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and had obtained no

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### LADY LARKSPUR

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

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#### COUNT MONTANI.

Synopsis .- Richard Searles, successful American playwright, con-fides to his friend, Bob Singleton, fact that, inspired by the genius of a young actress whom he had seen in London, he has written a play, "Lady Larkspur," solely with the thought that she should interpret the leading character. This girl, Violet Dewing, has disappeared and Searles refuses to allow the play to be pro-duced with anyone else in the part. Singleton has just returned (invalided) from France, where he had been serving in the aviation corps. His uncle, Raymond Bashford, a wealthy man, had contracted a marriage a short time before his death, while on a visit to Japan, He left Singleton a comparatively small amount of money and the privilege of residence in the "garage" of his summer home. Baron-the-Sound, Connecticut. Mrs. Bashford is believed to be traveling in the Orient. The household at Barton is made up of elderly employees of the Tyringham, a New York hotel, where Bashford made his home. By the terms of his will these people are to have a home at Barton for the rest of their lives. Singleton goes to Barton, taking with him the manu-script of "Lady Larkspur." There he finds the household strangely upset, some of its members being suspected by their comrades of pro-Germanism. Antonio, head of the establishment, informs him that he has been perplexed by the some-what mysterious visits of a stranger, apparently a foreigner, seeking Mrs. Bashford. Antoine has formed the male members of the household into a guard for pro-tection. Singleton reads "Lady Larkspur" with approval. "Aunt Alice" arrives unexpectedly, meets with a lively reception and turns out to be young and charming. Mrs. Farnsworth is her traveling companion. Torrence, Bashford's lawyer, suspects the two women and warns Singleton "Aunt Alice" may be an impostor.

#### CHAPTER II-Continued.

"It's her manner of speaking of spookish things, Mr. Singleton. It doesn't seem fitting in a widow and her so lately bereaved. And the older lady's, quite as bad, sir. The maids tell me they keep talking all day about fairles and pretending they're queens and such like, and talking poetry to each other. The late master never indulged in such things, sir."

"He would have lived longer if he had! It was probably the poetry and fairies that attracted him to Mrs. Bashford."

"Yes, sir," he acquiesced with a gulp. "I suppose you're right, sir."

"You should be grateful to Mrs. Bashford for not bouncing you all for the row you made last night. It could be done; in fact, Mr. Torrence has suggested that legal means could be found for getting rid of you."

"That would be very sad, sir," he said humbly.

"Isn't Mrs. Bashford kind to you? Hasn't she taken pains to make you

all feel at home?" "Well, yes, sir. But she's taken Elsie back into the house, and there's no work for her, there being two women in the laundry already; and she's told me Dutch must be given his old place in charge of the poultry; and both be-

ing Germans, you will recall." "It's just her kind heart, you idlot! You've all been spoiled; that's what's the matter with you."

"It causes feeling; that's all, sir." "It needn't cause it if you brace up and act like a man," I retorted. Then, sorry I had been so harsh, I added: "We must take good care of Mrs. Bashford, Antoine. It would be your old master's wish. It would be wise to keep a guard at the house for the present in case your mysterious stranger turns up again."

He couldn't have failed to note my change of tone about the unknown visitor, but he made no comment. "The guard's set, sir; front and

"While there's no danger whatever it's just as well to take no chances. Please tell the boys to send for me immediately at any hour of the night if they see any prowlers about."

"Very good, sir. But if you please, sir"-he had reached the garage and he lingered, fingering his hat nervously-"if it wasn't for the ladies talking about spirits, we'd all feel better, sir." "You're far from being a fool, An-

toine. Those ladies just play at believing in such rubbish. If they really believed in ghosts, you may be sure they wouldn't talk about it at table pefore strangers like you and me."

Though this seemed to impress him, moment later, as I was drawing down the shades in my bedroom, I saw him running across the lawn like a frightened rabbit.

#### CHAPTER III.

A Fan. The morning mail brought a letter from Searles acknowledging my con- tion," she protested. gratulations on his play. While my enthusiastic praise pleased him, he was very scornful of my suggestions, seeming even more depressed than

when he talked to me. "It's impossible for me to plan other work. 'Lady Larkspur' ate the soul dently lying in wait for us."

out of me. I'm done; finished, clean out of the running. There's only this to report. I had a letter from Dalton saying that some time ago he asked at the hotel where he sent the script of 'Lady Larkspur' to know whether Miss Dewing had sent a forwarding address. Her accumulated mail had been called for by some one whose identity was not disclosed. Of course this isn't much to hang a rope on, but if that play is what I think it is and Miss Violet Dewing ever reads it she's going to jump for the telegraph office the moment she finishes the last act. I have no plans for returning East; the folks at home let me do as I please, and it's a relief to be in seclusion where I hear nothing of the doings of Broadway. I hope your anclent globe-trotting aunt still lingers in the far East! Keep the ink flowing, son. That novel ought to be well under way when I get back."

The tale I had begun seemed utter trash in comparison with the story of Alice Bashford, in which, much against my will, I had become a minor character. I had rather prided myself on my ability to see through a plot in the first chapter of the most complicated mystery story, but there were points in this unwritten tale that baffled me.

I kept away from the house until dinner-time, when I was received quite as an old friend by Alice and Mrs. Farnsworth. The table talk was of Celtic poetry, and proved less disturbing to Antoine than the previous night's discussion of ghosts.

Their day had been spent, they explained, in a further examination of my uncle's Japanese loot, and they had taken a long walk beyond the estate's boundaries and were enthusiastic about the landscape.

"It's so beautifully peaceful all about here," Alice murmured. "I feel that I never want to move again."

"That's a real tribute to America," Mrs. Farnsworth remarked; "for Alice dearly loves new scenes. She inherited a taste for travel from her father. who put some new places on the maps. you know."

I didn't know and I wanted to ask questions about Alice's father, but as though anxious to frustrate such inquiries my aunt asked how close we were to the place made famous by Israel Putnam's spectacular escape from



"The Mystery Is Soived!"

the British. She had read the story and would motor to the scene, she declared. It was quite clear that there were chapters in her life that were not to be opened for my perusal. No sooner had I caught a glimpse of a promising page than the book was politely closed. A curtain hung between the immediate present at Barton-onthe-Sound and other scenes and incidents of the girl's life; and Mrs. Farnsworth was equally detached from any tangible background. It seemed that I might meet them daily for the rest of my life in this same friendly fashion without adding a particle to my knowledge of them.

I became alert immediately when, as we rose from the table, Alice said, with the air of asking an unimportant fa-

"We were speaking last night of a man who has been asking for us here. His visits have alarmed the servants, but there is nothing to fear from him. You know"-she smiled at Mrs. Farnsworth-"it's rather he who seems to fear us; that, at least, is our impression, though we have no idea why he should do so. Still, it's rather good fun to find yourself an object of special attention and to be followed, even pursued. We've even led him on a little, haven't we, Constance?"

Mrs. Farnsworth laughingly admitted that they had led the gentleman on a trifle, "but with all circumspec-

"We met him here and there in Tokyo, and later were surprised to find him crossing on our steamer. We ed bearers of sickness. The Greeks threw him off in the Canadian Rockies, where we stopped for a day, and eludi ed him in Chicago, where he was evi-

"But please don't get the idea that the man annoys us," interposed Mrs. Farnsworth.

"Far from it!" cried Alice.

"You've seen enough of us perhaps to understand that we enjoy little adventures," said Mrs. Farpsworth. "The man pretends to be interested in Mr. Bashford's art treasures. Antoine's story about the disguise is rather against that; but we will give him the benefit of the doubt. What we are hoping is that something really amusing may come of his persistent pursuit. With you and the army of servants here we feel perfectly safe; so we're for giving him every chance to show his hand."

"He is the Count Giuseppe Montani," said my aunt, "who represents himself as a connoisseur-a lover of the beautiful."

"The mystery is solved! It is easy to understand why he has haunted the place."

"Yes; quite easy. Count Montani is very anxious to see the porcelains." "I wasn't referring to the pottery; but I shan't press the matter."

"I advise you not to; your remark was highly improper from a nephew to an aunt! I have told you about all I know of this Italian gentleman. I am going to ask a favor. He telephoned from Stamford this afternoon to know whether we had arrived, and I bade him call tonight. I should be glad if you would remain until he leaves. I should like to know what you make of

"Certainly," I assented, pleased that she had taken me into her confidence and deeply curious as to the Italian connoisseur. What she had told me so frankly and plausibly did not, however, touch upon the matter of the interest shown by the American state department in my aunt's arrival at Baron, which troubled me much more than the antics of the Italian who had followed the women across the Pacific.

Count Montani arrived shortly and was received in the drawing room. The ladies greeted him with the greatest cordiality. As he crossed the room I verified the limp and other points of Antoine's description. His bearing was that of a gentleman; and in his very correct evening dress he hardly looked like a man who would disguise himself and attempt to rob a house. He spoke English all but perfectly and proceeded at once to talk a great deal.

"I was sad when I found I had so narrowly missed you at Seattle, and again at Chicago. You travel far too rapidly for one of my age!"

His age might have been thirty. He was a suave, polished, sophisticated person. Nothing was more natural than that he should pause in his travels to call upon two agreeable women he had met on a Pacific steamer. Possibly he was in love with Alice Bashford; this was not a difficult state of heart and mind for a man to argue himself into. She was even more strikingly beautiful tonight than I had thought her before. She was again in white-it was only in daytime that she wore black-and white was exceedingly becoming to her. As we talked she plied listlessly a fan-a handsome trinket of ostrich plumes. A pretty woman and a fan are the happiest possible combination.

There is no severer test of grace than a woman's manner of using a fan. A clumsy woman makes an implement of this plaything, flourishing it to emphasize her talk, or, what is worse, pointing with it like an instructor before a blackboard. But in graceful hands it is unobtrusive, a mere bit of decoration that teases and fascinates the beholder's eye.

With all his poise and equanimity I was distinctly conscious that Montani's dark eyes were intent upon the idly swaying fan. I thought at first it was her hands that interested him as they unfailingly interested me, but when, from time to time, she put down the fan his gaze still followed it. And yet there was nothing novel in the delicate combination of ivory and feathers. I had seen many fans that to all appearances were just like it. Once, as she picked it up and lazily opened it, I saw him bend forward eagerly, then, finding that I had noted his eagerness, he rose, pretending that a brass screen before the fireplace had caught his eye, and asked whether it was not a Florentine production, which shook my faith in his connoisseurship, as I had bought the thing myself from a New York brassworker who had made it to my order.

#### Count Montani and Aunt Alice's ostrich-plume fan.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Common Superstitions. Most people are superstitious. With some the breaking of, a looking glass means a gloomy foreboding. Peacock feathers were formerly considerand Romans of ancient times put implicit trust in omens and never undertook enterprises of any moment without consulting the oracle

# O'MARY GRAHAMIN

PENGUINS AND MOMENTS.

As Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Penguin were dreaming and watching what was going on with the watch they had found, they were hearing all sorts of funny things. All the moments seemed to have something to say for themselves. They were certainly a funny, busy lot.

"Dear me."

said Mrs. Johnny, "I'm sure I'd never have had such adventures with any other penguin. am sure of that." Just then ap-

Let's Hurry.

peared the fairy who had been talking to them before. "I've come to talk to you," she said. "I want to talk to you as I did before. Now I will tell you many things in a very little while. You are certainly having lots of adventures, you two. Dear me. One could almost say you were living a life of different adventures and yet each one is complete in tself! I do believe I will see more of penguins and see if they all have adventures."

"But don't leave us until we ask you some questions we have in mind," said

Mrs. Johnny.

"All right," said the fairy. Then they saw that the moments which came from the watch which the penguins had found on the beach began to prance about again and to talk. Though they had really been busy all the time the penguins hadn't noticed every one of them by any manner of

"You can't catch me," said another moment. "I would have put you to sleep when I first came and you would have been so rested by now instead of all tired out. I'm a napping mement. I'm off."

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Peggy, "we've lost the moments."

"And we'll never come back again," shouted the moments as they dashed off while the watch looked on and his face seemed to smile.

"Listen." said the little fairy. "you must not feel badly because you have lost those moments and because they cannot come back again. You have just learned something. Do not wait for some moment to come you think you may like. Enjoy each moment as it comes along. Work when it is time sleep when it is time for the napping moments to be giving you rest. Play when the joyous playtime moments are swimming and walking and singing and dancing. Don't wait for the moments to come but be friendly with the moments as they arrive and before they pass. If you don't do this you will grow so tired, oh, so tired, you will never be able to do anything. You will sigh and cry for the moments that have gone and you can't catch them once they are gone. And you'll sigh and cry for other moments to come and while you're sighing you'll be wasting all the precious ones which are hurrying right along, all the time."

The little fairy had vanished and only penguins seemed to be about the

"Let's hurry and finish the nest," said Peggy. "And then let's have a nap so we'll

get rested," said Johnny. "And then we'll have such good ap-

petites for breakfast," said Peggy, "and we'll care for the moments as they go by before they leave us. If we don't we might

miss the children when they come and they'd go hurrying by to see if they could and a better mother and father." the nest and they took a nap and

So they finished next morning when breakfast time came and Peggy put out the breakfast cloth and poured John-

ny's salt water coffee into his special stone cup and gave him an ozzelette of fish without any eggs, Johany strutted around her and sang this song: "The moments, the moments go flying

That is the point of this, my song; We must make the most of each one that's here And then we'll be happy and full of Heigh-ho!"

No Use, Anyway.
"I think I'll give Jimmy his knife," said the small boy, who had been thinking deeply.

"Have you Jimmy's knife?" the mother inquired. "Yes, I found it a long time ago. He thinks it's lost. But findin's keepin's,

you know." The mother made no comment, for she knew something else was coming. And then her son said:

"I might as well give it to him, 1 can't use it, 'cause he's with me all the

#### STRENGTHLESS SEEMED DYING

So Weak She Could Hardly Move, Says Indiana Lady.—One Bottle of Cardui Put Her on the Road to Recovery.

Tangler, Ind .- "Four years ago this summer I was sick in bed," writes Mrs. Lillie McElwee, of this place. "I had been under the doctor's care for five weeks. . . . I was pretty bad, and I was just as nervous as I could be. . . . I could not sleep at night until 10 or 12 o'clock. When I would doze off and wake up I would be all of a tremble with nervousness.

"The doctor called my trouble. catarrh of the . . . It gave me such pains that at each one it would seem that I could not bear another one. Then I would chill . . . the pains would just seem to shake me all over, and the next day I would be so weak I could hardly move. I would be so utterly strengthless that it would seem as if I were dying.

"After one of my bad spells . . . and I had almost died, I picked up the Home Treatment Book and decided to try Cardul. Before I had taken a whole bottle, I could sleep at night . . . I don't remember just how long, but in a short time I was up and helping with

Over forty years of successful use has proven the value of Cardui in the treatment of many common female allments.

All druggists sell Cardul, for women. -Adv.

The Mysterious Fascination. "I don't approve of some of these popular songs," remarked the severe person.

"You don't have to pay any atten-

tion to those you disapprove." "Oh, yes I do. That's the worst of it. They are the very ones that keep running through my head."

Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills contain nothing but vegetable ingredients, which act gently as a tonic and purgative by etimulation and not by irritation .- Adv.

Fitting Action. "What did they do when the speakeasy caught fire?" "Sent in a still alarm."



## TOO

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