

SYLVIA'S SECRET

(Continued from page 14.)

the thing was true or not. He had been right about the stealing of the plans of the new gun—for the best of reasons, as I now am aware from what you have just told me; no wonder he knew that! And there's another thing, Max, which has bothered me a good deal. In your letter from Luxemburg, on the night of your arrival there, you wrote me that you were going on to Treves, because you had had a message which read 'Try Treves.' You imagined that I had sent it to you, but I did nothing of the kind; it wasn't from me, or from the office at all. I made enquiries, and learned that it had been sent from the telegraph office in Fleet Street by a man who gave his name as Paterson and his address as that of this paper. I now suspect, it was Hollander that sent that message to you, Max," said the editor, "or that caused it to be sent."

"Yes, undoubtedly," Max agreed.

"HE had some strong reason for trying to get you out of the road—that is as plain as can be. Have you any notion what it is?"

"Not the least," said Max, "unless it was because he knew I was deeply interested in endeavouring to get at the truth with respect to the murder Sylvia Chase." He did not suspect that Peggy's engagement to himself might have something to do with Hollander's plot.

"Perhaps," said Beaumont, but doubtfully. "It looks to me as if the solution of that mysterious business would never have been got at in any other way—it was all too well covered up! However, we need not discuss it further. The question is, What is to be done next? And the answer is perfectly obvious. You must communicate with the War Office at once—now, Max."

"That was my intention," said Max. "No time is to be lost, for Hollander must soon hear of my return to London; he may have done so already for he has spies everywhere. He is sure to come back with all haste, and as he is not aware that I know exactly what he is, he will go on just as if nothing had happened—unless the War Office takes immediate action."

"The War Office will take action at once," said Beaumont; "there can be no hesitation in such a matter; short work will be made of Hollander. The Minister of War is a strong man, and he will know what to do. You must see him 'right away' and the matter can very well be left in his hands. But first of all, Max, what are we to put in the paper about you—we must say something?"

"Just say that I have returned to London, having succeeded in making my escape from Treves. You can add that I knocked down a goaler, and that I was helped by good fortune, principally in the shape of a tremendous snowstorm," suggested Max, smilingly. "It's a little vague," returned Beaumont.

"Not about my return, at any rate," said Max.

"No, thank God!" exclaimed the editor, with a sudden access of feeling. "I am glad to see you back, Max! I—I shall write that little paragraph myself," he added. And Max understood that Beaumont would say something about him that would be very kind.

Beaumont next had the whereabouts of the War Minister traced—he was at the House of Commons, then in session, and a message was conveyed to him that a member of the staff of "The Day," desired to see him at his earliest convenience respecting a matter of the most urgent importance. The Minister replied that he would see the journalist at the House as soon as the latter could get there. Within half an hour Max was talking to this gentleman.

The Minister was an elderly man, who, though not a soldier by profession, had established a great reputation as a singularly able and conscientious head of the War Office. Max Hamilton's name was well known to

him, and indeed he had met him once or twice; he listened to his revelations respecting Captain Hollander with unfeigned surprise and no little dismay and indignation. Like Beaumont he wished to be told who Max's informant was, or in what way Max had come by this disquieting intelligence. But Max said that it was not his own secret, and therefore he must be silent on those points.

"That is very unfortunate," said the Minister. "There can be no direct accusation against Hollander."

"I am convinced of the absolute truth of the information I have given you," said Max. "And more than that, I feel sure that you must act on it immediately."

"In what way?" asked the Minister, inclining his head assentingly.

"If I may make the suggestion, I should have Hollander's apartments searched, while he is absent and can have no inkling even that he is suspected of being, far less known as, a German secret agent. It may be that you will find sufficiently incriminating evidence to decide you to arrest him as soon after his arrival as possible."

"Yes," said the Minister, approvingly. "His rooms shall be searched at once. I shall also send for Captain Villiers and see what he can tell me—though I understand that you were informed that he was an innocent party—which must mean that he was not intentionally an accomplice of his sister, but there must have been the grossest carelessness and slackness on his part—things which in his responsible position are almost as reprehensible as actual treachery."

"He is innocent, I believe, of treachery," said Max.

"Nothing of all this will appear in your paper?" inquired the Minister, after a slight pause.

"Nothing, except a mere statement that I succeeded in making my escape from Treves, and am now in London."

"You have done us a great service, Mr. Hamilton," said the Minister, as rising he intimated that the interview was at an end; "I shall never forget it."

Max took his leave, and going to the nearest telephone office rang up Peggy Willoughby.

(To be concluded.)

A New British Song

(From the N. Y. Herald.)

HIGH up in a pretty flat over the Strand Theatre lives Ivor Novello, the twenty-year-old young man who composed "Till the Boys Come Home," which is certainly the most popular war air here since "Tipperary." For months the men in khaki have sung it as they swing through the streets and lanes; no concert is complete without it, every office boy whistles it and recruiting bands blare it forth, and the few Italian street organs that remain grind it out with variations.

It is not a ballad to fire the martial spirit, but rather a reminder of home set to a swinging yet most touching melody. Here are the words of the chorus:

"Keep the home fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
Through the dark cloud shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out
Till the boys come home."

Young Ivor Novello, a born composer, is a brilliant pianist, and was one of the most accomplished choristers in England, but it was "Till the Boys Come Home" which has given him fame.

"I do not know what inspired me to compose the song," he remarked to me. "I had in my mind the idea of keeping the homes as happy as possible while the soldiers are away, and in half an hour I had invented the

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