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ham thought me as dead as the rest of  
you did."

Stimson nodded to the magistrate. "I  
heard what was read, and it is con-  
firmed by the facts I have picked up,"  
he said.

Then Courthorne turned to Barrington.  
"I sympathize with you, sir," he  
said. "This must be horribly mortify-  
ing; but, you see, Witham once stop-  
ped my horse backing over a bridge into  
a gully when just to hold his hand  
would have rid him of me. You will  
not grudge me the one good turn I have  
probably done any man, when I shall  
assuredly not have the chance of doing  
another."

Barrington winced a little, for he re-  
cognized the irony in the failing voice;  
but he rose and moved towards the bed.

"Lance," he said, a trifle hoarsely, "it  
is not that which makes what has hap-  
pened horrible to me, and I am only  
glad that you have righted this man.  
Your father had many claims on me,  
and things might have gone differently  
if, when you came out to Canada, I had  
done my duty by his son."

Courthorne smiled a little, but with-  
out bitterness. "It would have made  
no difference, sir; and, after all, I led  
the life that suited me. By and by you  
will be grateful to me. I sent you a  
man who will bring prosperity to Silver-  
dale."

Then he turned to Stimson, and his  
voice sank almost beyond hearing as he  
said, "Sergeant, remember Witham fan-  
cied I was dead."

He moved his head a trifle, and the  
doctor, stooping over him, signed to the  
rest, who went out except Barrington.

It was some hours later, and very  
cold, when Barrington came softly into  
the room where Dane lay half-asleep  
in a big chair. The latter glanced at  
him with a question in his eyes, and the  
Colonel nodded very gravely.

"Yes," he said. "He has slipped out  
of the troopers' hands and beyond our  
reproaches—but I think the last thing  
he did will count for a little."

### CHAPTER XXV.

#### Witham Rides Away.

THE first of the snow was driving  
across the prairie before a bitter  
wind when Maud Barrington stood by  
a window of the Grange looking out  
into the night. The double casements  
rattled, the curtains behind her moved  
with the icy draughts, until, growing  
weary of watching the white flakes whirl  
past, she drew them to and walked  
slowly towards a mirror. Then a faint  
tinge of pink crept into her cheeks,  
and a softness that became her into her  
eyes. They, however, grew critical as  
she smoothed back a tress of lustrous  
hair a trifle from her forehead, straight-  
ened the laces at neck and wrist, and  
shook into more flowing lines the long  
black dress. Maud Barrington was not  
unduly vain, but it was some time be-  
fore she seemed contented, and one would  
have surmised that she desired to ap-  
pear her best that night.

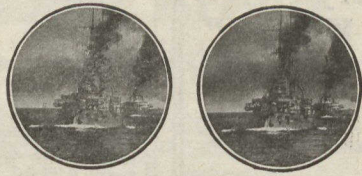
The result was beyond cavil in its  
artistic simplicity, for the girl, know-  
ing the significance that trifles have  
at times, had laid aside every adorn-  
ment that might hint at wealth, and  
the sombre draperies alone emphasized  
the polished whiteness of her face and  
neck. Still, and she did not know whether  
she was pleased or otherwise at this,  
the mirror had shown the stamp  
which revealed itself even in passive  
pose and poise of head. It was her  
birthright, and would not be disguised.

Then she drew a low chair towards  
the stove, and once more the faint colour  
crept into her face as she took up a  
note. It was laconic, and requested per-  
mission to call at the Grange, but Maud  
Barrington was not deceived, and recog-  
nized the consideration each word had  
cost the man who wrote it. Afterwards  
she glanced at her watch, raised it with  
a little gesture of impatience to make  
sure it had not stopped, and sat still,  
listening to the moaning of the wind,  
until the door opened, and Miss Bar-  
rington came in. She glanced at her  
niece, who felt that her eyes had noticed  
each detail of her somewhat unusual  
dress, but said nothing until the younger  
woman turned to her.

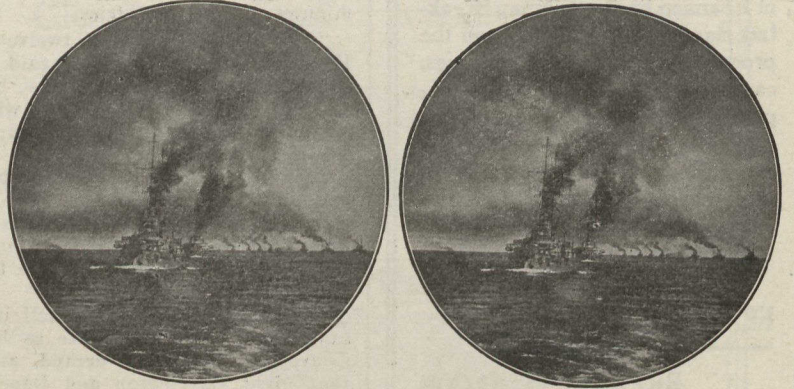
"They would scarcely come to-night,  
aunt," she said.

Miss Barrington, listening a moment,  
heard the wind that whirled the snow

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