Her voice rose with an odd, unusual thrill. "Au revoir!" she repeated, when a mistle in her eyes suddenly blurred sight of him, and she tightened the reins. Yet hesitating to go, her gaze cleared, and swerving, was abruptly arrested by another and more interested spectator, who, partly concealed by flowers and plants, peered with anxious expectancy from her own balcony. As Nanette's eyes met those of the Governor's daughter, they wavered half guiltily; suddenly became steady, held by something—a flash of impelling intelligence in the other's gaze. A moment or two, my lady continued to regard the girl; then touching her horse, wheeled sharply, and set a pace downward not easy to follow.

At the base of the Mount they were met by a numerous guard bright in holiday trappings, and, under the care of the commandant, with flourish of horse, the party swept gaily from sands to shore.

"A gallant company, Monsieur le Commandant!" observed the Marquis to the officer in charge, as they reached the green line at the yellow basin's edge. "Now if we were to meet an enemy—"

"He would find us prepared, my Lord!" the officer declared.

"True!" And the nobleman complacently touched the jeweled hilt of his own blade, accompanying the action with a tender glance at the Lady Elise.

She, however, a little ahead, appeared not to hear; spoke suddenly to her horse, and, as they swung from the award, started at a brisk gallop down the road. Laughing, the others came after, lords and ladies first; behind, with tumult and clatter, the commandant and his men. As they advanced, on either side the way thick trunks of moss-grown monarchs up-lifted their gnarled and hoary branches, to meet overhead; through leafy interstices bright flashes of sunlight shot downward, danced on fine garments and accoutrements, and then whisked elusively away. In dim recesses finches and sparrows sang; beyond, murmured streams and rivulets, while at the feet of the riders, gay restless flowers nodded, as if in accompaniment to the glad music of the morn.

"Small wonder his Excellency should have desired to add this fair principality to his own!" muttered the Marquis, looking around. "Of the seven forests of Brittany, none will compare with this, the Desaurac woods. What think you, Elise?" spurring his horse near his betrothed's. "Are you not taken by its beauties?"

She looked at him with a start; since leaving the sands she had not spoken, and now, tugging at the reins, only said abruptly: "My saddle! I believe it is loose."

"Loose!" repeated the nobleman. "Careless lackey! Let us see!" And grasping the bridle of her horse, pulled in his own, and drew both animals to a standstill at the side of the road.

As he dismounted to examine straps and fastenings, the others dashed up; my lady lightly motioned them on. "We'll soon overtake you! Don't wait!" Unquestioning, they obeyed; though the commandant, to whom a few moments later she delivered a similar injunction, brought his men to a halt and proffered his services. Whereupon the Marquis repeated the girl's words more sharply; reddening, the officer wheeled and started to ride on.

"I can't find anything wrong here!" Puzzled, the Marquis straightened.

But her eyes were directed ahead and she pointed with her whip to a break in the woody barrier to the right—a path that, springing from the roadside, seemed to plunge into the very heart of the labyrinth.

"Look! the short cut!—that would be to be continued"

Candidates Lining up for the Great Race in the Northwestern's Big \$650.00 Automobile Voting Contest \$650. In Prizes

Is your favorite's name on the list? Nominations can be made at any time, First count of votes in this issue. Boost your favorite to head the count of votes next week. Votes for the different candidates are pouring into the ballot box.

On the streets, in the home, in fact all over the county, people are awakening to the fact that the Northwestern's contest and the magnificent prize that is to be given away, is not idle gossip. The Northwestern inaugurated this subscription contest in order to determine who is the most popular lady in this and adjoining counties and is backing this proposition with \$650 in cash prizes. Choose your favorite and help her win the Ford automobile. The race is now on, and it is the wise candidates who get started at the beginning, who will gather in the votes.

To The Candidates

Have you planned your line of campaign in this voting contest? Probably you have, but is it the best plan, the one that will enlist all your friends; which will gather weight as it goes along. We are always willing to help the candidates with suggestions, list of subscribers in any territory where they want to work, and we request them to write to the contest manager for any information. Get your friends interested by securing the 50-vote coupon from their Northwestern and also get them to give you their subscription. Each subscription collected will entitle you to votes according to the published schedule of votes. The schedule of votes applies on both old and new subscriptions. Our motto is "A Square Deal to Every Candidate." We have no favorites. Let your slogan be "Do You Take the Northwestern? Do not stand back on any account. Just show your friends what a business woman you are and they will help you. All that is necessary, is to get the spirit of the race, and push to the front and it will take a dozen to defeat you. If you will use these tactics during the contest you will win a glorious battle, and come out with flying colors. The contest has opened, and our advice is, to get started now while the fields are unpledged to another candidate.

This Ballot Expires February 26.

The Leap City Northwestern's Automobile Contest

50 Good for 50 Votes 50

For M. Address.

This ballot is good for 50 votes when filled out and sent to the Northwestern office, mail or otherwise. No ballot will be altered in any way or transferred after being received by the Northwestern.

Address Contest Manager, care of Northwestern.

NOMINATING BLANK

The Northwestern's Automobile Contest

I hereby nominate and cast 1000 votes for

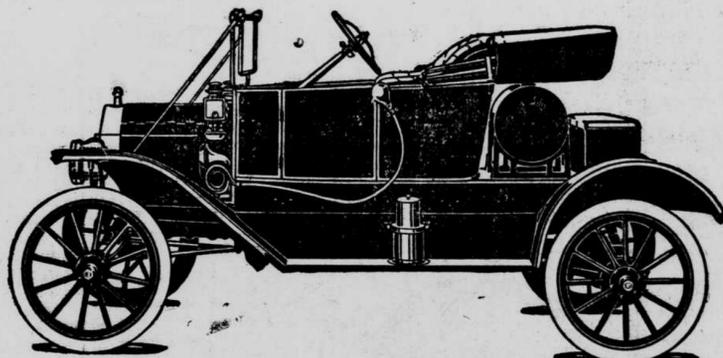
M. Address.

Address.

Signed.

Address.

Ford Automobile



Grand Prize

Rules Governing This Contest

Any lady is eligible, providing conditions set forth below are complied with, but the contest manager reserves the right to reject objectionable nominations.

No candidate will be permitted to transfer votes to another after receiving them for herself.

Ballots sent in for names not properly nominated will be destroyed uncounted.

Every candidate should be regularly nominated on a blank printed in this paper or a similar blank furnished by the Northwestern.

A coupon will be printed during the first weeks of the contest. This coupon will count for the votes designated therein. All coupons will be dated and will be void unless received at this office on or before the expiration of the time set as printed.

All ballots must be sent to the contest manager, care of the Northwestern with postage prepaid.

No employe of the Northwestern will be eligible as a candidate.

Any questions or controversies that may arise are to be settled by the Contest Manager.

In accepting nomination, all candidates must agree to abide by above conditions. In case of a tie vote a

prize of equal value will be awarded, or the prize so tied sold and money equally divided. The Contest Manager reserves the right to govern the closing date in case of sickness or death.

The way to secure votes is by paying money for subscriptions or cutting out free votes from the Northwestern. Positively no notes will be sold for cash without subscriptions to the paper. Candidates may solicit votes in any part of the United States.

The regular vote schedule below will not be increased during the contest except in special ballot periods.

No young lady should hesitate to go into this contest, as everyone has a fair chance to win a handsome and valuable prize. The main object the Northwestern has in view is to get subscribers and the girl who works the hardest is the one we want to have the best prize.

Don't hesitate to ask your friends and neighbors whether they take the Northwestern. Hustle and there will be nothing to defeat you.

The list of candidates nominated will be published next week. Read them over; probably your name will be among them.

Note

When properly filled out and mailed or delivered to the Contest Manager the nomination blank will count for 1000 votes for the candidate nominated, except that but one nomination blank will be accepted for each candidate. Nominations written on an ordinary sheet of paper will be accepted, names of parties making nominations will not be divulged only when requested. In next week's issue we will publish a list of candidates whose nominations have been received up to the time of going to press.

Save the 50-Vote Ballots

Candidates are entitled to as many of these 50 vote ballots as they may procure. Each one counts 50 vote for

the candidate whose name appears upon it. Ask your friends and relatives to save these free 50-vote ballots for you. Gather them up and bring them, or have them sent direct to the Northwestern office. Sign your name upon each one. Be sure you have them in the ballot box before expiration of date on the ballot.

Nominate a Candidate

Cut out this nomination blank, write in the name of a popular young lady or girl, sign and send to the Northwestern and upon receipt of same the young lady whose name appears upon it will become a candidate and is eligible to compete for the grand prizes offered. Only one nomination will be accepted for each candidate. Each candidate nominated will receive 1000 vote as a starting standing. Make a nomination now! Help some candidate win an auto.

Schedule of Votes on Subscription Contest

1 year \$1.50.....300 votes	6 years \$9.00..... 3300 votes
2 years \$3.00.....700 votes	7 years \$10.50..... 4200 votes
3 years \$4.50.....1200 votes	8 years \$12.00..... 5200 votes
4 years \$6.00.....1800 votes	9 years \$13.50..... 6300 votes
5 years \$7.50.....2500 votes	10 years \$15.00..... 7500 votes

J. W. Burleigh
Proprietor
Contest Manager,
Care Northwestern