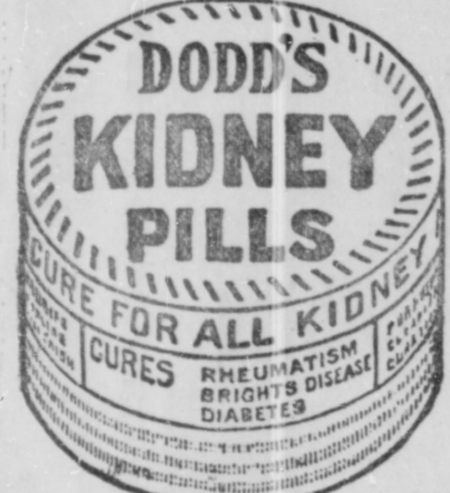


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THE EXPOSURE OF LORD STANSFORD

By ROBERT BARR.

(Copyright, 1899, by Robert Barr.) "I hope, Lord Stansford, you don't mean to imply that I am in any way responsible for your ruffianism?"

"You are, and in more than one sense of the word. That young fellow threatened me when I came here tonight, knowing that I was his father's hired guest. I do not wish exposure, and so I avoided you. You spoke to me and asked me to bring you out here. I came, knowing that if Heckle saw me he would carry out his threat. He has carried it out, and I have had the pleasure of knocking him down."

Miss Linderham sank upon the seat and once more motioned with her fan for him to take the place beside her.

"Then you receive 5 guineas a night for appearing at the different places where I have met you?"

"As a matter of fact," said Stansford, "I get only 2 guineas. I suppose the other 3, if such is the price paid, goes to my employers."

"I thought Mr. Heckle was your employer tonight?"

"I mean to the company who let me out, if I make myself clear—Spink & Co.; telephone 100,803. If you should ever want an eligible guest for any entertainment you give, and men are scarce, you have only to telephone them, and they will send me to you."

"Oh, I see!" said Miss Linderham, tapping with her fan upon her knee.

"It is only justice to my fellow employees," continued Lord Stansford, "to say that I believe they are all eligible young men, but many of them may be had for a guinea. The charge in my case is higher, as I have a title. I have tried to flatter myself that it was my polished, dignified manner that won me the extra remuneration, but after your exclamation of my brutality tonight I am afraid I must fall back on my title."

We members of the aristocracy come high, you know."

There was silence between them for a few moments, and then the girl looked up at him and said:

"Aren't you ashamed of your profession, Lord Stansford?"

"Yes," replied Lord Stansford, "I am."

"Then why do you follow it?"

"Why does a man sweep a street crossing? Lack of money. One must have money, you know, to get along in this world, and I, alas, have none! I had a little once; I wanted to make it more, so gambled—and lost; I laid low for a couple of years and saw none of my old acquaintances; but it was no use—there was nothing I could turn my hand to. This profession, as you call it, led me back into my old set again. It is true that many of the houses I frequented before my disaster overtook me do not hire guests. I am more in demand by the new rich, like Heckle here, who, with his precious little son, does not know how to treat a guest, even when that guest is hired."

"But I should think," said Miss Linderham, "that a man like you would go to South Africa or Australia, where there are great things to be done. I imagine, from the insight I have had into your character, you would make a good fighter. Why don't you go where fighting is appreciated and where they do not call a policeman?"

"I have often thought of it, Miss Linderham; but, you see, to secure an appointment one needs to have a certain amount of influence and be able



If a woman walked bare-footed on the sharp edge of a sword, she would not undergo one-tenth of the agony daily borne by thousands of women without complaint. They suffer greater misery and pain than could be inflicted by all the professional torturers that the world ever knew. Day and night they suffer from headache, dragging down and burning sensations, pains in the sides and back, hot and cold flushes, nervous and trembling sensations, and physical lassitude and mental despondency. The whole body is tortured with pain and the entire nervous system is racked. If they consult the average obscure physician, he will attribute their bad feelings to stomach, liver, kidney, heart or nervous trouble. If, by accident, he hits upon the right cause, he will insist upon the disgusting examinations and local treatment so embarrassing to a sensitive, modest woman.

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to pass examinations. I can't pass an examination in anything. I have quarreled with all my people, and have no influence. To tell you the truth, I am saving up money now in the hope of being able to buy an outfit to go to the Cape."

"You would much rather be in London, though, I suppose?"

"Yes, if I had a reasonably good income."

"Are you open to a fair offer?"

"What do you mean by a fair offer?"

"I mean, would you entertain a proposal in your present line of business for a remuneration?"

The young man sat silent for a few moments and did not look at his companion. When he spoke, there was a shade of resentment in his voice.

"I thought you saw, Miss Linderham, that I was not very proud of my present occupation."

"No; but, as you said, a man will do anything for money."

"I beg your pardon for again contradicting you, but I never said anything of the sort."

"I thought you did when you were speaking of the crossing sweeping. But never mind. I know a lady who has plenty of money. She is an artist—at least she thinks she is one, and wishes to devote her life to art. She is continually pestered by offers of marriage, and she knows those offers come to her largely because of her money. Now, this lady wishes to marry a man, and will settle upon him £2,000 a year. Would you be willing to accept that offer if I got you an introduction?"

"It would depend very much on the lady," said Stansford.

"Oh, no, it wouldn't, for you would have nothing whatever to do with her except that you would be her hired husband! She wants to devote herself to painting, not to you, don't you understand? And so long as you did not trouble her you could enjoy your £2,000 a year. You perhaps might have to appear at some of the receptions she would give, and I have no doubt she would add 5 guineas an evening for your presence. That would be an extra, you know."

There was a long silence between them after Maggie Linderham ceased speaking. The young man kicked the gravel with his toes, and his eyes were bent upon the path before him. "He is thinking it over," said Miss Linderham to herself. At last Lord Stansford looked up, with a sigh.

"Did you see the late scuffle between the unfortunate Heckle and myself?"

"Did I see it?" she asked. "How could I help seeing it?"

"Ah, then, did you notice that when he was down I helped him up?"

"Yes, and threatened to break his wrists when you got him up."

"Quite so. I should have done it, too, if he had not promised. But what I wanted to call your attention to was the fact that he was standing up when I struck him, and I want also to impress upon you the other fact—that I did not hit him when he was down. Did you notice that?"

"Of course I noticed it. No man would hit another when he was down."

"I am very glad, Miss Linderham, that you recognize it as a code of honor with us men, brutes as we are. Don't you think a woman should be equally generous?"

"Certainly, but I don't see what you mean."

"I mean this, Miss Linderham—that your offer is hitting me when I'm down."

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Linderham, in dismay. "I'm sure I beg your pardon. I did not look at it in that light."

"Oh, it doesn't matter very much!" said Stansford, rising. "It's all included in the 5 guineas, but I'm pleased to think I have some self respect left and that I can refuse your lady and will not become a hired husband at £2,000 a year. May I see you back to the house, Miss Linderham? As you are well aware, I have duties toward other guests who are not hired, and it is a point of honor with me to earn my money. I wouldn't like a complaint to reach the ears of Spink & Co."

Miss Linderham rose and placed her hand within his arm.

"Telephone—what number?" she asked.

"Telephone 100,803," he answered.

"I am sorry the firm did not provide me with some of their cards when I was at the office this afternoon."

"It doesn't matter," said Miss Linderham. "I will remember." And they entered the house together.

Next day, at a large studio in Kensington, none of the friends who had met Miss Linderham at the ball the evening before would have recognized the girl; not but that she was as pretty as ever, perhaps a little prettier, with her long white pinafore and her pretty fingers discolored by the crayons she was using. She was trying to sketch out on the canvas before her the figure of a man, striking out from the shoulder, and she did not seem to have much success with her drawing, perhaps because her mind was preoccupied. She would sit for a long time staring at the canvas and then jump up and put in lines which did not appear to bring the rough sketch any nearer perfection.

The room was large, with a good north window, and scattered about were the numberless objects that go to the confusing make up of an artist's workshop. At last Miss Linderham threw down the crayon, went to the

end of the room where a telephone hung and rang the bell.

"Give me," she said, "100,803."

After a few moments of waiting a voice came.

"Is that Spink & Co.?" she asked.

"Yes, madame," was the reply.

"You have in your employ Lord Stansford, I think?"

"Yes, madame."

"Is he engaged for this afternoon?"

"No, madame."

"Well, send him to Miss Linderham, 2044 Cromwell road, South Kensington."

The man at the other end wrote the address and then asked:

"At what hour, madame?"

"I want him from 4 till 6 o'clock."

"Now," said Miss Linderham, with a sigh of relief, "I can have a model who will strike the right attitude. It is so difficult to draw from memory."

The reason why so many women fail as artists as well as in many other professions may be because they pay so much attention to their own dress. It is an astonishing fact to record that Miss Linderham sent out for a French hairdresser, who was a most expensive man, and whom she generally called in only when some very important function was about to take place.

(to be continued)

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