

The RING and the MAN?

WITH SOME INCIDENTAL RELATION TO THE WOMAN
By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY
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SYNOPSIS.

A foolish young tenderfoot becomes fascinated with the bold, artful wife of a drunken prospector in a western mining town. They prepare to elope in a blinding blizzard but are confronted by the maidin husband. He is shot by the wife, but the chivalrous boy pins a note to the body taking the crime upon himself. In their flight to the railroad station the woman's horse falls astrap; the youth puts on his own and follows, leading to the stirrup strap. Seeing he is an impediment, the woman thrusts her foot into a snow drift and rides on. Half-frozen she stumbles into the railroad station just as the train bears the woman away. Twenty-five years later, this man, George Gormly, is a millionaire in New York. He meets Eleanor Haldane, a beautiful and wealthy settlement worker, and co-operates with her in her work. Gormly becomes owner of a steamship line and finds himself frustrated in pier and track extension plans by grafting and backbiting in the Gotham Traction company. An automobile accident brings the Haldanes to his country home. Gormly announces that he will resign from the New York and Gotham city from corruption. Mr. Haldane in a long desired interview with Gormly, makes an indirect proposition to compromise the fight which the latter has been waging in the newspapers against the Gotham Traction company, and which Haldane is suspected of being the head. Gormly boldly announces his plan of campaign to Haldane. Gormly rides to Haldane's place, carrying with him 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 party. A meeting of the Sachem Society of 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 candidacy. The woman, Haldane, is proposed as an opposition candidate; the whole machinery of the city's detective force is to be used to dig up something damaging to Gormly. Haldane, however, refuses the nomination and announces that he will support Gormly. The reigning party then decides to name a party ticket for the purpose of dividing the Gormly forces, and at the same time rush through a Freight Traction company franchise, without which the Sachem Society would be helpless. The press heretofore unanimously favorable to the merchant candidate, now under pressure, divides and the campaign waxed warm. A resolution is introduced granting a gratuitous removal of the traction franchise. Gormly offers ten million dollars for the franchise. The excited populace threaten to mob the aldermen, when addressed by Gormly. The Ring mayor and the merchant have a critical moment. The detective force reports a valuable clue. 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.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

"And you—you will—do you think—"
He stopped. "No," he said. "I shall stop there, with this moment, with this statement. I ask nothing, I expect nothing, and so far as a man can crush down his own feelings, I hope for nothing. I just want you to know the fact."
"I know it," was the answer. "Now, you must let me say something. I am, at least I believe myself to be, absolutely heart free. Sometimes I have thought that what you have said might be true, with regard to your feelings I mean; but I have tried to put it out of my mind. Your declaration, therefore, comes to me with a certain measure of surprise. You have not asked me anything, and it is just as well that you have not. I think I can say honestly and truthfully that I do not care for you now in the way you seem to care for me."
"Seem to care for you," cried the man impulsively.
"The way you do care for me then," returned the woman.
"That's better."
"And whether I could care in that way, I don't know; but at least I care for no one else. And while I hold myself as free as the air, when you speak to me again on this subject, I shall at least be ready to hear you."
"That is all that I can ask."
"Meanwhile I want to say over and over again how I respect you, how I admire you. The fine life you have lived, the splendid stand you have taken for public right, the crowning of your long and honorable and unblemished career with the success which I think I see before you and with the great opportunity for service, fills me with pride."
"Miss Haldane," said Gormly, "what you say to me is sweeter and more precious than the acclaim, the applause, the indorsement of all the rest of the people of New York. As I said, I began this to make myself worthy of you; but I would not be worthy of you, I would not be worth considering in any light, if I did not say to you now that I am carrying it on for the work and for the possibilities that it presents, as well as for you."
"I believe you," said the woman, "and I am glad to have you say that."
"Although there is nothing in my life I so covet as you, Miss Haldane," went on the man with the blunt honesty that somehow appealed to the woman much more powerfully than more graceful and romantic wooing, "yet if I had to choose now between you and this great opportunity for service to the people—"
"You would choose the opportunity for service," interposed the woman quickly.
"I should have to do so. And yet you still remain my inspiration," said the man. "Your approbation means more to me than anything or every-

thing else. I don't know what fate has in store for me; but I doubt if I shall have another opportunity of the magnitude of that I have enjoyed to-night, and that you were there completes my satisfaction."
"Mine, too."
"Yet, there is another thing that I ought to say," continued Gormly, and this was the hardest thing he had ever attempted, he thought. "You have spoken of my career, of my long and honorable record, of my unblemished reputation. I have to confess to my shame that I am not altogether worthy of your confidence."
"What do you mean?"
"Ever since I have been in New York, there is no act of my life that I could not tell you myself; but before that—"
"You were a boy then," said the woman quickly.
"But I mingled with life in an ugly way."
"That ride in the snow?" she whispered, staring at him in turn.
It did not occur to him to lay any emphasis upon or draw any inference from the fact that she had remembered his remarks of several months before.
"And that other woman, was it she for whom you rode?" she went on.
"Yes," said he.
"Did you do anything that makes you unworthy the respect of—"



He Bent Over and Kissed It Fervently.

"Not anything dishonorable in one sense," answered Gormly. "And whatever it was, I have repented of it long since and would have made amends if I could have done so; but—Well, if I ever should come to you with that question about being my wife, I will tell you all about it. As it is, I don't want even the faintest shadow of a pretense about myself where you are concerned."
"You were only a boy, as you say, Mr. Gormly," said Miss Haldane after a long pause. "I don't know what it is, nor do I wish to, now. I know what you are, the world knows what you have been since you have been here, and I—"
She extended her hand to him. "I trust you, I would trust you with anything."
The man took it in both his own. They were stretching out beyond the city. No one was near. The two in front were busy about their own concerns. He bent over and kissed it fervently.
"I thank you for that," he said simply, as he released it.

BOOK III.

THE CRUCIAL MOMENTS.

CHAPTER XII.

Mrs. Haldane is Surprised.
The Haldane family usually partook of luncheon together. Breakfast was an irregular meal taken at different times by different members of the household, and dinner usually brought many engagements which widely separated them. A few days after the automobile ride, while the excitement

over the proposed granting to the Gotham Freight Traction company of the New York Street Car company franchise was still at its height, Mr. and Mrs. Haldane and their daughter, after waiting sometime for the arrival of Livingstone Haldane, sat down to luncheon without him.
It was Eleanor who opened the conversation, after the luncheon had been served and the servants had withdrawn.
"Father," she said, "I have been thinking for some days now that I ought to tell you something that happened the other night."
"What night, Eleanor?"
"The night Mr. Gormly made his famous speech in the city hall square. You know Livingstone and Louise and I were down there in the car and saw and heard it all."
"Yes," said her father, somewhat bitter, "it was told to me the next morning that Gormly had spoken from your brother's car and that after it was all over he had ridden away with you two young women."
"Told to you?" exclaimed his daughter. "Why should you be interested in Mr. Gormly's movements?"
Haldane saw that he had made a mistake. "I mean," he said quickly, "that I heard of all this from some of those who were present."
"Eleanor, I am surprised," began Mrs. Haldane in her loftiest and most impressive manner, "that you should allow yourself to be mixed up with this inefable person in any way. It is bad enough to have Livingstone espousing his cause; but to have you associated with him in the public eye, or out of it, is simply preposterous!"
"Mother!" said Miss Haldane mildly; but the elder woman was not to be stopped.
"The family has never been allied with trade since it has been settled on Manhattan Island. I am a five-barred Colonial Dame; your father's people are nearly as old; and I say frankly, that I do not like your intimacy with this person. Of course Liv-

ingstone being a man, it does not make so much difference; but you should be more careful."
"I think it proper," said Miss Haldane at this juncture, "to inform you that Mr. Gormly told me that he cared very much for me."
"What!" exclaimed both Mr. and Mrs. Haldane at the same moment and with one voice.
The intimation, however, and the feeling expressed in both cases were decidedly different. Both were surprised; but Mrs. Haldane's surprise was lost in indignation. In Haldane's amazement, there was a shade of relief. A possibility instantly leaped into his mind, a possibility that he dared not formulate or give utterance to. It rendered him less emphatic, therefore, in his disapproval. Nothing restrained Mrs. Haldane.
"The impudence, the insolence of that man!" she cried. "It was bad enough to have him aspire to be mayor of New York; but that he should have the audacity, the presumption to raise his eyes to you, Eleanor Haldane, is inconceivable! I trust that you reduced him to his proper position instantly. For one thing, I am glad that he did declare himself; for now the acquaintance will be absolutely ended."
"He did not ask me to be his wife," returned the daughter quietly.
"Why, good gracious! you don't mean to say that he—"
"Eliza," interposed Haldane, "don't be foolish. I have no doubt that Mr. Gormly's remarks were entirely proper."
"Mother!" exclaimed the girl indignantly. "Of course they were."

"Well, you said yourself he did not ask you to marry him."
"No," was the hesitating answer. "But he said he intended to do so."
"I wish he would do it then, and have it over with."
"My dear wife," said Haldane, "while of course such an alliance is not to be thought of, yet Mr. Gormly, so far as I know, has done no dishonor to Eleanor by his remark, and—"
"Have you taken leave of your senses, Beekman Haldane?" cried his wife. Such a proposition as that should be disposed of at once, and I repeat I am sorry that the man hesitated, for whatever reason I can't imagine, so that the affair might have been conclusively settled."
"I am not at all sure, mother," answered Miss Haldane, "that it would have been conclusively settled in the way at least you seem to think the only way possible, if he had asked me to be his wife."
"Eleanor, you could not possibly love this man!"
"I could do so; but I certainly do not love him now. I certainly respect and admire him, I think he is the leading citizen of New York today. If he wins this election and goes on as he should, there is no reason why he should not be president of the United States. I believe it would be easier to be elected to that office than to become mayor. And while I do not feel toward him as I should toward the man I will some day marry, yet there are many other things in the prospect that allure."
"But you are a Haldane, you are a Stuyvesant, you are—"
"I know, mother, all that my ancestors were. As for myself, I am just an American girl, who likes American men and American institutions, and who is glad to see people do things."
"I presume," said Haldane, who had said little but had thought deeply, "that such a proposition, if definitely made, would be made to me."
"Well then, of course," said his wife, "you will give but one answer."
"And what would you suggest that should be?" asked Haldane.
"To show him the door."
"I hardly think," returned her husband, "that I should be guilty of that discourtesy."
"There is no use," interposed her daughter, "to discuss the matter any further; for he hasn't asked me, I haven't accepted him. I don't know whether he ever will ask me or not, and until he does why trouble about it?"
"Well, what does he mean then by telling you that he loves you? Loves!" sneered the older woman disdainfully.
"Yes," said her father, "it seems to me a rather remarkable course for a man to address a woman in that way, and yet not complete his proposition."
"He said that something was impending which made him feel that it was proper to tell me this now."
"Something impending?"
"Some sort of disclosure, I inferred," answered the girl, "that might affect him or possibly me."
Haldane started.
"Well," he said, "I do not quite agree with your mother. There is no insult in the honest affection of any honest man. But if he approaches you upon the subject, I wish that you would refer him to me."
"Father!"
"Beekman!" exclaimed the older woman, greatly surprised. "You don't mean—"
"Now, I don't mean anything, except just what I say," answered Haldane decisively. "It is proper that such a proposition should be made to me; and in short I very greatly desire to be allowed to discuss the matter, if it goes any further, with Mr. Gormly personally."
Haldane spoke sternly, and his wife at once subsided, as she invariably did when he assumed that mood. Eleanor, however, was not so easily silenced.
"Of course, in any event you would be consulted, father," she said firmly; "but so far as the disposition of my hand goes, that is a matter that concerns my heart, and it is one which, although I should be very glad of your counsel and your approval, I shall have to decide myself."
"Quite so, quite so," said Haldane. "I have no other idea."
"Father," he said abruptly, "I want to see you alone for a moment or two please!"
"What has happened?" began Haldane, rising.
"Why, Mr. Gormly— But I would rather see you alone."
"Has he made a proposition to you for your sister's hand?" questioned Mrs. Haldane.
"What!" exclaimed her son.
"Eleanor," explained his mother, "has just stated that Mr. Gormly took advantage of your kindness to him the other night, after that disgraceful episode in the city hall, to make love to her in the tonneau of the car."
"You don't say!" exclaimed the young man, apparently neither shocked nor surprised. "Well, he's a good one. What did you say to him, sis?"
"It is very unpleasant to me to have these matters discussed in this way," answered Eleanor, her face blushing. "As I have explained to father and mother, Mr. Gormly did me the honor to say that he cared a great deal for me. He did not ask me to be his wife, although he expressed his intention of doing so. He said that certain things had made him anticipate his purpose and state his feelings toward me now without waiting, as he had expected to do, until the end of the election."
"What things?" asked young Haldane. "Things that concerned him or—"
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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A quaint paragraph appears in the will of Mrs. Julie Hall of Brighton, England. At the reading of the will the other day it was found that she had bequeathed £100 to her coachman, provided he is in her service at her death, and "if I do not die through or from the effects of a carriage accident when he is the driver."

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A Reply Was Revised.
"They have grown very touchy on Alaskan matters in the interior department since the trouble of the Cuningham claims," said a coal man the other day.
"I had occasion some time ago to write to the department about an Alaskan subject that had no bearing on the situation. I have just received an answer that does not commit anybody, but it had on it the initials of at least six persons, showing that the reply had been thoroughly considered and revised before it was started in my direction. I guess they are on the lookout for bombs."

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