

LOST NEW YEAR'S WAGER



"THIS IS A MATTER OF A KISS"



Lady Anne Courtenay



THE FIGHT WAS NOW MORE DESPERATE THAN EVER

ON New Year's eve, 1704, Lord John Langley walked into Derival's inn, on a little street back of The Mall. Some of the young bloods, the guests of Sir James Johnstone, he was their wont, were spending the afternoon in carousal there. Langley had been absent from the town for two years, following a quarrel with Lady Anne Marston, to whom he was paying court. None in London, or indeed, in England, had been able to say with certainty in that time where he could be found, although it was known that he had visited many of the larger cities of the continent. Despite the fact that he wore false mustaches, Sir James and old Derival recognized him, but at his request for secrecy the former introduced him to his guests under an assumed name. Some of them had known him slightly, others not at all. "Was, therefore, an easy matter to befool them. The afternoon was spent with cards and wine, Langley partaking somewhat sparingly, though awaiting the gambler, ready enough, battling with Sir James for fairly high stakes, and in the end losing to him 2000 guineas. After dinner the party was for resuming the cards and wine. My Lord Langley, however, set their minds upon another matter. He had been talking in the evening with Sir James, who he rose suddenly, and with a curse flung his glass against the wall. For a moment thereafter there was silence, then Langley, not loudly, but quite plainly, said: "An I do not kiss a maid of high degree on her way to my Lady Templeton's ball to-night, you press me for the debt. An I do it, you write me free?" "You have it right," answered Sir James, dryly. "The wager's as good as won," Langley returned; "my life on it"—rising as he spoke.

At the turning of a nearby corner he almost ran into a carriage halted because of a break in the harness, which two busy fellows were endeavoring to patch. Another stood near them holding a red torch, giving a sufficient, but not brilliant, light. The glow of it fell athwart the carriage, bringing into view three persons: an elderly man and woman, and a young and handsome creature, Lady Mary Courtenay.

He bowed. "Lady," he said, softly, "tis in the matter of a kiss." Again she started. The elderly man in the carriage cried out angrily and attempted to rise, but Langley, springing on the other, shoved him back into the seat. Lady Courtenay screamed, and the fellows who had been mending the harness ran to assist her. At this moment there was another direction. Four or five horsemen came riding swiftly along the roadway. One, an officer, leading by his lance, called out as he neared: "Lady Courtenay!"

She answered with a joyous little cry. His practiced eye at once noted something unusual in the grouping around the carriage. "Whom have we here?" he demanded, sharply, and then to his men: "Draw, but await my further orders."

Langley, still standing by the carriage, looked towards the speaker. "My lord," he said, calmly, "you'll find me at Derival's inn at any time."

The officer, loosed forward eagerly and regarded Langley with a puzzled air. "I will be there at once, my lord," he replied, and he drew himself up.

In the room of the carousal Langley and Forest faced each



THEY WERE HENCEFORTH AS THEY HAD BEEN IN YOUTH, CLOSER THAN BROTHERS

other, the latter's men-like himself, wearing the uniform of the famous Blues—standing some distance behind him and near the door. Forest looked a few inches of Langley's height and was not so stout in frame. Moreover, his fair hair, blue eyes and fine features gave him an appearance so boyish as to make it almost impossible to believe that he had seen several years of war service. He looked much younger than Langley as they stood eying each other for a moment in the light of the many candles placed at various vantage points around the room.

Few words were wasted. As Forest drew Langley passed his arms rapidly behind his ears, the mustaches came off and he threw them on the table.

Not until then did Forest recognize him. "I thought I had not mistaken the voice," he said, with an odd mixture of sternness and sorrow in his tone, "defend yourself, my lord."

Instantly Langley's weapon was out, and at once the two were engaged. Langley's friends had always declared him to be the greatest swordsman in England, and in truth he fought like a veteran in such encounters, as indeed he was. The watchers looked to see him score an easy victory, and won-

dered whether he would content himself with the mere drawing of blood—for 'twas said he could strike almost death. But presently they began to notice that all his tricks and feints were met by Forest with a quiet, determined coolness. For many minutes Langley pressed, but always he failed to get behind the guard that seemed to be as wide and as high as Forest himself, and to consist of not one, but many bars of tested steel.

A candle fell from its place and, still alight, rolled across the floor until it stopped near Forest's feet. The watchers caught their breath: suppose he should slip upon it or its flame should—but almost quicker than their thoughts he moved one foot and sent the candle rolling to the wall, the impact with which put out its light. And yet he had not for a second moved his eyes from Langley's face, or made one false move in meeting the latter's attacks. The soldiers at the door smiled knowingly. The others regarded Forest with amazement, but no one spoke, until some began to breathe harder—even than the two who were fighting.

Presently, at the close of a more determined attack by Langley, which, as the others had done, failed, Forest took a step forward. His arm seemed to move a little more rapidly than before, and, though Langley tried not to do so, he gave ground. Again and again he was compelled to do this. Twice Lord Forest's rapier ripped his coat, once on the left and once on the right shoulder. The onlookers thought at first that this was a rare accident, that no man could use a weapon with such deadly nicety, in the heat of conflict, until Langley's coat was again ripped by that daring tongue of steel, this time under the left arm, and a moment thereafter under the right.

The watchers marvelled at the wonderful steadiness of Forest's hand as he held his rapier there, and still more at his sudden lowering of it. Before they could recover from their astonishment he had thrust it into the scabbard.

"Jack," was a shameless thing thou wouldst have done to my affianced wife."

Langley gasped. "What?"

"My wife to be, God bless her," returned Forest.

"And what of Lady Anne Marston?" Langley asked, with an assumption of roughness his tremulous lips belied.

"She waits for thee; and she'll wait away, an thou goest not to her, so true as she is."

"Jack," Forest went on, gently. "The Lady Anne was the repository of the love secrets of Lady Courtenay; and myself when each fancied the other did not love. She brought us to gether, but all her love is for thee only."

Langley, who was staring at him eagerly, cried out: "How blind I was!"

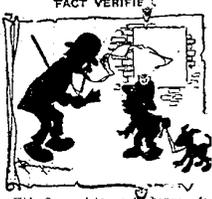
"Charles," said Langley, presently, and Forest smiled happily at the name. "I deserve death at thy hands. God grant you may never regret the sparing of my life."

A VARIETY OF EXPEDIENTS.

Little Sinner Was Providing for Future Emergencies.

Muriel, a five-year-old subject of King Edward VII, has been thought by her parents too young to feel the weight of the rod, and has been ruled by moral suasion alone. But when, the other day, she achieved disobedience three times in five minutes, more rigorous measures were called for, and her mother took an ivory paper-knife from the table and struck her smartly across her little bare legs. Muriel looked astounded. Her mother explained the reason for the blow. Muriel thought deeply for a moment. Then, turning toward the door with a grave and disapproving countenance, she announced in her clear little English voice:

"I'm going upstairs to tell God about that paper-knife. And I shall tell Jesus. And if that doesn't do, I shall put fennel on my legs!"—Everybody's Magazine.



FACT VERIFIED

Kid—Say, mister, got change for five dollars?
Kind Gentleman—Yes, my boy, here it is.
Kid—Thanks, boss; I just wanted to see it. I'd kinder got to thinkin' dere wasn't dat much money in circulation!

ECZEMA ALL OVER HIM.

No Night's Rest for a Year and Limit of his Endurance Seemed Near—Owes Recovery to Cuticura.

"My son Clyde was almost completely covered with eczema. Physicians treated him for nearly a year without helping him any. His head, face, and neck were covered with large scabs which he would rub until they fell off. Then blood and matter would run out and that would be worse. Friends coming to see him said that if he got well he would be disgraced for life. When it seemed as if he could possibly stand it no longer, I used some Cuticura Soap, Cuticura Ointment, and Cuticura Resolvent. That was the first night for nearly a year that he slept. In the morning there was a great change for the better. In about six weeks he was perfectly well. Our leading physician recommends Cuticura for eczema. Mrs. Algy Cockburn, Shiloh, O., June 11, 1907."

The Family Skeleton.

Visitor—By George! Dye, you've added a great many beautiful volumes to your library since I was here last. What 'rest something, old man?"

Mr. Meeker—On the level, Bill, I'm on the verge of bankruptcy buying souvenir post card albums and book-case sections to hold 'em—Puck.

It's awfully hard to keep in the straight path.

ONLY ONE "HARD" QUININE THAT IS LAXATIVE BROMO QUININE. Look for the signature of Dr. Williams on the wrapper over to cure a Cold in One Day. See.

Work is only done well when it is done with a will.—Ruskin.



This woman says Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved her life. Read her letter.

Mrs. T. C. Willardson, of Manning, Iowa, writes to Mrs. Pinkham:

"I can truly say that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved my life. I cannot express my gratitude to you in words. For years I suffered with the worst forms of female complaints, continually doctoring and spending lots of money for medicine without help. I wrote you for advice, followed it as directed, and took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and it has restored me to perfect health. Had it not been for you I should have been in my grave to-day. I wish every suffering woman would try it."

FACTS FOR SICK WOMEN.

For thirty years Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from roots and herbs, has been the standard remedy for female ills, and has positively cured thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, fibroid tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backaches, thin, falling-out, nervousness, indigestion, dizziness, or nervous prostration. Why don't you try it?

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