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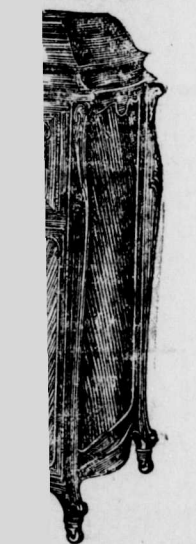
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CHAPTER XVI Shaddeck Light

A gusty November day. Dead leaves swirled in wild, brown drifts through the streets of St. Ann's before the wind, a wind that buffeted and tossed and shouted like the lusty young giant it was, that wrenched and twisted treetops, that rattled the sundry vine stalks which a few months ago hung with great, drooping clusters of roses, that flung dust by the handful into the eyes of the unwary, and then whooping in glee, flew off to Shaddeck Bay.

It was the middle of the afternoon when Richard French turned out of the great elm avenue of Carlton Place and prepared for a windy walk to town. He had come only yesterday and departed again this evening. His work was done, his name was cleared, the real culprit lay in prison—Fate itself could not hold him and his wife apart any longer. Never had debonaire Captain Dick, in the most spirited, most sanguine days of his youth, looked more hopeful, more buoyantly happy than did the ex-cavalry colonel to-day. He was going for Vera; no misunderstanding, no foolish scruple should keep them asunder longer. She had all the pride of a fallen angel where he was concerned, but love should triumph over pride, and in his heart he knew as well as he lived that Vera cared for him yet. So—free, cleared, triumphant, rich, loving, hopeful—he got over the ground at his usual swinging pace, whistling cheerily as he went, "My love is but a lassie yet." He had discovered this much: when Vera left Carlton she went direct to her old friend, Mrs. Trafton, and had remained with her ever since. Before this time to-morrow he would be at Mrs. Trafton's door to claim his own, through life and beyond death if he might.

How it blew, and how great, stripped trees wrestled with the blast in

a fierce embrace! He bent his powerful figure before it, as it came swooping down upon him, flinging spiteful siroccos of dust in his eyes, and sending the blood bounding through every strong vein. His spirits, already high, rose higher as it buffeted him. It was like strong wine, this exhilarating autumn gale, with the saltness of the sea, the fragrance of the pine woods in its breath at once.

The tide was out as he turned into the shore road; the long black bar was bare that led to Shaddeck Light, and crossing it, he saw Daddy. The old den looked battered, wind-blown, weather-beaten, and tumble down. He had half a mind to cross over, and take a look at it before he left—he had not been there for many a year. As he approached Daddy espied him, and came to a halt.

"Hello!" cheerily said Colonel French.

"Hello!" Daddy stolidly returned; and then Daddy stood on the other foot and eyed his master. "Yer ain't seen her, hev yer? Yer don't know she's here, do yer?" he vaguely inquired.

"Seen her? What, her?"

"Yer didn't hear she'd come back, did yer? Said so herself. Told me not to tell nuther. A-goin back in the keers to-night. Come to take a look. She's thar yet."

Daddy jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the ocean. But Colonel French began to understand. His dark face flushed and lighted.

"Are you speaking of Miss Vera?" he asked.

"Ah!" said Daddy, nodding—"her. She's thar yit. Come to take a last look at the dear old place. Thats what she said. Blessed if he ain't gone!" said Daddy, as his master turned from him, and in a minute was crossing the bar. A dim perception of the truth stirred vaguely in the fog of Daddy's mind. "Blessed

if he ain't going to her! Blessed if he ain't sweet on her!" said Daddy to himself, as he lumbered heavily away.

She was sitting on the little sea wall, her fingers locked together, her hands laying listlessly on her black lap. Her long crape veil was thrown back; the clear face was like a star set in jet. The great, dark eyes, the loveliest the wide earth holds, this man thought, had all the sadness of farewell in their depths. She heard his footsteps, and turned, then rose and stood, pale, startled, surprised, before him. But a light came into her eyes—the quick light of irreplaceable gladness and welcome. And he saw it.

"Vera!" he exclaimed, and held out both hands.

"Captain Dick!" she answered, and gave him hers. The name, the look, the manner, had swept away six long years, and it was the Captain Dick of Carlton days, her hero, that was here; then she laughed faintly, and drew away her hands.

"I thought for a moment I was a little girl again. You looked so like the Captain Dick of those far-off days. But I thought you were in New York."

"And I thought you were in New York."

He seated himself beside her on the stone wall, and looked with loving, longing, happy eyes into her half-shrinking face.

"I was in New York; I have been ever since I left—"

"Why did you leave?" he broke in. "That was cruel, Vera. I went back early next morning, full of all I had to say, all one heart could hold—and you were gone!"

She looked away from him, and out to where the angry red of the sunset beamed through gathering clouds.

"It was best I should go—it was inevitable, and Mrs. Trafton's house has ever been a second home. I went to her in my trouble and my loneliness, and she was good to me, better than I can say. Colonel French, I have read it all—the dreadful truth that vindicates you, and condemns that wretched man. And I hardly think it surprised me, although it was a profound shock. For she loved him—oh, my dear little Dot! she loved him. I always knew him to be weak and wicked, but of this I feel sure: he never intended to go beyond the stealing of the jewels—he never intended to injure her."

"No, he came to steal, not to murder. If she had only not awakened. But why should you ever think of him?"

"I think of Eleanor, poor, noble, great-hearted Eleanor! She haunts me like a ghost. Some day I hope to see her."

"I have ventured to promise that much in your name," he said. "You will let me keep my word, will you not?"

"I shall see her certainly," Vera answered. "In a week or two I start with Mrs. Trafton to spend the winter in Florida, and we shall take New Orleans on our way. Mrs. Trafton is falling into a decline, and has been ordered south. I go with her as a companion. That is why I am here. I have come to take a last look at poor Dora's grave."

"And I think I will let you go?" he said. Vera, turn round, look at me, instead of the sky and the water, and tell me, if you can, how long this is to go on. For six years you have been my wife in name. In all that time we have been held apart, by my own act in the first years, by misunderstandings and mutual pride in these last. It is time all that should end. I love my wife, I want my wife, and I mean to have her. "No," as she flashed one of her old imperious looks, and tried to free her hands, "I am not to be annihilated even by the fire of your eyes, my Vera, eyes I have thought the most beautiful on earth, the truest, the dearest, ever since I saw them first. I know you cared for me a little once; I know you care for me a little still; I know that I love you with all the strength of my heart. In my trouble you came to me, you offered to stay with me, to be my wife. Vera, I claim that promise now—I claim you. I am going to Mexico in a week—not to join the army. I have done with that, but political purposes, all the same. Vera, will you come with me to Mexico, instead of to Florida with Mrs. Trafton?"

She looked up, and the dark, sweet eyes that met his were full of tears.

"I will go with you to the end of the world," she answered.

There had been a hiatus here, you understand. The wind shouted as if in derision at this pair of lovers, and the sea dashing higher and higher over the rocks, sent its flaky spray in their faces.

"And it is not from any sense of duty, such as sent you to me at the hotel, but because—"

"Because I love you," said Vera, speaking the words for the first time in her life; "because I have loved you from the first."

The tide was rising; if this ecstatic pair lingered much longer, they would have a chance to pass the night tete-a-tete on the sea wall. The crimson and fiery orange of the strong sunset was paling rapidly before the grayness of the coming night and gathering storm. The wind still shrieked about them like a wind gone mad; sea gulls whirled and whooped startlingly near; the flashing spray leaped higher and higher.

"The tide is rising," he said, "let us go. If we sit here longer we will have to stay here till morning, and one night you may think quite enough to spend at Shaddeck Light; although I shall look back to that night with the deepest gratitude, for to it I owe the happiness of my life."

He offered his hand and she took it, and so, clinging to it, passed over the wet, weedy, slippery kelp and shingle to the shore. There, as by one impulse, both paused and looked back. Before them lay the new life; behind the old, and they lingered for a second to bid it farewell.

One last yellow gleam of sunset broke from behind the wind-blown clouds and lighted palely the solitary little brown cot. Falling fast to decay, with broken windows, hanging doors, settling roof, it stood waiting for its deathblow, in forsaken and bleak old age—a desolate picture. While they looked the light faded, swift darkness fell and night and loneliness wrapped Shaddeck Light.

THE END.

Read our new story "The Net," by Rex Beach, starting this week on page four.

AS THE BOYS COME HOME

"I understand that you have taken on a number of returned soldier boys to work here on the farm."

"Sure I did. I needed help and it was a patriotic thing to do."

"Fine, I have my son blow a bugle at 5 o'clock every morning, and the girls dress up as Red Cross Nurses and I named every rock and stump in that fresh ground after some German general."

PROBABLY SUITED HIS WIFE

"Good morning."

"Good morning."

"You remember that house you sold last week?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I had my wife up to see it yesterday, and now I want to sell it back to you again."

"But you said you admired the house."

"I did."

"What fault do you find with it now?"

"It has an echo in it."

"That doesn't hurt it."

"Yes it does."

"In what way?"

"When my wife scolds me for staying out late the blamed old house will repeat it six or seven times, and gosh how I do hate nagging!"

Children Cry for Fletcher's

CASTORIA

The Kind You Have Always Bought, and which has been in use for over thirty years, has borne the signature of

Chas. H. Fletcher and has been made under his personal supervision since its infancy. Allow no one to deceive you in this. All Counterfeits, Imitations and "Just-as-good" are but Experiments that trifle with and endanger the health of Infants and Children—Experience against Experiment.

What is CASTORIA

Castoria is a harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Paregoric, Drops and Soothing Syrups. It is pleasant. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other narcotic substance. Its age is its guarantee. For more than thirty years it has been in constant use for the relief of Constipation, Flatulency, Wind Colic and Diarrhoea; allaying Feverishness arising therefrom, and by regulating the Stomach and Bowels, aids the assimilation of Food; giving healthy and natural sleep. The Children's Panacea—The Mother's Friend.

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The Kind You Have Always Bought

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

Revised Prices for

McLAUGHLIN CARS

UNTIL JULY 1st 1919

LIGHT SIXES

H-62 Roadster	\$1500
H-62 Special	\$1575
H-63 Touring	\$1500
H-63 Special	\$1575
H-62 Coupe	\$2075

MASTER SIXES

H-45 Touring	\$1925
H-45 Special	\$2050
H-45 Extra Special	\$2050
H-49 Seven Passenger	\$2365

F. O. B. Oshawa, Ontario

Call and see the New Models at the Showrooms, Talbot Street east.

JOS GARTON, Dealer, Aylmer

Oil and Gasoline will be on sale this week

Aylmer's Electric Shop

No need to go out of town for Electrical Goods as we have a full line of everything electrical including:—

Toasters, Electric Irons, Electric Lights, Fixtures of all kinds.

Come in and inspect our up-to-date stock. We also handle the Jewel Gas Range.

Frank Light

Plumbing done of all kinds

Silverwood's ice cream

"SMOOTHER THAN VELVET"

Ice Cream like mother used to make?

No indeed! Ice cream far superior to that.

Nothing but pasteurized pure cream, cane sugar and pure flavor extracts go into Silverwood's Ice Cream. That creamy, velvety taste that mother never could have given to her home-made ice cream is the result of homogenizing and scientific freezing.

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