

The Lady of the Red Admirals.

BY ARTHUR T. QUILLER-COUCH, ("Q.")

Author of "The Splendid Spur."

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PART I.

All day within the dreamy house
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sang in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot
shrieked.

On from the crevice peep'd about,
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

My eyes here had been occupied with the gray chimney's base, among the Spanish chestnuts, at the very moment when I slipped on the northern face of Skirrid and twisted my ankle. This indeed explains the accident, and the accident explains why my interest in the house with the gray chimneys suddenly became a personal one. Five miles separated me from the man, that is, from the white smoke of a goods train crawling across the green and cultivated plain at my feet; and I knew, though I carried no map, that somewhere under the stone to my left must hide the country station of Lantlanau. To reach it I must pass the house, and there, no doubt, would I have found something to rest me on the shortest way.

So I picked up my walking-stick and hobbled down the hillside, albeit with pain. Where the descent eased a little I found and followed a foot-track, which in time turned into a sunk road scored deep with old cart-ruts, and so brought me to a desolate farmstead slowly dropping to ruin there in the perpetual shadow of the mountain. The slates that had fallen from the roof of byre and stable lay buried beneath the growth of nettle and mallow and wild pansy; and the yard-wall was down in a dozen places. I shuffled through one of these gaps, and almost at once found myself face to face with a marksmanship of iron in worst reverse gear. If that were possible, I stretched away right and left, with promise of a noble circumference; but no hand had retained it for at least twenty years. I counted no less than three inches through a hole in a man's common size night-slip, without squeezing; availed myself of the nearest; and having with difficulty dragged my disheveled feet up the hand-slope beyond took breath at the top and looked about me.

The edge of the ha-ha stood but fifty paces back from an avenue of the most magnificent Spanish chestnuts I have ever seen in my life. A few of them were withering from the top; and under these many dead boughs lay as they had fallen, in grass that obliterated almost all trace of the broad carriage-road. But nine out of ten stood hale and stout, and apparently good for centuries to come. Northward, the gray facade of the three-chimneyed manor and closed their green perspective, and towards it I now made my way.

But I must own this avenue daunted me, as a frame altogether too heavily for a mere limping pedestrian. And therefore I was relieved, as I drew near, to catch the sound of voices behind the shrubbery on my right hand. This determined me to take the house in flank, and I diverged and pushed my way between the laurels in search of the speakers.

"A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!"
Lobelia, however, horses had your father in stable; Red, white or gray."

"One, Miss Wilhelmina; an' 'Nat's the old Sentry-go, and father says he'll have to go to the knacker's before another winter."

"Then he shall carry me there on his back; with rings on my fingers and heels on my toes—no matter how heavy the pole into the knacker's yard."

And tiel'd at the pin;
Right glad were then the cat's meat men
To let that lady in!

—especially, Lobelia, when she alighted and sat upon the ground and began to tell them sad stories of the death of king;—but they cut off Sentry-go's head and nailed it over the gate. So he died, and she very imprudently married the master knacker, who had heard she was an heiress in her own right, and wanted to decorate his coat-of-arms with an escutcheon of pretense; and besides, his doctor had recommended a complete change.

"Law, miss, how you do run on!"
The young lady who had given utterance to this amazing rhapsody stood at the top of a terrace flight (much cracked and broken) between two lion statues (headless); a willow child in a large-brimmed hat, with a riding-switch in one hand and the other holding up an old tartan shawl, which she had pinned about her to imitate a horse-woman's habit. As she paced to and fro between the leaden statues, the poles vesis definit ad imos.

Et vos incesas, et motiones meo, and I noted almost at once that two or three butterflies—"red admirals" they were—flitted and circled about her in the sunlight. A child of common make and perhaps a year older, dressed in a buff print frock and pink sunbonnet, looked up at her from the foot of the steps. The faces of both were averted, and I stood there for at least a minutet on the verge of the laurels, unobserved, considering the picture they made, and the ruinous Jacobean house that formed its background.

Never was house more eloquent of desolation. Unpainted shutters, cracking in the heat, blocked one half of the windows. Weather-stains ran down the slats from the lantern on the main

roof; while the lantern over the stable had lost its vane and the stable-clock its minute-hand. The very walls had dropped out of the gable wall, and the wistaria and Gloire de Dijon they should have supported trailed down in tangles, like curtains. Grass choked the rain-pipes, and moss dappled the gravel walk. In the border at my feet some one had attempted to burn the weeds; and here lay his hoe, matted with bindweed and ring-streaked with the silvery tracks of snails.

"Very well, Lobelia. We will be sensible household and cook and talk of business. We came out, I believe, to cut a cabbage-leaf to make an apple pie."

At this point happening to turn her head she caught sight of me, and stopped with a slight, embarrassed laugh. "I raised my hat."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but no strangers are admitted here."

"I beg your pardon—" I began; and with that, as I shifted my walking-stick, my foolish ankle gave way, and

plump I sat in the very middle of the bindweed.

"You are ill?" She came quickly towards me, but halted a pace or two off. "You look as if you were going to any such trouble."

"I'll try not to, then," said I. "The fact is, a nerve just twisted my ankle on the side of Skirrid yonder, and I wished to be told the shortest way to the station."

"I don't believe you can walk; and"—she hesitated a second, then went on defiantly—"we have no carriage to take you."

"I should not think of putting you to any such trouble."

"Also, if you want to reach Aber, there is no train for the next two hours. You must come in and rest."

"But really—"

"I am mistress here, I am Wilhelmina van der Knoope."

"Being by this time on my feet again, I looked and introduced myself by name, she nodded. The child had a thoughtful face—thoughtful beyond her years—and delicately shaped rather than pretty."

Lobelia, run in and tell the admirals that a gentleman has called, with my permission."

Having dismissed the handmaid, she observed me in silence for a few moments while she unpinned her tartan

riding-skirt. Its removal disclosed, not as I expected—a shor' frock, but one of quite womanly length; and she carried it with the air of a grown woman. "You must make allowances, please, I think," she mused. "Yes, I really think you will be able to help. But you must not be surprised, mind. Can you walk alone, or will you lean a hand on my shoulder?"

I could walk alone. Of what she meant I had of course no inkling; but I saw she was anxious now for me to come in, and she had been prompt at first to warn me of the premises. So I hobbled after her towards the house.

At the steps by the side door she turned and came in, and she had been prompt at first to warn me of the premises. So I hobbled after her towards the house.

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"In two years' time the lad will be home, all being well. And then, of course, we shall see."

"Of what rank is he?"

"At present a second lieutenant. His age is but twenty-three. The Van der Knoopes have all followed the sea, as the portraits in this house will tell you. Ay, and we have fought against England in our time. As late as 1672, Adrian van der Knoope, captain of a ship under De Ruyter when he outgeneraled the English in Southwold bay. But since 1688 our swords have been at the service of our own country; and she has used them, sir."

I am afraid I was not listening. My chair faced the window, and as I glanced over my shoulder, I saw a soft enough light filtered through its transparent watermark, and it bore the name of a firm of opticians, Messrs. Abbotts, in which he laid down his young life.

Hen miserabile puer. Si qua fata aspera rumpas Tu Marcellus eris.

"Uncle Melchior had it set up. I wonder what Fritz was really like."

"And your Uncle Peter still believes in that?"

"Oh, yes. I am to marry Fritz in time. That is where you must help us. It would kill Uncle Peter if he knew. But Uncle Melchior gets puzzled when ever it comes to writing; and I am

afraid of making mistakes. We've put him down in the South Pacific station at present—that will last for two years more. But we have to invent the gossip, you know. And I thought that you—who wrote stories—"

"My dear child," I said, "let me be Fritz, and you shall have a letter duly once a month."

And my promise was kept—until, two years ago, she wrote that there was no further need for letters, for Uncle Peter was dead. For aught I know, by this time Uncle Melchior may be dead also, but regularly, as the monthly date comes round, I am Fritz Opdam de Keyser van der Knoope, a young midshipman of her majesty's navy; and wonder what my affianced bride is doing; and see her on the terrace steps with those butterflies floating about her. In my part of the world it is believed that the souls of the departed pass into these winged creatures. So might the souls of those many pictured admirals—but some day, before long, I hope to cross Skirrid again and see.

THE END.

An Acquired Habit.

"You heard Mrs. De Voe recite 'The Lost Child' last night, didn't you?"

"Of course."

"Not course; the queer way in which she worked her chin."

"Certainly; but you know the reason for that."

"Double-hinge to her jaws?"

"Oh, no! She worked in a chewing-gum in their frames for five years before her jaw was set, and had to sample every lot turned out."

RADWAY'S PILLS, No. 55 Elm Street, New York.

As I followed, the name of Van der Knoope repeated itself on many mural tablets before she paused, almost at the end of the south aisle, and pointed. I read:

SACRED To the Memory of FRITZ OPDAM DE KEYSER VAN DER KNOOPE. A Midshipman of the Royal Navy Who was born Oct. 24th, MDCCCLXVII, and died of Cholera on the 17th of January, MDCCCXXXVI. A youth of peculiar promise, who lacked but the greater influence of an all-wise Providence to earn the distinction of his forefathers of whom he was the last male representative.

In his country's service he laid down his young life.

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RADWAY'S PILLS, No. 55 Elm Street, New York.

KITCHEN LORE.

Two Length of Time Required to Cook Different Things.

The following is a handy table which tells how long various meats and vegetables should be cooked:

For bags allow ten minutes to the pound. Cold fish, twelve minutes. Clams, four to six minutes. Cod fish, seven to ten minutes. Haddock, eight minutes. Halibut, sixteen minutes.

TO BOIL. For breaded chops allow five to eight minutes. Sliced fish, five to eight minutes. Small fish, two to four minutes. Potatoes, two to five minutes. Croquettes, in deep boiling fat, one and a half minutes. Doughnuts, about four minutes. Fish balls, one and a half minutes.

TO BAKE. Veal, one hour and a half to three hours. Turkey, one hour and a half to three hours. Sweet breads, twenty minutes. Stewed apples, parboiled, fifteen minutes. Smoked tongue, two and a half to four hours. Salmon, fifteen minutes to the pound. Pears, one hour and three-quarters to three hours. Corned beef, three to five hours. Chickens, three-quarters of an hour to an hour. Beef à la mode, two and a half to four hours.

TO ROAST. Beef, ten to twelve minutes per pound (rare). Beef, fifteen to eighteen minutes per pound (well done). Chicken, three to four pounds, one to two hours. Duck, forty-five to sixty minutes. Mutton, fifteen minutes per pound. Mutton, eighteen minutes per pound (well done). Pork, thirty minutes per pound. Turkey, twenty pounds, three hours to three and a half. Veal, eighteen to twenty minutes per pound.

Asparagus, twenty minutes. Onions, thirty-five minutes. Lima beans, one hour. Strong beans, one hour and a half. Beans, three-quarters of an hour, if young. Cabbage, thirty-five minutes. Rice, twenty minutes. Peas, twenty minutes. Carrots, fifty minutes. Cauliflower, fifty minutes. Green corn, eight minutes. Turnips, forty minutes. Tomatoes, twenty minutes. Squash, thirty minutes.

UP TO DATE.

Established 1866. Over 26,000 in Use.

Radway's Pills

Always Reliable, Purely Vegetable, MILD, BUT EFFECTIVE.

Purely vegetable, act without pain, elegantly coated, tasteless, small and easy to take. Radway's Pills soothe the bowels, stimulate to healthy activity the liver, bowels and other digestive organs, leave the bowels in a natural condition without any after effects.

CURE Sick Headache, Biliousness, Constipation, Piles

—AND— All Liver Disorders.

Radway's Pills are purely vegetable, mild and reliable. In acute cases they stimulate to healthy activity the liver, bowels and other digestive organs, leave the bowels in a natural condition without any after effects.

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Spinach, thirty minutes. Potatoes twenty to thirty-five minutes. Oyster plant, two hours. Oat meal, two hours. Beans (shelled), ten hours. Potatoes (baked), forty-five minutes. BROILING. Chops should be broiled ten minutes. Chickens, twenty to twenty-five minutes. Beefsteak (rare), six to eight minutes, if an inch and a half to two inches thick. Small fish, six to ten minutes. Large fish, ten to fifteen minutes.

Desire vs. Capacity. Mr. Callipers—"What kind of a boy is Willie Wiggle?" Little Clarence—"He is a bar, pa." Mr. Callipers—"You should not talk so about one of your playmates, Clarence." Little Clarence—"Well, he is a bar. Why, at the church supper, the other night, when one of the ladies asked him if he had eaten all he wanted to, he told her 'yes, ma'am,' instead of saying that he'd eaten all he could hold."—Truth.

THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh.

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THE GENUINE GUTHRIE'S PIANOS

At a time when many manufacturers and dealers are making the most astounding statements regarding the merits and durability of inferior Pianos, intending purchasers should not fail to make critical examination of the above instruments.

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SCRANTON'S GREATEST HOME-FURNISHERS.

PLAIN, \$9.00. FULL NICKEL, \$10.50.

This Radiator is Beautiful in Design and Appearance. In the Radiators We Get the Benefit of the Heat Near the Floor. This is Not Found in Other Styles of Oil Heaters. Removable Top—Sliding Tubes—Quick to Light—Easy to Re-Wick—Always Ready—At a Glance Advantages Seen in This Radiator Not to be Found in Any Other Oil Heater. Every Radiator Has a Kuller Pan.

ITS BEAUTY OF FORM and richness of ornament have given this stove its name. It is a combined heater, radiator and hot air circulator. Out door connection can be made for fresh air supply and rooms on upper floors can be heated by connecting with opening at top and rear of stove.

The Silver Sterling has wonderful heating power, being constructed with very large flues, and the combustion chamber extends to the top of the stove, thus increasing the radiating surface. The return flue system is used. The return flue system is used. The return flue system is used.

By means of the extra mica illumination the full effect of an open fire is produced. Duplex Grate, with shaking ring is used and the fire pot is cast in one piece, with straight sides.

SILVER STERLING Base Burning Heater.

"H. & W."

TEA KETTLE

Cast from Special Hard Aluminum.

This Tea Kettle cannot rust, corrode, chip, crack or break. It has no impurities as from copper, and other Tea Kettles.