



Tea—and Fate

A CONTRACT FOR LIFE

(Continued from page 9)

little kitchen" frightfully dirty and all my pretty blue onion set grimy with dust, for Dick and I had been taking our meals where we listed for ages.

My theory would have scored triumphantly if things could have stopped at the end of the next month, for Betty was radiantly happy, exercising her special gift. Our tempers all grew placid over the wonderful meals we feasted on, and Dick said he was good for at least twice as much work.

Professor Sidway fell into the habit of dropping in three or four times a week for a cup of tea or chocolate. He usually came about the time the light was beginning to fail, and I was taking off my painting apron for the day, so he would lounge in Dick's big chair, giving little appreciations of my last bit of work or doing a rambling monologue of the quaintest scraps of human lore to the soft accompaniment of Betty in the kitchen singing "Bendemeer's Stream, or 'Believe me if all those endearing young charms,' just as her Irish grandmother might have sung them.

One chill November twilight brought Dick and the professor together. Dick had grown wonderfully friendly to him of late. While they were trying to warm some of the damp shivers out of their bones before the grate fire I slipped out to the kitchen to tell Betty to lay an extra plate for supper.

"It would be a shame to send the man out in the storm again with only a cup of tea," I said.

"Oh, Caroline, isn't it luck that we're having fried chicken," Betty exclaimed hospitably.

"I'll slip that vase of roses into the dining-room," I promised, as I went back to my men. Our dining-room was a joke since it was only the farther end of the studio, hidden by two big Japanese screens.

No mere man could have withstood the charm of that table spread with my best snowy cloth, a tall vase of pink roses and a wonderful meal of fried golden-brown chicken, fluffy potatoes, a simple salad of crisp pale-green lettuce, damson preserves, amber coffee, and a genuine old-fashioned custard pie and, to give zest to it all, the piquant sauce of Betty's softly flushed girlish face above her white collar.

The special charm of Betty's meals was that they always put you so at peace with all the world. When we had finished, and Dick was insisting on helping Betty clear away the table, Professor Sidway, back in the big chair in the

studio, seemed to have dropped ten years in some magical way.

It was very still except for the ripple of Betty's laughter and Dick's big muffled bass from the kitchen, and the occasional angry slap of the rainy wind at the windows. The only light was the fire and the red glow from the baleful eye of a "bloomin' heathen idol" doing duty as a lamp.

The professor moved his cigar and began meditatively: "A night like this and a dinner such as we have just had makes a man, well, just a wee bit skeptical about the comforts of bachelor life. Maybe I'm a trifle old to be dreaming dreams, but—Miss Caroline, every time I see Betty pour the tea or butter the muffins—here he paused to regard his cigar for a moment and flick the ashes away—"well, every time I watch her at her little domestic duties, I wonder if it is ever too late for a man's dreams of his 'ain fireside' to be realized."

The chill of the raw night seemed to be creeping in and gripping me. That was what came of working out beautiful theories! Her own warm love-guarded fireside for Betty, and I could go on painting china the rest of my gray days, but—I loved to paint china! Oh, yes, that was my little niche in life! Well, I was fitted in snugly enough; thank heaven, the professor would never suspect.

"Of course, Caroline," he was continuing, "I wouldn't think of asking you to give up your painting entirely, but don't you think, dear, you would have room in your life for a poor, home-hungry man? Couldn't you just pour the tea that some Betty would brew, and smile across our own table as you smiled to-night?"

"Me!" I gasped most ungrammatically, and tremulously near tears.

"Whom else should I mean?" asked the professor very gently, with one of my hands held tightly in both of his own.

"But—but—Betty—" I stammered.

"Whoopee folk!" burst in Dick, as he dragged a very pink-cheeked, dewy-eyed Betty in from the kitchen. "I beat you to it, old fellow. You'll have to find another girl for your job. Betty has just promised to take charge of a domestic science department for life. Kiss us, Caroline, and give us your blessing."

"Kindly don't interrupt, Dick," said the professor with the dearest twinkle in his eyes. "I'm trying to get your sister to make the same contract."

"Come on, Betty," cried Dick. "Us for the kitchen and the rest of the preserves!"

THE WOMEN OF RUSSIA TO SAVE THE NEW RUSSIA

(Continued from page 6)

gymnasiums are installed for healthful exercises, and reading rooms are also provided. Added to these is a fine recreation hall with a stage large enough for concerts, plays, and moving picture shows. Upstairs are to be found lecture rooms where talks on practical subjects are given to those who may be interested. In this way women are, at last, being given a chance to take part with men in enjoying helpful recreation, and Russia already feels the stirring of newer impulses as a direct result.

The Spread of Knowledge

Women of the noble classes have also felt the stirring of a desire to give a little real service to their country. Scores of titled women are now travelling from village to village, aiding the peasant woman to adjust herself to the new conditions brought about by the absence of men at the front. They teach sewing, show them how to cook, and give courses in scientific dairying. The cooking lessons have taught the peasant women how to make really good bread, a most important matter, for bread, with the *borsch*, or soup, is the staple peasant diet in most districts—as well as how to manufacture cheese for sale as a commercial product. Naturally, the necessity of handling heavy field work by women has emphasized the importance of labour-saving machinery, and the peasant women have been told where to buy it and taught how to use it. Last year the Minister of Agriculture sent instructors with experimental trains laden with modern farm implements to every corner of the Empire. The Zemstvos, and the co-operative societies, organized the buying of the machinery and advanced the necessary capital for its purchase. To-day, hundreds of thousands of these implements are being operated by women even in the most remote parts of Russia. The absence of mothers from their homes while doing field work made necessary the establishment of creches in the villages. This innovation was made during the spring of 1916; and as they are under Government auspices, this, not only left the mothers free to give their field work first-class attention, but also insured good care for the children in their absence.

While Russia is primarily an agricultural country, more and more are women joining the professional classes. There have been women doctors for the last thirty odd years, and many of the Zemstvo medical positions, entailing

work among the peasant women, are held by them. For many years, too, women lawyers have been admitted to practice in many of the Russian courts. Another extension of professional opportunities was made last summer when the Minister of Education granted a woman's college in Moscow equal status in its diplomas with those given in the men's universities. As this new college consists of two faculties, law and languages, the extension of privileges opens the door still wider.

In the realm of art Russian women have at last made for themselves a prominent place. At the Petrograd Academy the first woman architect graduated in 1916. Previous to 1903 women were allowed to study art only; the architecture course is exceedingly difficult and the examination exceedingly strict. In the 1916 competition it was necessary to draw detailed plans for a home for convalescent soldiers, housing 2,000 men and 300 officers. Out of a class of thirteen, of which twelve were men, the one woman succeeded. The "Institute of Technology for Women" has, during the past few months, received official recognition from the Government and its diplomas are now given full standing, so that graduates in engineering, architecture, and other branches, possess full authority to assume responsible positions in big engineering and architectural projects.

While the women of Russia have been making immense strides, during the last decade particularly, it yet remained for war conditions to demonstrate their immense capacity and latent possibilities. Schools for nursing have been formed in nearly every important settlement and special relief work has been organized on a scale that is not surpassed either in Great Britain or France. Women have fitted into office work in banks and mercantile institutions, and are doing their work as stenographers, book-keepers, and salesmen every bit as efficiently as it was previously done by men.

Possibly one of the reasons why the Russian woman's progress appears so great is because it has been made so rapidly and completely, and probably the biggest factor in bringing this about is the wonderfully serious nature which is a characteristic of the average peasant. Once her interest is aroused, the Russian woman pursues the problem to its inevitable conclusion, and now that her aspiration has been awakened, she will not quit until she has gained an equal citizenship with her sisters in Great Britain and America.

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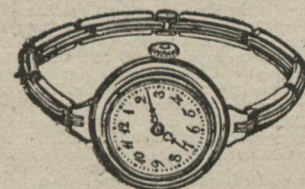
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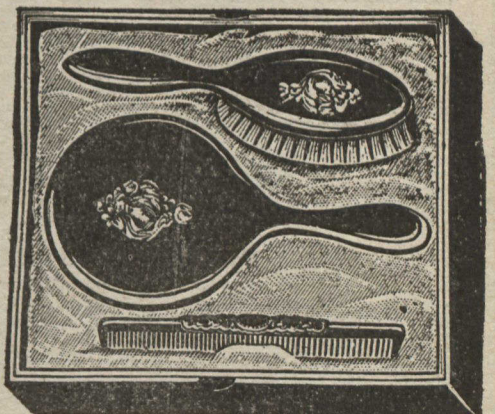
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