

# The Vengeance of Henry Jarroman

By ROY VICKERS

Must the Woman Always Ray?

THEY HAD BEEN THE STORY... Lady Doucester was in the habit of breakfasting in bed. Thereafter would follow a long, leisurely toilet, every moment of which she thoroughly enjoyed. It was not vanity but pride of craft. She conceived it to be a part of her duty to her husband and society in general to look as attractive as possible, and she spared no pains to that end.

"Every one knows that I make up and dye my hair and all the rest of it," she told a young girl once, "and they think it jolly decent of me not to grudge them the time."

Her preparations were only in the early stages, and she still looked her age—when her husband knocked at her door. Petulantly she dismissed her maid and invited him to enter.

"Good morning, my dear," said Lord Doucester. "I am sorry to disturb you, but it had to be done." He seated himself on a divan and stared at the ceiling, his hands thrust into his pockets.

"What would you sit like that, Mollentrave," she said. "You had better smoke."

"Thank you, my dear," said Lord Doucester, eagerly availing himself of the permission, whereas his thoughts collected themselves.

"It's a bit of a shock, Emmeline. I had a chat with Wilfred last night after you'd gone to bed about—about the girl."

"I thought we'd settle about her," remarked Lady Doucester. "In the circumstances we agreed that their engagement should be announced in about a month's time. It isn't quite what one had hoped for Wilfred, but—she lowered her voice—"for him to marry John Camden's daughter, neither of whom knowing she is John Camden's daughter, is an extraordinarily safe coincidence."

Quite so, but unfortunately either we have made a mistake or there are forces at work that are far from coincidental. The girl has just been told—by some guardian or family lawyer, I gather—that she is the daughter of an ex-convict!

"An ex-convict!" repeated Lady Doucester. She hated repeating things, but this time she could not help herself.

"Whose name, continued Doucester, "is Henry Jarroman."

Lady Doucester looked at her husband as if she wished she could suspect him of practical joking.

"I wish you would explain the thing properly, Mollentrave," she said with unnatural calm. She knew she had paled, and mechanically she reached for the rouge stick.

"There is little to explain beyond the bare facts," said Doucester. "It appears that the day after she was introduced to us here—the day Wilfred went to Creighton—the guardian person took her out to lunch and explained that she had been brought up under the name of Quest for general convenience—that her real father was Henry Jarroman, who had just come out of prison and wished to meet her."

"She met him on the following morning—that is to say, yesterday morning—then satisfied—quite other as to their respective identities, and—there we are."

"But he's not her father!"

"I wish you wouldn't use slang in my room, Mollentrave. What do you mean by 'there we are'? It seems to me a peculiarly senseless phrase."

"I thought you would understand the rest, my dear," said Doucester meekly.

"As soon as the girl heard the news she wrote to you to say she could not dine with us after all; you will remember that we were slightly surprised at the time. She also wrote to Wilfred, presenting him with the fact that her father was an ex-convict, and adding that that was a final argument against her accepting his offer of marriage."

"But he's not her father," said Lady Doucester in a voice that was little above a whisper.

Doucester shrugged his shoulders.

"I wish you wouldn't do that, Mollentrave," her nerves were on edge.

"Do you think it is possible that we were wrong? Ever since after all she really is Jarroman's daughter."

"You agreed with me as to her quite recognizable resemblance to Mrs. Camden," Doucester pointed out. "Moreover, it is not as if she had a name to be changed, she admitted that the gemmed ring belonged to her father. The two points taken together would make a rather startling coincidence. There would be a third coincidence in the fact—if it were a fact—that she was actually the daughter of a man whose life was thrown so tragically in touch with that of John Camden."

"For a time Lady Doucester was silent.

"You say this letter of hers reached Wilfred by the same post as her note to me. That was yesterday morning. And he only related what she had told him last night to you!"

"There was a tinge of jealousy in the last two words that hurried her husband into an explanation.

"We waited till last night because he wanted to see the girl in person and discuss the extraordinary turn of events. He approached me first, I think, because he did not want to distress you. He is amazingly obstinate, Emmeline. In spite of the girl's sensible decision not to marry him, he will not give her up," he says that he will not rest until—"

Lady Doucester, busy with her manufacture implements, interrupted him.

"What is the name of the family lawyer who took her out to lunch and—revealed her parentage to her?" she asked.

"It has not been mentioned," returned her husband slowly, "but I think you have made the same guess as I have. You also, Emmeline, guess the man to be—Theed."

Lady Doucester nodded, and absented herself at an unpleasant memory.

"Sleeping Dogs!"

"Sleeping dogs!" she muttered.

"I never did believe in letting them lie," said Doucester. "I have always preferred to stir them up and—let them bite each other."

"I can never make out what you mean."

"I mean, my dear, that if Theed has for some motive of his own, persuaded both Jarroman and the girl that they are related to each other it means that the existence of John Camden's daughter can no longer be held over our heads—which in turn means that there is no need for Wilfred to marry the girl."

"I don't like talking about her like that," he added, "as if she were trying to snub him up—which is not true. From all I know of her I admire her deeply."

"Are you going to see Theed?" asked Lady Doucester.

"I thought of doing so," he answered. "But I would naturally consult you first."

"I have nothing to say against it, if you think it necessary," she answered, with something that was perilously near humility.

"If I go—you give me a free hand, Emmeline."

"Yes, Mollentrave," she answered. He rose to go. She, too, had risen, and stood between him and the door. As he passed her she stopped him, stood on tiptoe, and kissed him. He looked mildly surprised, squeezed her hand, and left her.

## THE GUMPS—That's Toller 'Em



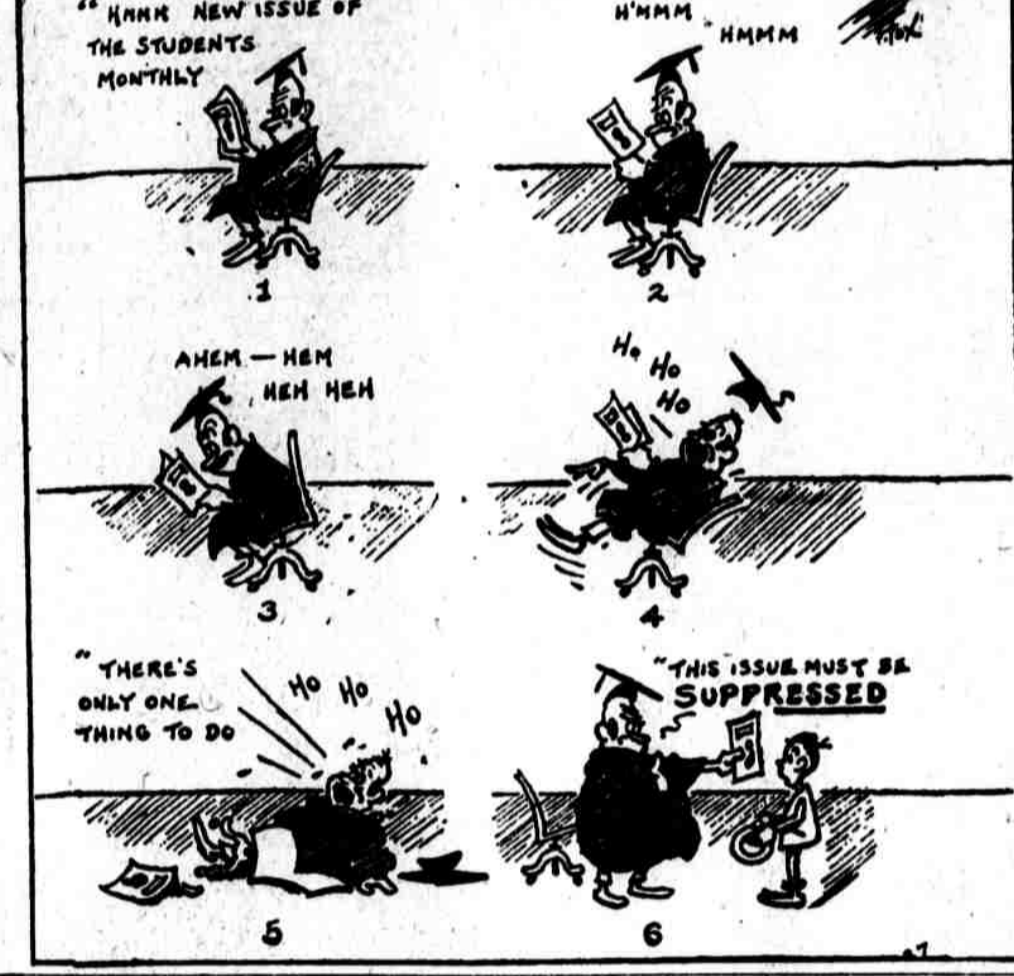
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