

THE MARCHIONESS' COACHMAN

From the French of E. Carey.

This was done under my eyes, yet I was surprised.

I had a ward, a young orphan, Eliane du Rocher, whose father and mother had died before she had reached her eighth year.

I was married and the father of three boys; this placed me in an awkward position, as Eliane was to receive an income of £50,000 on becoming of age.

My dear Guardian—I am becoming weary. After deep reflection I do not feel that I am fitted for a religious vocation.

I hurried to Jully. "So you are wearily?" "Yes, indeed, my dear guardian."

"You have considered it well?" "Not very well, but enough to know that I am not fitted to lead this life."

"What kind of a husband do you want?" "What do you require of this happy mortal?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing but to please me." "Very well, but we are moving in a circle, my dear child. What is required to please you?"

"I shall look, I said, as I arose, feeling somewhat out of humor." "She felt on my neck and embraced me. She would probably have shed more tears if I had been her ideal."

"I shall seek and find," I said, recovering my good humor. "She threw me a kiss and retired with a merry bow."

"But there were those miserable scraps of delicacy which prevented me from taking the bait. 'They will say that she has been taken in,' thought I, 'and it will look as though I was an unfaithful trustee.'"

"The lady's stern gray eyes seemed to rest kindly on my little ward." "Dinner was ready and we had but a few minutes in which to change our traveling costumes for more suitable ones."

"At this moment the door opened and there entered a young man of about 20, of large stature and possessing an energetic face. He came forward without embarrassment, and after bowing took the place opposite mine, de Pen-Vollet."

"The dinner, I must say, was very good, and the wines well selected, but the service very poor. The little servant seemed inexperienced and not accustomed to handling the fragile dishes."

"On the way," said I, "we will stop to see the Marchioness de Pen-Vollet."

"She gave me a knowing look. 'I'll wager your client has a son?'" "Not only one, but two."

"So much the better; we can take our choice." "The marchioness lived a few leagues from Redon, on a large farm, very picturesque, but not productive, as is often the case in that country of heath and moor."

"Suppose that we go on top?" "The weather is fine and it will be delightful."

"But I see no ladder," I said, somewhat afraid of mounting. "Fshaw! one foot on the wheel, the other by the coachman and here we are—little courage, my friend."

"I am to be married to the coachman?" "Yes, my dear friend, he is a very good fellow, and very rich."

"What do you think of it?" "I like it very much, it will be a very good match."

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Vollet the conversation became more animated. I do not know how, but from the subject of rabbits and partidges we drifted to the tiger hunt in India.

"I have traveled a great deal," was his brief reply. "A great deal too much," his mother added.

"Those extreme climates are trying to our European temperaments," I replied, not knowing but what he was right.

"I was never better than when traveling, but I spent all my fortune, something to which my mother will never become reconciled."

"Your fortune—and some of mine," said the marchioness, with a bitter smile.

"The young one is pretty, has a fine voice and a nice country costume; this is all I can say at present."

"I slept well, and it was broad daylight when I awoke. I had scarcely finished my toilet when some one rapped. It was Eliane, as fresh and bright as the dawn."

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