Dana Forger
OR, THE
LIGHT OF LOS
DARKENED
JOHN STRANGE WINTER

INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION.

CHAPTER XXV. (Continued.)

"Where to, m'lord?"

"Palace Mansions."

"Yes, m'lord," murmured Charles to Barker, as they drove off, "that the old codger's done it at last. Palace Mansions is the order—that's where Mrs. 'Arris lives, you know."

"Ay," muttered the coachman, in reply, "and Mrs. 'Arris'll catch a Tartar in 'im, no mistake about that."

"They generally takes care of themselves," said Charles, with a cynicism worthy of his estimable master.

Coming events, they say, cast their shadows before, and Barker, who had been giving a small share of attention to Charles and gossip, suddenly pulled in his horses with a jerk, "Osses is inclined to be playful today," he remarked.

"I dessay they know it is the wrong time of year to be in town," returned Charles, supercilliously.

"Likely enough. 'Osses is as sensible as Christians and sensibler than some," Barker rejoined.

As they got over the ground the "playfulness" of the horses did not subside; indeed, on the contrary, it increased, and to such an extent that by the time they turned into the Kensington High street they were racing along at express speed, with the evident intention of bolting as soon as they had a chance.

Barker, however, knew his work and did not give them the chance at all, and by the time they reached the corner of the road for which they were bound, they were going steadily again. Unfortunately, at that point, however, that terrible maker of mischief, the unforeseen, happened—a little child with a balloon as large as a man's head suddenly let go the string with which she had held it captive, the balloon soared away and dashed into the near horse's face, the off horse screamed at the loss of her toy; the horse reared and plunged. Barker administered a cut of his whip, and the next moment they were dashing down the road, and an elderly woman was lying helplessly in a dead faint just where the carriage had passed.

"My God! we are over some one," shouted Lord Aylmer. He was the kind of man who, on emergency, always appeals to the Deity, whom in all his ways of life he utterly and systematically ignores. "Let me get out," he cried,

Barker, who was pulling in the horses with might and main, had already checked their mad speed, and a moment or so later turned the horses with a face like chalk and a dreadful fear knocking at his heart that the motionless figure lying in the road would never move again. He pulled up just where the crowd was gathering, and Lord Aylmer was out of the carriage before Charles could collect his scattered senses sufficiently to get off the box.

The crowd was gathering in numbers every moment, and was not only dense and strong, but curious. Lord Aylmer, however, without standing on ceremony, vigorously elbowed his way to the inner circle.

"Let me pass; stand aside, Policeman, I am Lord Aylmer—my horses were frightened by an infernal balloon that a child was carrying. Is she much hurt?"

"Dead faint at present, my lord," returned the policeman, who had the woman's head upon his knees. "I wish we could get some brandy and some water."

Lord Aylmer looked around for Charles. "Charles, get some brandy and water from somewhere or other. Be quick."

Just then a well-dressed young woman pushed her way through the crowd. "Let me pass," she urged. "Can't you see I've brought brandy? Stand back, you men. Have you never seen an accident before? Do you want to kill her? Stand back!"

She was a handsome woman, scarcely more than a girl; her hands and face and speech betokened that she was gently born; her fearless speech putting into words what was in her mind, had the effect of causing the crowd to shrink back a little. "Is she much hurt?" she asked.

"Pretty bad case, Miss," answered the policeman, who was trying to get a little brandy down the unconscious woman's throat.

"Had we not better get her into my house? She can't lie here," she went on. "Has any one gone for a doctor?"

"I should get her off to the hospital at once Miss," the policeman replied.

"Would you? Poor thing! I was standing at my window and saw it all. You oughtn't to let your coachman drive like that," she added, severely, to Lord Aylmer.

"I don't; but my horses were frightened by a child's balloon," he explained.

"You oughtn't to have horses that are frightened at trifles," she responded, tlirtily.

"I think we'd better get her off at once," said the policeman, "she gives no sign of coming round."

"How can we take her? Shall I? I have the carriage here ready, and the horses are sober enough now."

"Yes, my lord, I really think that's the best thing we can do," the other answered. "If your man'll give me a hand we'll lift her in, in a minute."

Eventually the woman was lifted into the victoria and the energetic young woman, having rushed back to her house for her hat, got in also, and supported her in as comfortable a position as was compatible with her insensible condition. Just as they were starting, a doctor arrived on the scene, took a hasty glance at the victim of the accident, and quietly got in, taking possession of the little black case. "I'd better go—it's a bad business," he said to Lord Aylmer, realizing that he was the owner of the carriage.

"Yes—yes—we had better follow in a cab," Lord Aylmer said, turning to the policeman. "I suppose you'll see me through?"

"Oh, yes, my lord; I'm bound to do that," he answered.

Lord Aylmer was getting more and more nervous; he got into the cab looking white and scared, with his sinful old heart thumping against his ribs in a way that was very unusual with him. When he became nervous his carriage has run over an elderly woman and it was likely to prove a fatal accident, not for that reason at all, but wholly and solely because, when Charles and the policeman had lifted the unconscious woman into the carriage, Lord Aylmer had picked up a letter which was lying face upward in the roadway just where she had lain. Short-sightedness was not one of Lord Aylmer's signs of approaching years, and in an instant he had grasped that the letter was addressed to his nephew Dick, and before Charles and the policeman had got their burden safely into the victoria, he had thrust the letter into his pocket, with a sort of impious thanksgiving to Heaven that at last the girl he had been hunting down for many weeks was delivered into his hands.

For evidently this respectable elderly woman, dressed in decent black was Mrs. Harris's servant, and it had happened that she did not keep more than one—why this accident would put her altogether at his mercy.

He was positively trembling when they reached the St. George's Hospital, and Barbara was carried in, not unconscious now, for the slight jolting of the carriage had brought her to again. Then there was a short time of impatient waiting before the doctor came to them—that is, Lord Aylmer and the young lady who had come with the patient.

"Broken leg," he said—"a bad thing at her time of day. And she is worrying about her mistress—wants to send and break it gently—isn't in good health just now. Will you go?" turning to the young lady.

"I? Oh, I'm so sorry, but I'm due at rehearsal now—I must go off at once. Couldn't you go?" she asked, turning to Lord Aylmer.

"Certainly—with pleasure. Shall I bring her back to see the old lady?" Lord Aylmer inquired, in a tone which was a delightful mixture of gallantry and father in-law—a tone which had, by the by, stood him in good stead many a time and oft.

"Yes, it would quiet her down a little I dare say," the house surgeon answered.

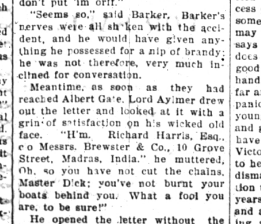
"Very well. Make me liable for any expenses, you know," Lord Aylmer said, as he moved toward the door, "Can I come into a cab, my dear lady?" he added to the actress.

"Thanks," she answered.

"And may I have the honor of settling with the cabman?"

"Oh, no—very kind of you, but I always pay for myself. The Cornhill—good-by"—

The cab rolled off, Lord Aylmer uncovered his handsome old head, smiled



DEAD FAINT AT PRESENT.

his most fascinating smile, and bowed with a courtesy of the old school which was quite lost on the back of the retreating cab and its occupants. Then he got into his victoria and said, "Palace Mansions."

"Yes, m' lord," answered Charles, woodenly; then remarked to Barker, as soon as he hopped up on the box—"Palace Mansions; even bigwigs legs don't put 'im off."

"Seems so," said Barker. Barker's nerves were all shaken with the accident, and he would have given anything he possessed for a nip of brandy; he was not therefore, very much inclined for conversation.

Meantime, as soon as they had reached Albert Gate, Lord Aylmer drew out the letter and looked at it with a grim of satisfaction on his wicked old face. "H'm. Richard Harris, Esq., c o Messrs. Brewster & Co., 10 Grove Street, Madras, India." he muttered, Oh, so you have written to your dear Master Dick; you've not burnt your boats behind you. What a fool you are, to be sure!"

He opened the letter without the smallest scruple, tore the envelope into a thousand fragments and scattered them to the winds, and settled down to enjoy the tender words beginning—"My own dear Dick," ending "Your loving and faithful little wife, Dorothy."

"So her name is Dorothy," he mused. "Strange that they should always by such stress on their love and their faithfulness! They're all alike. I wonder who the Esther is that she talks about. Barbara is evidently the old girl who came to grief just now. Well, Barbara is safely laid by the leg for the next few weeks. Really, it could not have fallen out better if one had planned it all. But I wonder who Esther is? 'Esther hasn't come yet,' she says, 'but may come at any moment,' I must find out about Esther."

When they got to Palace Mansions, he saw Dorothy looking anxiously out of the window.

"On the watch," he said to himself, "And pretty enough, too."

The lovely face disappeared when the carriage drew up at the door, and the smart footman, in his glory of crimson and white, jumped down and opened the door for the handsome old gentleman, who got out and went into the building. He knocked at the door of No. 3, and Dorothy, being perfectly alone, had no choice but to go and open it.

Am I speaking to Mrs. Harris?" he said the suave, wicked old voice.

"Yes," answered Dorothy, wondering what the caller possibly want with her.

"May I come in? I am Lord Aylmer, I have something to tell you. No, don't be alarmed; it is nothing very bad. Pray don't alarm yourself."

CHAPTER XXVI.

In the mention of his name—and as the policeman and the doctor, the young lady who had gone to Barbara's aid, and the people at St George's knew all else to follow, it would, he knew, be useless to decrie Dorothy as to his identity, so he boldly gave his own name and trusted to the chance of her not knowing that he was anything to Dick—Dorothy started as if she had been shot, and at the thud of something which in his startled agony she mean had been, she staggered back, and would probably have fallen if he had not caught her.

"I beg you will not frighten yourself like this," he cried. "Indeed, it is not so serious as that."

"It is—it is. Her lips could not utter Dick's name, her agony was so great but her eyes spoke volumes in place of her tongue.

It never occurred to Lord Aylmer that she was thinking of Dick. He only thought how lovely she was in her distress, and wondered how he could best profit by it. He was positively trembling when they reached the St. George's Hospital, and Barbara was carried in, not unconscious now, for the slight jolting of the carriage had brought her to again. Then there was a short time of impatient waiting before the doctor came to them—that is, Lord Aylmer and the young lady who had come with the patient.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

His Communication to Congess on the Cuban Question.

A POWERFUL PRESENTATION.

Favors Forcible Intervention to Terminate Hostilities and Asks Discretionary Authority in the Matter—Responsibility Rests with Congress.

Following is the text of the president's message:

To the Congress of the United States—Obedient to the constitutional duty which commands the president to give from time to time to the congress information of the state of the union, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient, I address you (my duty) now to address your body with regard to the grave crisis that has arisen in the island of Cuba, a neighbor of the United States to Spain by reason of the warfare that for more than three years has raged in the neighboring island of Cuba. The warfare which by its intimate connection of the Cuban question with the state of our own union and the duties and responsibilities which it involves