The Heart of a Woman

By BARONESS ORCZY

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CHAPTER XXIV.

A Herd of Cackling Geese.

When at 10 o'clock the next morning Louisa Harris entered the Victoria coroner's court accompanied by her father, the coroner and jury were just returning from the mortuary at the back of the building whither they had gone, in order to look upon the dead.

Already the small room was crowded to its utmost holding capacity. Louisa and Colonel Harris had some difficulty in making their way through the groups of idlers who filled every corner of the gangway.

The air was hot and heavy with the smell of the dust of ages which had gathered in the nooks and crannies of this dull and drabby room. It mingled with irritating unpleasantness with the scent of opoponax or heliotrope that emanated from lace handkerchiefs, and with the pungent odours of smelling salts ostentatiously held to delicate noses.

Louisa, matter-of-fact, commonplace Louisa looked round at these unaccustomed surroundings with the same air of semi-indifferent interest with which she would have viewed a second-rate local music hall, had she unaccountably drifted into one through curiosity or desire.

She saw a dull, drabby paper on the wall, and dull, drabby hangings to the single window, which was set very high, close to the ceiling; the latter once white-washed was now covered with uneven coatings of grime.

In the centre of the room, a long table littered at one end with papers tied up in bundles of varying bulk, with pieces of pink tape, also a blotting pad, pen, ink, and paper—more paper—the one white note in the uniform harmony of drabby brown: and in among this litter that encumbered the table a long piece of green baize covering a narrow formless something, which Louisa supposed would be revealed in due course.

On each side of the table were half a dozen chairs of early Victorian design upholstered in leather that had once been green. To these chairs a dozen men were even now making their way, each taking his seat in solemn silence: men in overcoats and with velvet collars somewhat worn at the back of the neck—it seemed to Louisa as if they were dressed in some kind of uniform so alike did their clothes appear. She looked at their faces as they filed in—haggard faces, rubicund, jolly faces, faces which mirrored suspicion, faces which revealed obstinacy, the whole of middle class England personified in these typical twelve men all wearing overcoats with shabby velvet collars, who were to decide today how and when Philip de Mountford, heir presumptive to the Earl of Radclyffe, had been done to death.

Louisa and her father were able at last to reach the forefront of the crowd, where chairs had been reserved for them immediately facing the table, at the farther end of which the corner already sat. Louisa recognized Mr. Humphreys, one of Mr. Dobson's clerks, who did his best to make her and Colonel Harris comfortable. Farther on sat Mr. Davies, who had been Philip de Mountford's solicitor when he had first desired an interview with Lord Radclyffe. Louisa knew him by sight—Luke had on one occasion pointed him out to her.

Luke and Mr. Dobson were even now making their way to the same group of seats. They had—like the jury and the coroner—been in the mortuary to have a last look at the murdered man. Louisa thought that Luke looked years older than he had done yesterday. She saw him standing for a moment right against the dull, drabby background of the court room wall; and it seemed as if something of that drabbiness had descended upon his soul. Youth seemed to have gone out of him. He appeared to be looking out onto a dreary world through windows obscured by grime.

There was a look not so much of dejection as of absolute hopelessness in the face. No fear, or anxiety—only a renunciation. But this was only for one moment; the next he had caught sight of her, and the look of blank dejection in his eyes suddenly gave place to one of acute and intolerable pain. The face which usually was so calm and placid in its impassive mask of high-bred indifference was almost distorted by an expression of agony which obviously had been quite beyond control.

The whole thing was of course a mere flash, less than a quarter of a second perhaps in duration, and already Luke was just as he had always been; a correct, well-born English gentleman, perfect in manner, perfect in attitude and bearing, under whatever circumstances Fate might choose to place him.

Mr. Dobson spoke to him, and he at once followed his friend and solicitor across the body of the court room to the row of reserved chairs in front of the crowd.

A whisper went round the room, and Louisa with cool indifference turned to greet those among the crowd whom she had recognized as acquaintances and friends. Some were sitting, others standing back against the walls in the rear. Lady Ducies was there, excited and overdressed, with a large hat that obstructed the view of a masculine-looking woman who sat immediately behind her, and who seemed quite prepared to do battle against the obstruction.

Farther on sat the Countess of Flintshire, novelist and playwright, eager and serious, note-book in hand and a frown between her brows, denoting thought and concentration of purpose. She bowed gravely to Louisa, and contrived to attract Luke's attention, so that he turned toward her, and she was able to note carefully in indelible pencil in a tiny note-book that a murderer about to meet his just fate may bestow an infinity of care on the niceties of his own toilet.

(N.B. The next play written by the Countess of Flintshire, better known to the playgoing public as Maria Annunziata, had an assassin for its principal hero. But the play found no favor with actor-managers, and though it subsequently enjoyed some popularity in the provinces, it was never performed on the London stage.)

Louisa looked on all these people with eyes that dwelt with strange persistency on trivial details; the Countess of Flintshire's note-book, Lady Ducies' hat, the masculine attire of the militant suffragette in the rear—all these minor details impressed themselves upon her memory. In after years she could always recall the vision of the court room, with its drabby background to a sea of ridiculous faces.

For they all seemed ridiculous to her—all these people—in their obvious eager agitation: they had pushed one another and jostled and fought their way into this small, stuffy room, the elegant ladies with their scent bottles, the men about town with their silk hats and silver-topped canes: they were all ready to endure acute physical discomfort for the sake of witnessing the harrowing sight of one of their own kind being pilloried before the mob: it was just a pinch of spice added to the savorless condiment of every-day life. Then there were the others: those who had come just out of idle curiosity to hear a few unpleasant details, or to read a few unwholesome pages in the book of life of people who lived in a different world to their own.

Ridiculous they seemed, all of them! Louisa felt a sudden desire to laugh aloud, as she realized how very like a theatre the place was, with its boxes, its stalls, and its galleries. But in this case those who usually sat in stalls or boxes, displaying starched shirt-fronts, bare shoulders, and bad manners, they were the actors now made to move or dance or sing, to squirm or to suffer for the delectation of pit and gallery.

On the left a group of young men with keen young faces, all turned toward Luke and toward Louisa and her father. Note-books protruded out of great-coat pockets, fountain pens and indelible pencils snuggled close to hand. Lucky the lightning artist who could sketch for the benefit of his journalistic patrons a rough outline of the gentleman with more than one foot in the dock. Close by, a couple of boys in blue uniform, with wallet at the side and smart pill-box cap on the head, stood ready to take messages, fractions of news, hurried reports to less-favored mortals whose duty or desire kept them away from this scene of poignant interest.

Louisa saw them all, as in a vivid dream. Never afterward could she believe that it had all been reality: the coroner, the jury, the group of journalists, the idle, whispering, pushing crowd, the loud murmurs which now and again reached her ear:

"Oh! you may take it from me that tomorrow he'll stand in the dock."

"Such brazen indifference I've never seen."

"And they've actually found the dagger with which he murdered the wretched man."

"Brrr! it makes me feel quite creepy."

"Yes, he was at your At Home, dear, wasn't he? a week ago."

"Oh! one had to ask him for form's sake, you know."

"Poor Lord Radclyffe, what a terrible blow for him."

"They say he'll never recover his speech or the use of his limbs."

"Silence there!"

The cackling herd of geese stopped its whisperings, astonished at being thus reproved. Louisa again felt that irrepressible desire to laugh; they were so funny, she thought, so irresponsible! these people who had come to gape at Luke.

Now they were silent and orderly at the bidding of authority. An old woman, with black bonnet and rusty jacket, was munching sandwiches in a corner seat: a young man at the farther end of the room was sharpening a lead-pencil.

By the door through which a brief while ago coroner and jury, also Luke and Mr. Dobson had filed out—the door which apparently gave in the direction of the mortuary—a small group in shabby clothes had just entered the court room, escorted by one of the ushers. The latter made his way to the coroner's table and whispered to that gentleman somewhat animatedly. Louisa could not catch what he said, but she saw that the coroner suddenly lost his morose air of habitual ennui, and appeared keen and greatly interested in what he heard.

He gave certain instructions to the usher, who beckoned to the group in the shabby clothes. They advanced with timid, anxious gait, a world of unspoken apologies in their eyes as they surveyed the brilliant company through which they had to pass. The feathers on Lady Ducies' hat attracted the attention of one of them—a young girl with round black eyes and highly decorated headgear; she nudged her companion and pointed to the gargantuan hat and both the girls giggled almost hysterically.

The man in front led the way. He was pale and cadaverous looking with scanty hair and drooping moustache; in shape he was very like a beetle, with limbs markedly bowed and held away from his stooping body. There were five of them altogether, three women and two men. Louisa was interested in them, vaguely wondering who they were.

That they were personages of importance in this case was apparent from the fact that the usher was bringing some chairs for the women and placing them close to those on which sat the solicitors, and Luke and Louisa herself. The men were made to stand close by and remained just where they had been told to stay, tweed cap in hand, miserably conscious of the many pairs of eyes that were fixed upon them.

"Who are these people, do you know?" Lady Ducies was leaning forward and had contrived to catch Luke's ear.

He turned round very politely.

"How do you do, Mr. de Mountford," she continued in her shrill treble, which she took no trouble to subdue, "you hadn't seen me, had you?"

"No, Lady Ducies," he replied, "I had not."

"I don't wonder," she commented placidly, "you must feel so anxious. Who are these common people over there, do you know?"

"No, I do not."

"Some of your late cousin's former associates, perhaps?" suggested Lady Flintshire, "Maria Annunziata," who sat close by.

"My dear, how can you suggest such a thing," retorted the other, "they are so common."

"Silence there!"

And once more the cackling geese were still.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Fog Was Dense, I couldn't Rightly See.

The curtain went up on the first act of the play. It was not perhaps so interesting from the outset as the audience would have wished, and the fashionable portion thereof showed its impatience by sundry coughings and whisperings, which had to be peremptorily checked now and again by a loud:

"Silence, there!" and a threat to clear the court.

The medical officer was giving his testimony at great length as to the cause of death. Technical terms were used in plenty, and puzzled the elegant ladies who had come here to be amused. The jury listened attentively, and the coroner—himself a medical man—asked several very pertinent questions.

"The thrust," he asked of Doctor Blair, who was medical officer of the district, "through the neck was effected by means of a long narrow instrument, with two sharp edges, a dagger in fact?"

"A dagger or stiletto or a skewer," replied the doctor. "Any sharp, two-edged instrument would cause a wound like the one in the neck of the deceased."

"Was death instantaneous?"

"Almost so."

He explained at some length the intricacies of the human throat at the points where the murderer's weapon had entered the neck of his victim. Louisa listened attentively. Every moment she expected to see the coroner's hand wandering to the piece of green baize in front of him, and then drawing it away disclosing a snake-wood stick with silver ferrule stained, and showing the rise of the dagger, sheathed within the body of the stick. Every moment she expected to hear the query:

"Is this the instrument which dealt the blow?"

But this apparently was not to be just yet. The opaque veil of green baize was not to be lifted; that certain long Something was not to be revealed, the Something that would condemn Luke irrevocably, absolutely, to disgrace and to death.

Only one of the members of the jury—Louisa understood that he was the foreman—asked a simple question:

"Would," he said, "the witness explain whether in his opinion the—the unknown murderer—the—I mean—"

He floundered a little in the phrase, having realized that in his official capacity he must keep an open mind—and in that open mind of an English juryman there could for the present dwell no certainty that a murderer—an unknown murderer—did exist.

They were all here—he and the others and the coroner—in order to find out if there had been a murder committed or not.

The coroner, one elbow on the table, one large hand holding firmly the somewhat fleshy chin, looked at the juryman somewhat contemptuously.

"You mean?" he queried with an obvious effort at patience.

"I mean," resumed the man more firmly, "in this present instance, would a certain medical or anatomical knowledge be necessary in order to strike—er—or to thrust—so precisely—just on the right spot to cause immediate death?"

With amiable condescension the corner put the query to the witness in more concise words.

"No, no," replied the doctor quickly, now that he had understood the question, "the thrust argues no special anatomical knowledge. Most laymen would know that if you pierce the throat from ear to ear suffocation is bound to ensue. It was easily enough done."

"When the deceased's head was turned away?" asked the coroner.

"Why, yes—to look out on the fog, perhaps; or at a passer-by. It would be fairly easy if the would-be murderer was quick and determined and the victim unsuspecting."

And Doctor Blair, with long tapering fingers, pointed toward his own throat, giving illustration of how easily the deed might be done.

"Given the requisite weapon of course."

After a few more courteous questions of a technical kind, the first witness was dismissed—only momentarily, for he would be required again—when the green baize would be lifted from the hidden Something which lay there ready to hand, and the medical man be asked to pronounce finally whether indeed the dagger stick was the requisite weapon for the deed which had been so easy of accomplishment.

The chauffeur who had driven the taxi-cab was the next witness called. A thick-set man, in dark blue Melton coat and peaked cap, he came forward with that swinging gait which betrayed the ex-coachman.

He gave his evidence well and to the point. He had been hailed on the night in question by two gentlemen in evening dress. It was in Shaftesbury Avenue, just opposite the Lyric Theatre, and a little while after he had heard St. Martin's church clock strike nine o'clock. "The fog was so dense," he added, "you could not see your hand before your eyes."

He had just put down at the Apollo and had crossed over to the left, going down toward Piccadilly, when the two swells hailed him from the curb. He couldn't rightly see them, because of the fog, but he noticed that both wore high hats and the collars of their overcoats were turned up to their ears. He hardly saw their faces, but he noticed that one of them carried a walking stick.

"Or it might 'ave been a umbrella," he added after a moment's hesitation, "I couldn't rightly say."

"You must have seen the faces of your fares," argued the coroner, "if you saw that one of them carried a walking stick—or an umbrella. You must have seen something of their faces," he reiterated more emphatically.

"I didn't," retorted the man gruffly. "Was you out in that there for, sir? If you was, you'd know 'ow you couldn't see your 'and before your eyes. I saw the point of the stick—or the umbrella, I couldn't rightly say which—only because one of them gents waved it at me when 'e was 'ailing me—that's 'ow I seed the point."

The corner allowed the question of identification to drop: clearly nothing would be got out of the man. The gentlemen, he declared, entered the cab, and then one of them gave directions to him, putting his head out of the right hand window.

"I didn't turn to look at 'im," he said bluntly. "I could 'ear 'is voice plain enough—so why should I take a look at 'im? 'Ow did I know there was a goin' to be murder done in my cab, and me wanted to say what the murderer looked like?"

He looked round the room defiantly, as if expecting applause for this display of sound common-sense, opposed to the coroner's tiresome officialism.

"And what directions," asked the latter, "did the gentleman give you?"

"To go along Piccadilly," replied the witness, "till 'e told me to stop."

"And when did he tell you to stop?"

"By the railings of Green Park, just by 'Yde Park Corner. One of 'em puts 'is 'ead out of the window and calls to me to pull up."

"Which you did?"

"Which I did, and one of 'em gets out and standin' on the curb 'e leans back to the interior of the cab and says: 'S'long—see you tomorrow,' and then 'e says to me: 'No. 1 Cromwell Road,' and disappears in the fog."

"Surely you saw him then?"

"No. The fog was like pea soup there, though it looked clearer on Knightsbridge away. And 'e got out left side of course. I was up on my box right 'and side— a long way from 'im. I could see a man standin' there, but not 'is face. 'Is 'at was pulled down right over 'is eyes, and 'is coat collar up to 'is ears."

"Had he his stick—or umbrella—with him then?"

"Yes. With 'is 'ands in 'is pockets, and the tip pointing upward, like a soldier's bayonet."

"You saw that and not his face?" once more insisted the coroner, making a final effort to draw some more definite statement out of the man. It would help justice so much if only this witness were less obstinate! No one would believe that he really saw nothing of the face of the man who had twice spoken to him. He may not have seen it clearly, not the upper part of the face perhaps, but surely he saw the mouth that had actually framed the words!

But the chauffeur was obstinate. He was not going to swear away the life of a man whom he had not rightly seen, only through a fog as thick as pea soup; this was the fortress behind which after a while he entrtnched himself.

In vain did the coroner, pleased at having gained this slight advantage, try to draw him further, explaining to him with the quiet patience of a man moved by official ambition that, far from jeopardizing the life of any man, he might be saving that of an innocent one, falsely accused through circumstantial evidence. In vain did he press and argue, the man was obstinate. After a very long while only, and when the coroner had almost given up arguing and cross-examining, he admitted that he did think that the gentleman who directed him to No. 1 Cromwell Road had a moustache.

"But, mind," he added hurriedly, "I won't swear to it, for I didn't rightly see—the fog was that dense in the park. And 'e wasn't the same as the one 'oo told me to go along Picadilly until 'e stopped me. The dead man done that."

"How do you know," came as a quick retort from the coroner, "since you declare you could not see the faces?"

"The first gent 'oo spoke to me," replied the chauffeur somewhat sullenly now, "'ad no 'air on 'is face; the second one I think 'ad—but I can't rightly say. I wouldn't swear to neither. And I won't swear," he reiterated with gruff emphasis.

A sigh went round the room, a tremor of excitement, the palpitation of many hearts, and in-drawing of many breaths. No one spoke. No one framed the thought that was uppermost in the mind of every one of the interested spectators of this strange and un-understandable drama. The dead man who lay in the mortuary chamber was clean-shaven, but Luke de Mountford wore a moustache.

Lady Ducies' feathers nodded in the direction of the literary countess who went by the name of Maria Annunziata and the latter made hasty notes in her diminutive book.

But Louisa leaned slightly forward so as to catch fuller sight of Luke, and she encountered his eyes fixed steadily upon her.

After that the driver of the cab concluded his evidence more rapidly. There was little more there than what every one had already learned from the newspapers. The second pulling up in Cromwell Road this time: the silent fare, the descent from the box, the discovery of the huddled figure in the far corner of the cab, the call for the police.

People listened with less attention; thoughts were busy with the contemplation of a picture: two men, one clean-shaved—the dead man of course—and the other wearing a moustache. The first link in the chain of evidence against the assassin had been forged and was ready to be rivetted to the next.

The crowd in the body of the court could only obtain a view of the top of Luke de Mountford's head. It was smooth and fair, of that English fairness of tint which is golden when the light catches it. And the group of elegantly dressed women who came here today in order to experience an altogether novel sensation shuddered with delightful excitement as they thought of Black Maria, and handcuffs, and crowds of police officers in blue. A jumble of impressions ran riot in frivolous and irresponsible minds, foremost amongst which was one that the public was not longer allowed to witness a final scene on the gallows.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Next Witness Please.

The air grew more and more heavy as the morning dragged on. It was close on twelve o'clock.

Frederick Power, hall porter of the Veterans' Club, had finished his evidence. With the precision of a soldier he had replied curtly and to the point to every question put to him, and had retold all that had occurred on that foggy night, in the smoking room and the lobby of the Veterans' Club in Shaftesbury Avenue.

It was but a repetition of what he had told Sir Thomas Ryder in Colonel Harris's presence the day before. Louisa had had it all at full length from her father; she had drawn the whole story out of him, point by point, just as the man had told it originally. Colonel Harris, reluctant to tell her, was gradually driven to concealing nothing from her. Moreover, since she had made up her mind to attend the inquest she might as well hear it all fro mhim first, the better to be prepared for the public ordtal.

Though she knew it all, she listened attentively to every word which Frederick Power uttered, lest her father had—in telling her—omitted some important detail. She heard again at full length the account of Luke's visit to the Veterans' Club, his desire to see Philip de Mountford, the interview in the smoking room behind closed doors, the angry words of obvious, violent quarrelling.

Then Luke's return to the lobby, his departure, the final taunt spoken by Philip and the look of murder in his eye, sworn to by the hall porter. She listened to it all, and heard without flinching the last question which the coroner put to the witness:

"Did Mr. de Mountford's visitor carry a stick when he left the club?"

"'E 'ad a stick, sir, when 'e came," was the porter's reply, "and I 'anded it to 'im myself when 'e left."

Louisa had been sitting all this while at the extreme end of the row of chairs, right up against the wall. She sat with her back to the wall, her head leaning against it, her hands hidden within the folds of a monumental sable muff lying idly in her lap. She had her father on her right, and beyond him Mr. Dobson and his clerk; she saw them all in profile as they looked straight before them, at the coroner and at each succeeding witness.

Luke sat farther on, and, as he was slightly turned toward her, she could watch his face all the while that she listened to the hall porter's evidence. It was perfectly still, the features as if moulded in wax; the eyes which actually were a clear hazel appeared quite dark and almost as if they had sunk back within their circling lids. He sat with arms folded and not a muscle in face or body moved. No stone-carved image could have been more calm, none could have been so mysterious.

Louisa tried to understand and could not. She watched him, not caring whether the empty-headed fools who sat all round saw her watching him or not.

When the coroner asked the hall porter about the stick and the man gave his reply, Luke turned and met Louisa's fixed gaze. The marble-like stillness of his face remained unchanged, only the eyes seemed as if they darkened visibly. At least to her it seemed as if a velvety shadow crept over them, an inscrutable, an understandable shadow, and the rims assumed a purple hue.

It was her fancy of course. But Luke's eyes were naturally bright, of varying tones of gray, blue, or green, with never a shadow beneath them. Now they appeared cavernous and dark, and again as he met her gaze, that swift flash of intense misery.

No longer had she the feeling that she was living in a dream, no longer that this was a theatre wherein she and Luke and the dead man were puppets dancing and jerking for the benefit of shallow-hearted dolts. That sense of unreality left her together with the hysterical desire to laugh which had plunged her so in the earlier part of the proceedings. On the contrary, now an overwhelming feeling of intense reality oppressed her, so that she could have screamed with awful soul agony which the sight of Luke's misery had caused her.

And her nerves were on the rack, her very faculty concentrated on the one supreme desire to understand and to know.

Love, the omnipotent, had encountered an enemy—grim, unexplained Mystery—and he sat pondering, almost cowed by this first check to his supreme might. Louisa had sought and compelled Luke's gaze, and Love had gleamed in one great flash out of her eyes. Yesterday, at her glance, he had knelt at her feet and buried his sorrow with aching head in the scented palm of the dearly loved hand.

Today the look of Love brought but a surfeit of misery, an additional load of sorrow. The eyes in response remained fearless and hard and circled with the dark rings of utter hopelessness.

I'll grant you that if Louisa Harris had been an extraordinary woman, a woman endowed with a wonderfully complex, wonderfully passionate, or wonderfully emotional nature—if, in fact, she had been the true produce of this century's morbid modernity—she would, whilst admitting Luke's guilt, have burned with a passion of self-sacrifice, pining to stand beside him pilloried in the dock, and looking forward to a veritable world of idealistic realism in the form of a picturesque suicide, after seeing the black flag hoisted over Newgate prison.

But Louisa, though a modern product of an ultra-modern world, was an absolutely ordinary woman—just a common-place sensible creature who thought and felt in a straight and essentially wholesome manner. Though she had read Tolstoi and Dostoyefsky and every Scandinavian and Russian crack-brain who has ever tried to make wrong seem right, black appear white, and animalism masquerade as love, yet she had never been led away from her own clean outlook on life.

She loved Luke and would have given—did in fact give—her whole life to him: but she loved him without analysis or thought of self. It never entered her mind at this moment to wonder if he were guilty or not guilty, if he was capable or not of committing a crime to gain his own ends. All that troubled her was his misery, which she would have given her very soul to alleviate, and the hopelessness in him which she had given the world to console.

The mystery troubled her, not the sin; the marble-like rigidity of his face, not the possibility of the crime.

For the moment, however, she was brought back quickly enough to present realities. The coroner—satisfied with Frederick Powers' answers—was given him a moment's breathing space. The grating of fountain pens against paper was heard from that corner of the room where sat the journalists; the crowd waited silent and expectant, for—unversed though most people there present were in proceedings of this kind—yet instinctively every one felt that one great crucial moment was just about to come; one great, leading question was just about to be put.

The coroner had fingered the papers before him for the space of a few seconds, then he looked up once more at the witness, his elbow resting on the table, his fleshy chin buried in his hand, in an attitude which obviously was habitual to him.

"This visitor," he said speaking loudly and clearly, "who called the night before last at the Veterans' Club and had an interview with the deceased, you saw him well, of course?"

"Yes, sir," was the prompt reply.

"You would know him again?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Looking round this room now, should you say that he was present?"

The man looked across the room straight at Luke and said pointing to him:

"Yes, sir; the gentleman sitting there, sir."

As every one had expected the reply, no one seemed astonished. The many pairs of eyes that turned on Luke now expressed a certain measure of horrified compassion, such as might be bestowed on some dangerous animal brought to earth by a well-aimed gnu shot.

The coroner made no comment. He turned to the jury, glancing along either row of solemn faces, on both sides of the long table. Then he said:

"Would any of you gentlemen like to ask this witness a question?"

Receiving no reply, he added:

"Next witness, please!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

And People Went Out to Luncheon.

And now it was Luke de Mountford's turn at last. A wave of excitement swept over the crowd, every neck was craned forward, every eye fixed on this next witness, as he rose from his seat and with courteous words of apology to those whom he disturbed in passing made his way to the centre table.

An absolute embodiment of modern London society, Luke stood there, facing the crowd, the coroner and jury, as he would have faced friends and acquaintances in the grandstand at Ascot or in the stalls of a West End theatre. There are hundreds and thousands of young Englishmen who look exactly as Luke de Mountford looked that morning: dress is almost a uniform, in cut, style, and degree of tone; hair and even features are essentially typical. Luke de Mountford, well-born, well-bred, behaved just as Eton and Oxford had taught him to behave, concealing every emotion, raising neither voice nor gesture. An Englishman of that type has alternately been dubbed hypocritical, and unemotional. He is neither; he is only conventional. Luke himself, facing the most abnormal condition of life that could assail any man of his class, was so absolutely drilled into this semblance of placidity that it cost him no effort to restrain himself, and none to face the forest of inquisitive eyes levelled at him from every side. And since there was no effort, the outward calm appeared perfectly natural; an actor who has played one part two hundred times and more does so night after night until the role itself becomes reality, and he in ordinary every-day life, seems even to himself strange and unnatural.

Now Luke was given the Bible to kiss and told to take the oath. From where he stood he could see Louisa and a number of faces turned toward him in undisguised curiosity. Mocking eyes and contemptuous eyes, eyes of indifference and of horror, met his own as with quick glance they swept right over the crowd.

I don't think that he really saw any one except Louisa; no living person existed for him at this moment except Louisa. Hypocritical or unemotional nature—which? None could say, none would take the trouble to probe. All that the crowd saw was a man to all intents and purposes accused of a horrible murder, confronted at every turn with undeniable proofs of his guilt, and yet standing there just as if he were witnessing the first act of some rather dull play.

Hypocrisy or effrontery were the two alternatives which the idle and the curious weighed, whilst anticipating the joy of seeing the mask torn from this wooden image before them.

The coroner was asking the witness his name, and Luke de Mountford's voice was quite steady as he gave reply.

"You were," continued the coroner, "until quite recently and are again now heir-presumptive to the Earl of Dadclyffe?"

"It was supposed at one time," replied Luke, "that besides myself there was no other heir to my uncle's title."

"Deceased, I understand, arrived in England about six months ago?"

"So I understand."

"He made claim to be the only son of Lord Radclyffe's brother?"

"That is so."

"And to all appearances was able to substantiate this claim in the eyes of Lord Radclyffe?"

"Apparently."

"So much so that Lord Radclyffe immediately accorded him that position in his household which you had previously occupied?"

"Lord Radclyffe accorded to the deceased the position which he thought fitting that he should occupy."

"You know that the servants in Lord Radclyffe's household have informed the police that in consequence of Mr. Philip de Mountford's advent in the house, you and your brother and sister had to leave it?"

"My brother, sister, and I now live at Fairfax Mansions, Exhibition Road," said Luke evasively.

"And the relations between yourself and the deceased have remained of a very strained nature, I understand?"

"Of an indifferent nature," corrected Luke.

There was a pause. So far these two—the coroner and the witness—had seemed almost like two antagonists going through the first passes of a duel with foils. Steel had struck against steel, curt answers had followed brief questions. Now the combatants paused to draw breath. One of them was fighting the preliminary skirmish for his life against odds that were bound to overwhelm him in the end: the other was just a paid official, indifferent to the victim, interested only in the issue. The man standing at the foot of the table was certainly interesting: the coroner had made up his mind that he was the guilty party—a gentleman and yet a cowardly assassin; he amused himself during this brief pause with a quick analysis of the high-bred, impassive face—quite Saxon in character, fair and somewhat heavy of lid—in no way remarkable save for the present total lack of expression. There was neither indifference nor bravado, neither fear, remorse, nor defiance—only a mask made of wood, hiding every line of the mouth, and not allowing even the eyes to show any signs of vitality.

(To be Continued)

CANADIAN PACIFIC FINANCE

Some Illuminating Figures Bearing Upon the Public Interest in the Proposed Melon-Cutting.

(Toronto Globe.)

To those who urge that public control of the conditions under which C. P. R. and other railway stock issues shall be made in future is neither necessary nor desirable so long as the railways are forced to submit to public regulation of their rates, the answer must be that the undue expansion of the capital of any public service corporation must inevitably involve additional burdens upon the public. The process of stock-watering is frequently so gradual as to be unperceived, but if the volume or the price of a stock is unduly increased with that increase goes an unceasing pressure upon the management of the company to provide dividends bearing some reasonable ratio to the apparent value of the stock.

Were the Railway Commission of Canada to make such a radical reduction in passenger and freight rates as to reduce the dividend return on C. P. R.—a thing, by the way, that would be impossible without driving both the G. T. P. and C. N. R. into bankruptcy—there would be an angry protest from people who have recently been buying C. P. R. stock up around 280. Although the reduction might be entirely just and proper, the clamor of those injuriously affected would undoubtedly influence public opinion. There can of course be no vested right to overcharge the public for railway transportation, but there would be a very bad quarter of an hour for the legislators who would translate into rate schedules the idea that only the actual capital invested in the C. P. R. should obtain dividends from the operation of the road.

The holders of the common stock of the C. P. R. had no substantial investment in the railway up till 1902, when additional issues were made at par. Mr. Edward Blake, reviewing Canadian Pacific finance in 1885, told the commons that up till the spring of 1886 there would have been paid in dividends—or earmarked for the payment of dividends—on the common stock issue of $65,000,000 no less than $24,500,000. At that time the railway had not been completed. Of the original stock issue $5,000,000 was at par, $20,000,000 at 25 cents on the dollar, and $40,000,000 at 52 1-2 cents. At the present dividend rate the stockholders who came in at 25 cents on the dollar are getting 40 per cent yearly, and their stock is now worth in the open market eleven fold what they paid for it.

Since 1902, when C. P. R. capital issues were first made at par, the following additions to the common stock have been authorized:

March, 1902, at par	$19,500,000
October, 1904, at par	16,000,000
April, 1906, at par	20,250,000
January, 1908, at par	24,500,000
Broken lots sold during 1908 and 1909	3,084,000
Allotted Nov., 1909, at 125	30,000,000
Allotted Jan., 1912, at 150	18,000,000
Total issue, including original $65,000,000	$198,000,000

An analysis of these figures indicates that the holders of common stock have made an actual cash investment, including stock premiums, of $180,500,000. They own unsold land worth at least $150,000,000, they have deferred payments of $41,000,000 coming to them on land already sold, and they have a railway property and franchise that yielded last year a net operating profit of $33,800,000 after the payment of fixed charges, on bonds and preferred stock issues. In effect, therefore, the C. P. R. as a railway corporation, aside from its land department, earned eighteen per cent. on the actual cash investment in the common stock.

The very recital of these facts gives ample warrant for the insistence with which public bodies are demanding that the volume of further capital issues shall be carefully guarded by the dominion government.

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

Acadia University has taken a step in advance in providing a separate professor for each language. Last year, Prof. W. H. Thompson, Ph. D., took charge of the Latin, while Prof. R. V. Jones, Ph. D., continued with the Greek. This year a professor has been appointed for French and another for German.

Dr. Adolf F. Herrmann has recently been appointed to the chair of German. He is a native of Germany, holding the degree of Reifezeugins from the Realgymnasium, Berlin, having received the Harnisch prize at that time. After graduating he studied in Jena, Berlin, Kiel, Grenoble, and Paris. He holds a diploma from the French University of Grenoble, and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the German University of Kiel. He has taught in the Universiteschule of Professor Rein of Jena, and in other schools in Hamburg and London. German has never received the attention that it merited in the maritime provinces, but now at Acadia we may expect a most thorough department.

The professor of French is John Rice, Ph.D. Dr. Rice is a citizen of the United States, and at the age of eleven went abroad on account of his father's health and spent the next five years on the continent, largely in France, but also in Germany and Italy. After a year in an American preparatory school he entered Yale University and graduated in 1900 with a high-oration standing. In 1901 he took his M.A. at Yale, and in 1902 was awarded the Scott Hurt Fellowship. In 1903 he was appointed instructor of French and German in the Sheffield Science School of Yale University, and in 1904 instructor in French which position he held until 1909, when he took the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He had since been instructor in Williams College, teaching besides French, Spanish and Italian. He has kept up his connection with his work abroad in spending a portion of 1900 in Spain and Portugal; 1904 in Italy; and has spent frequent summers in France since. Dr. Rice was informed of his appointment while in Paris, and is now on his way to Wolfville.

GOOD WORK DONE BY S. P. C. DURING YEAR

Thursday, Sept. 5.

The quarterly meeting of the executive committee of the New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty was called to meet at the office of the secretary yesterday afternoon at 3.30 o'clock. Owing to the exhibition and other attractions this week, the attendance was small and the meeting was adjourned to a later date.

The secretary, S. M. Wetmore, submitted the following tabulated statement of work done from June 1 to Aug. 31, 1912:

Horses removed from work for:	
Lameness	9
Sores under harness	6
Unfit for work	14
Horses, owners and others cautioned for:	
Overloading	20
Overworking	8
Overdriving	18
Lameness	3
Neglected	2
Ill-treated	31
Sores under harness	3
Destroyed	2
Cattle and other stock:	
Stock neglected	1
Stock ill-treated	19
Stock overcrowding	6
Stock tied down	2
Stock shipments	26
Other animals:	
Dogs, ill-treated	4
Cats and dogs destroyed in lethal chamber:	
Cats	3
Dogs	4
Fowls and birds:	
Robbing nests	1
Shooting pidgeons	1
Children and others:	
Children ill-treated	5
Children neglected	6
Women ill-treated	2
Women neglected	6
Men neglected	1
Total	[illegible]

Cases taken to court included in above: Ill-treating wife and children, one, fined $20; ill-treating and overloading horses, one, fine $10, fine allowed to stand.

S. M. WETMORE,
Secretary and Agent.

St. John (N. B.)

A GOOD-HEARTED VEGETABLE.

A well known expert in cooking lectured before the mothers' club in a suburban community the other afternoon.

Her subject was "How to cook." After dwelling upon how much a man appreciates good cooking, she went on to give various recipes. Among the first was one for a lettuce salad.

"To have this 'best,' began the lecturer, "take a good-hearted lettuce and—

At this point a young matron interrupted. She was eager to get all the information possible. "Tell me, please," she said anxiously, "how is one to know the disposition of a lettuce?"

One teaspoonful of extract will flavor one quart of custard or pudding.

AND IT WAS SO.

"No," said the editor regretfully, as he handed the typewritten manuscript back to the young man, "bear stories are out of date. We want more spicy matter."

The author's face brightened. "Oh, then that is just what you want!" he declared. "It describes an adventure with a cinnamon bear."

WANTED

WANTED—At once, second teacher for Red Rapids, Di Parish of Perth, Victoria Cour stating salary, to F. King, Tru

WANTED—An assistant cook ing room girl at Rothesa School. Apply by letter or t Mrs. R. P. Foster, Tel. Rot Rothesay, N. B.

WANTED—At Biggar Ridge, trict No. 11, Aberdeen, take charge of school this p Apply to W. A. Biggar, Secret tees, Foreston P. O.,

WANTED—Second or third teacher for District No. Parish of Aberdeen; district Apply, stating salary, to K. Secretary to Trustees, Carleto 8902-9-11 s.w.

WANTED—A second-class fe for school district No. Kars. Apply to A. B. Jones

WANTED—Septe. 1st, two for the Netherwood Scho Apply to Miss Tees, Nertherw say.

WANTED—A first class male or female teacher. Apply ary and experience, Scott D. G Harbor, Grand Manan.

SCOVILS want both women work in their clothing fac sewing and machine work. N required, weekly wages paid ing. Scovil Bros. Ltd., 198 U

WANTED—A competent ma nurse and assist with work. Apply to Mrs. Manni 38 Coburg street.

AGENTS WANT

WANTED IMMEDIATELY agents; good pay weekly; exclusive stock and territory. are valuable. For particulars ham Nursery Company, Toron

RELIABLE representative meet the tremendous fruit trees throughout New present. We wish to secure good men to represent us general agents. The special in in the fruit-growing busines Brunswick offers exceptional for men of enterprise. We manent position and liberal right men. Stone & Wellingt Ont.

FOR SALE

MILL machinery for sale. sale the following second machinery in good order: En rotary (complete), lath mach saw, shafting, pulleys and be be sold at a bargain on favor Price on application. W. P. J tor, Woodstock, N.B., Aug.

SITUATIONS VAC

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