

A NEW SERIAL, By L. T. MEADE

The Maid Indomitable

CHAPTER I.

LONDON, crowded as it is, has its remote places, and perhaps of all the most unfashionable was a certain square, the direction of which had best not be mentioned. It was known as Hope Square, but why it had this appellation no one could tell, for it had a dreary and very empty sort of appearance. There was no apparent reason for this, for the square was large and open, the rents low, the houses very large and commodious, also well-planned, with perfect drainage, and by no means far from the really fashionable world; yet why should Hope Square have so few inhabitants? That was the question which no one seems able to answer. It is true there was a confirmed miser, an elderly man of unpleasant appearance, who occupied the entire of Number 1—but Numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9—in short all the houses up to Number 15 were empty. They had that desolate appearance, which empty houses invariably wear and which must be the case more with the smuts and dirt of London than elsewhere. It was many years since Jasper John took possession of Number 1, and from that date all the other houses with the exception of Number 15 became gradually but surely empty and desolate. Number 15 was a boarding-house kept by three old maiden ladies, who just managed to subsist by taking in paying guests. They did their best to make their house look pretty and cheerful. They charged their guests very little indeed, and, all things considering, fed them well. But try as they would, struggle as they might, the paying guests of the Misses Croft never remained longer than a fortnight or three weeks at the most at Number 15. They departed. They gave no reason for this. They found no fault with their food or with their really excellent bedroom accommodation. Nevertheless, at the end of a few weeks, they took their leave to enter a boarding-house at quite double the expense and certainly half the comfort not far away.

The good Misses Croft—Miss Pen, Miss Tabitha, and Miss Sukey—quickly, however, refilled their house, but always to find it empty at the end of a fortnight or three weeks.

"Certainly," each dear little lady said to the other, "the whole matter is most peculiar," but Penelope, Tabitha, and Sukey did not intend to be defeated nor downhearted. They were not that sort of woman, they were brave of the brave, and they paid their scanty rent and ate their scanty food, and looked for better times.

"Sisters," said Penelope, "brighter days must dawn."

"Assuredly, sister," answered Miss Tabitha.

"We'll keep on to the end, whatever happens," said bright little Miss Sukey.

Now it was just when the prospects of these brave little sisters had reached the very lowest ebb and when they were really faint for want of food that a remarkable and unexpected thing happened. The miser, Jasper John, who owned Number 1, and who never called upon anyone, actually had the calm assurance to call one morning upon Pen, Tabitha, and Sukey, and tell them that he wished to ask their advice.

The ladies stared at the good gentleman. What could this visit portend?

"I HAVE had a bit of a shock," said Jasper John, "and the only thing possible is to turn it to account. Hope Square is supposed to be a desolate region, but personally I have always lived here happily and with profit. Number 1 is a large mansion and there I sleep, there I take my early breakfast and late dinner, there also I put my gold. Each morning I go to the City and return home in time for dinner at night. During these long years my gains have vastly increased. I keep no servant, but have a char in once a week to keep my noble mansion clean. I do my own cooking and make my own bed. My char's name is Hagar. I do not even know her other name, and I do not think she would give up her one day at my house for all that I am likely to offer. Well, now, dear ladies, for my shock; I feel that it will be a little shock to you. I have naturally noticed your boarding-house, and having eyes in my head cannot but observe how with all your care, your guests leave you at very short intervals. Now there must be a reason for this, for your house is large—compared to mine it is very clean. It has a bright, well-kept appearance, and I make no doubt that you feed your guests well and that your terms are not over high."

"They certainly are not," replied little Miss Sukey, "and we cannot in the least understand why our guests leave us as they do."

"Now, dear ladies, may I venture to ask a bold question," said Jasper John, his tiny eyes twinkling, and his little mouth screwed up in a crooked manner, which he always wore when he was doing what he called a "deal." "What do you charge your visitors for food and lodging? Pray do not answer unless you quite wish to."

"We are quite willing to tell you, Mr. John," said Tabitha.

"Is it wise, sister?" whispered Miss Pen.

"Yes, I'm quite sure we can trust Mr. John. Our charge for our most luxurious bedroom on the first floor, including all food and extras, is £1 a week. We give the same food to all, four excellent meals every day, but for the paying guests who occupy the second-floor rooms we only charge fifteen shillings, for the floor over that ten shillings, and for the attics, which are really very good, we charge

THE author of this story died a few days ago at her residence in Oxford, England. Mrs. L. T. Meade was for six years the editor of the magazine *Atalanta*. She was an industrious writer of novels, particularly for the most part of interest to young girls. Some of her most popular works were "Scamp and I," "The Cleverest Woman in England," "The Medicine Lady," "Stories from the Diary of a Doctor," and "Daddy's Girl." In "The Maid Indomitable" Mrs. Meade added to her repertoire a really new note, dealing as it does with the country for which Lord Byron sacrificed so much of his romantic, warlike energy and wrote the imperishable poem, "The Isles of Greece." *Antigone*, named after the heroine in Sophocles' great ancient drama by that name, is a character of tremendous fascination. The fact that "The Maid Indomitable" was the last novel written by the author gives the story an added interest.

seven shillings and sixpence weekly. We are forced to do that just to cover the expense of the mere food."

"Good gracious!" cried Jasper John. "My good ladies, my dear ladies, no wonder your guests don't stay."

"Do you think we charge too much?" asked Miss Pen.

"We have thought of lowering our terms a very little," said Miss Sukey; "but food and house-rent and taxes are dear, and the strange thing is this, Mr. John, we are ladies and do not wish to pry, but we have accidentally discovered that our paying guests, both ladies and gentlemen, on leaving us invariably go to much poorer quarters, where the expenses are considerably more. We cannot understand it." Here the poor little lady sighed deeply.

"YOU may well sigh, Miss Sukey," remarked Jasper John. "You may well look grave, Miss Pen, you may well look sorrowful, Miss Tabitha. The fact is this. You have made the most frightful mistake, you have undercharged your guests. Dear! dear! When will women understand these things. But now to talk about myself, for I assure you, kind ladies, I have not intruded on you simply for mere pleasure. I have already told you that I have received a shock, and hinted to you that I mean to give you a shock and a very severe one. I am not an affectionate man. I am close on sixty years of age, I am not a marrying man. I live for my beloved golden store, ha! ha! but at the same time I am a man with a keen sense of duty. I had one sister, Clementina was her name. She was

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What Happened to Jones

Exciting Adventures of a Canadian Camera Man at the Seat of War

By FRANCIS DICKIE

VERY much elated, Jones came out of the Minister of Militia's office at Ottawa. In his pocket rested a letter from the Minister authorizing him to take photographs of the Canadian troops.

Arrived in New York, Jones bought a ticket for England, and, armed with three varieties of camera, a toothbrush and an overcoat, went aboard the steamer. At Southampton he caught a Channel boat for Dieppe, and ten hours later was in Paris. Still armed with his three cameras, his overcoat and his toothbrush, he sauntered into the Gare St. Lazare. But that was as far as he ever got.

Nine successive times in half as many days he tried from various stations to board one of the trains outgoing to the front, and each time, gently but firmly, and with many apologies, a gendarme escorted him back to his hotel.

On his tenth attempt, while trying to make a train from the Gare de l'Est, the gendarme who seized him, instead of marching him to his hotel as former ones had done, walked him down the Place de la Republique to the quarters of the military commandant in the Rue de Rennes. Here Jones was unceremoniously thrust into a small, closely-barred room at the end of a long corridor.

The door had no sooner slammed shut upon the little photographer than he began making himself heard.

"Bring me the officer commanding! Take me to the officer in charge!" he shrieked over and over again. Soon his cries attracted attention. Two soldiers came down the corridor. As Jones saw

them come he dramatically thrust his hand into his breast coat pocket, drawing it forth with the Minister of Militia's letter. As the soldiers reached the door he waved this frantically. "What does this insult mean?" Jones demanded, standing to the full height of his five feet five. "I am authorized by the Minister of the Canadian Militia to take pictures. Here is my authority. How dare you insult a British subject and an ally by such treatment?"

Impressed, though not understanding a word of what Jones was saying, the soldiers hurried away. A few minutes later they returned, opened the door, motioning him to follow them. Jones was shown into a large bare room at the farther end of the corridor. Sitting at a table at the upper end of it was a middle-aged, white-moustached man who, from his appearance, Jones at once recognized as the officer in charge.

Once more Jones thrust his hand into his pocket, bringing forth the Minister's letter. Holding it in his left hand, and with right hand outstretched, he rushed across the room. The officer rose to meet him, and before he could make a move or say a word Jones was upon him. Seizing the right hand of the astonished officer, which rested at his side, Jones raised it up and began shaking it in regular pump-handle fashion, waxing voluble as he did so.

"How are you, Colonel; gosh, I'm glad to see you. How's all the family? I knew the minute you knew I was here that everything would be all right. Here's my passport signed by the Minister of Militia." Jones got all this out in one breath and, as he

stopped talking, dropped the soldier's much-shaken hand.

Taken by surprise, that worthy, in spite of his chagrin at the effrontery of this man who had nearly wrung his hand off, was forced to smile. Conversant with English, this asking after the welfare of himself and family by an entire stranger was so droll a proceeding that it appealed to his French sense of humour.

"Quel toupet," he remarked in French to his aide, who stood gazing wonderingly at the strange little man, at the same time accepting Jones' passport, which he scanned carefully.

To Jones he said courteously: "It is impossible, sir, to allow you to go to the front even with such exemplary papers as these." The faintest suspicion of a smile wreathed his countenance. "However, I shall be pleased to give you your liberty. One of my men will accompany you to your hotel."

Jones made another reach for the officer's hand, which attempt that gentleman courteously foiled by turning quickly aside to give an order to the soldiers standing at attention.

An hour later, a little disgusted at his repeated failures, but still undreaming of being discouraged, Jones took a saunter down the Boulevard St. Denis and suddenly in front of the Brasserie du Negre he spied something that made him halt. His hotel was but two blocks away, and hoping against hope that the precious thing he had seen in front of the cafe would remain in its place till he got back, Jones dashed madly for his hotel. Armed with his three cameras, his toothbrush and his overcoat, Jones, three minutes later by the clock, was back on the

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