

Woman Against Woman

or A Terrible Accusation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Stunned, mentally helpless, Ailsa stood staring at her father, realizing in a vague, undefined way that her last hope had dropped from her, yet not blaming him, understanding, as she did, the terrible influence which he could no more have resisted than he could the will of God.

She could not speak to repudiate the awful lie he had uttered, and what could have been the use even had she done so? She heard the old clergyman's voice speaking words of reproach which she did not even dimly understand, and then that faded.

She waited, waited; she could not have told whether it was for moments or hours; but the silence seemed freighted with horror; then started like one in a dream as once more Nathan Simonson stepped toward her.

"You have disappointed me in more ways than one," he said, with his ever-present smile. "I am not going to either reproach or rebuke you, but there has come a time when your irrevocable decision must be made. I am going to send your father out again. Is it to be for a minister or an officer of the law? The answer remains alone with you."

She opened her eyes like one who had been asleep. She put her hand to her mouth, and her finger-nails knocked against her teeth, with a sound that startled her. But there was still no more idea of yielding in her heart than there had been upon her entrance there.

"You have my answer already," she returned, dully. "Not the most desirable change within the power of mortal man to make could I prove me now. You have already done your worst. Let my father answer for a crime, if crime he has committed. I will refuse to sell my soul for his unholy life."

She leaned back against the wall and closed her eyes. It seemed to her that all her strength had gone at once. The excitement of the night before, the misery she had suffered, and this together, would have proved too much for a stronger woman than she, and she realized that unconsciousness was threatened.

As she leaned there, white and exhausted, Simonson smiled again, and taking a stealthy step toward her, he uncorked the vial and carefully extended his hand, placed it directly beneath her nostrils.

The sweet, pungent odor, filled the room. Carefully he held his breath.

For one moment she did not seem to comprehend what the dense odor was that impregnated the atmosphere about her, then slowly she opened her eyes and gazed straight into his own.

She saw the triumphant smile, the hideous sneer of the heavy features, the glow in the bulging eyes, and—the vial in his dirty, outstretched fingers.

It told her the truth.

She staggered, but the dizziness that oppressed her caused her to fall back against the door. She passed her hand across her eyes helplessly, as if to clear a film from her vision. Then she swayed and tottered—further—further—until she lay cold and still in the arms of the man she most abhorred.

Deceitfully Simonson inserted the cork in the vial with his teeth, then drew it from him, never drawing breath until it was beyond his reach.

"Quick, Valworth!" he exclaimed. "We must lose no time in getting away from here. Dunraven will know well enough where to find her when her absence is noticed, and will come directly here. You know that, in spite of all our talk to the contrary, that we cannot detain her against her consent, and he must not find her here, and I defy him or all the detectives in New York at once to find her there."

"A carriage?" stammered Valworth, stupidly.

"Yes, a carriage. Quick, man!"

"But can't they trace us by a carriage?"

"No, you fool. I shall take particular care that they don't. Don't stop to question my methods, but if you would save yourself, go at once."

Valworth picked up his hat. For the first time there seemed to be something almost sullen in his manner, but Simonson was too much occupied with his burden to think of that.

Ailsa lay there like a dead thing, cold, lifeless, and with but a single glance in her direction, Valworth stumbled from the room.

He went down-stairs like a drunken man, though he had but one drink that morning, holding himself up by the rickety balustrade, and let himself into the street.

He looked about him in a dazed way as the cold air cut across his face. The snow was falling heavily, in cutting sleet rather than soft flakes. He drew back under the shelter of the doorway and shivered.

What was it that he had done? For the first time in years the enormity of his sin seemed to strike—perhaps because he had added to it this crowning disgrace.

He had foully besmirched the character of his own child, his Ailsa, the fairest, purest flower that ever blossomed in the field and mire of pollution. He had no regrets for the blows that he had struck her, for the want and deprivation that he had caused her; but under all that temptation she had remained good, and pure, and true, and he would as soon have thought of doubting the purity of God as to have doubted her now, yet he had lied—upon his own child! Lied to save himself, and accomplish the ends of a man whom he knew to be a dastard and a scoundrel!

For the first time in all those long, long years he hated himself with that loathing that only such self-censure can know.

And then, too, he seemed to realize for the first time the terrible influence he possessed by the priest.

Slowly, with painful distinctness, all the years of his past life rolled before him, ghastly in its memories. He was again a young man, handsome and respected, the lover of a pure young girl. He saw her his wife, saw himself slowly but surely falling from his respected estate, saw her heart breaking, knew himself a murderer, realized all the woe and shame he had brought to that child whom he had betrayed into her present position, and suddenly a low cry issued from his lips.

It was Nathan Simonson who had done it all.

The scales had dropped from his eyes. He rushed out into the storm like an insane creature driven by mania.

He had forgotten the cold, forgotten the cut of the sleet—forgot everything, except that new and unrecognized repentance upon him.

How clear it all was to him now—that frightful influence—and with what exactitude that was surprising, he recalled all Ailsa's words—that which she had said of Simonson's infatuation for her mother. It was true! Ghastly—horribly true!

How he hated the Jew!

He was stumbling down the street, his eyes more haggard than before, his limbs almost palsied.

He stopped abruptly and gazed up at a building—a plain brick structure of no pretension, but printed in black letters on an electric light that hung before the door were the words:

"—Precinct Station."

He hesitated.

His hands were blue with cold, his teeth chattering, but he did not know it. He looked irresolutely at the sign, then with one mad, headlong rush he entered the building, and cried out to the man behind the desk:

"For the love of Heaven, arrest and hang me! I am a murderer! Not alone of one man, but of a woman—my wife, as well—and worse than all, for her—my child! Arrest me—I am a murderer!"

"There was a wild commotion in the Precinct Station. Quicker than thought a policeman was upon either side of him, imagining they had in sanity to contend with; but Dowd Valworth threw off their hands.

"I am neither mad nor drunk!" he cried, excitedly. "Only a man stricken with remorse in the eleventh hour. Let me alone! I have come here of my own accord, and have given myself up. I am not going to try to escape. Don't stop to think of me. Go there at once—to my house, for her—my child! You will find her in—that man's power, the creature who has accomplished all this ruin and misery! She lies there like a dead thing in his arms, but he has not sight, and Simonson staggered backward, his eyes bulging more than ever, a loamy whiteness overspreading his grimy face.

He had recognized the gray-blue of the uniformed officer.

(To be continued.)



A WAR-TIME DINNER.

Pork and Beans With Worcester Sauce Is Cheap and Nourishing.

Greenwood is one of those intolerable men who always rise to an occasion, says a contributor to Punch. He is the kind of man who rushes to sit on the head of a horse when it is down. I can even picture him sitting on the bonnet of an overturned motor bus and shouting, "Now all together!" to the men who are readjusting it.

We were going down to business when Perkins introduced a new grievance against the censor.

"Whatever do they allow this rot about food prices in the paper for?" he began. "It unsettles women awfully. Now my wife is insisting on having her house-keeping allowance advanced twenty-five per cent. I tell you she'd never have known anything about the advances if they hadn't been put before her in glaring type."

The general opinion of the compartment seemed to be that the censor had gravely neglected his duty.

"I agreed with my wife," said Blair, who is a shrewd Scotchman, "and told her that she must have an extra two pounds a month. Now a twenty-five per cent. advance would have meant five pounds a month. Luckily providence fashioned women without an idea of arithmetic."

Most of us looked as if we wished we had thought of this admirable idea.

"My wife drew my attention to the paper," said Greenwood loftily. "I did not argue the point with her. Finance is not woman's strong point. I rang for the cook at once."

Everyone looked admiringly at the hero who had dared to face his cook.

"I said to her," continued Greenwood, "Cook, get the store's price list for to-day and serve for dinner precisely the things that have not advanced. You understand? That will do." So you see the matter was settled.

"Er, what did your wife say?" asked Perkins.

"What could she say? Here was the obvious solution. And I have noticed that women always lose their heads in an emergency. They never rise to the occasion."

The next morning I met Greenwood again.

"By the way," I asked, "did you have a good dinner yesterday?"

Greenwood looked me straight in the eyes. There is a saying that a liar cannot look you straight in the eyes. Discredit it. "That dinner was excellent," he replied. "I wish you had been there to try it. And every single thing at per-war prices."

But that night I came across Mrs. Greenwood as she emerged from a Red Cross working party loaded with mufflers and mittens.

"Glad to hear these hard times don't affect your household," I began diplomatically.

Mrs. Greenwood smiled. "What has Oswald been telling you?"

"Nothing except that he had an excellent dinner yesterday."

"I wasn't there," said Mrs. Greenwood. "I went to my mother's. You see, cook conscientiously followed Oswald's instructions. He had sardines, Worcester sauce, macaroni, and tin-

THERE'S A DELIGHTFUL 'SOMETHING'

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INVENTIONS OF PARSONS.

Rev. Alex. John Forsyth invented the Percussion Cap.

The case of a clergyman spending his week-days in a factory making shells is not nearly so extraordinary as some of the newspapers would have us believe. Ever since the olden times when monasteries were the centres of learning, priests have been pioneers in the fields of invention and discovery. Especially does this seem the case where warlike things are concerned, says London Answers.

Strange as it may seem, members of the Church stand in the front rank of the inventors of weapons of destruction. The case mentioned above brings to light an interesting instance, a correspondent mentioning that next year will be the centenary of the invention of the percussion lock, which superseded the flint lock, and was the discovery of a Scottish minister, the Rev. Alexander John Forsyth.

Likewise, although the origin of gunpowder is wrapped in mystery, two men are given the credit for its discovery, and both were monks. One was Friar Bacon, who can, without fear of contradiction, be called the father of British scientific research. His undoubtedly knew how to make gunpowder, but never realized the uses to which it might be put.

The other is a German monk, Schwartz, whose claim is supported by the majority of authorities. As might be expected, however, the heads of the Church show little appreciation for the cleverness of its members when directed towards improving the machinery of destruction. This was made apparent a year or two ago when an Italian monk invented an automatic rifle, which it was claimed would fire 350 shots a minute.

He wished to submit it to the Italian Government, but his superiors ordered him to destroy the designs of such a murderous weapon. Rather than do that, however, he abandoned his monastic career, and it is quite possible that if his invention justifies the sacrifice he made for it, we may get striking proofs of its destructiveness in the present war.

THE BITTEREST MEMORY.

German Soldiers Cheered the Sinking of the Lusitania.

A private in the Cameron Highlanders who has been through the fighting from the beginning till a few days ago says—

The Cameroners were at Givenchy when the great liner (Lusitania) was torpedoed. The German trenches were well within 200 yards of the British lines, and it happened that there were many English-speaking Germans opposed to the Highland regiment. Time and again there had been much chaffing between the lines. When the big Cunarder was sunk the enemy were made aware of it at once by their head-quarters. The Cameroners heard burst after burst of exultant cheering from the German trenches when the news came in, and there was much speculation as to what had happened. The Scots were not left in doubt for long. "Hi you Scotch, what about your Lusitania now? We have sent her to the bottom." There was a moment of silence in the Cameroners' trench, and then with a yell a number of the men, with bayonets fixed, jumped for the parapet of the trench, and were about to dash to certain death in an attempt to vent their rage upon the sneering enemy. Fortunately, the incensed Highlanders were at once observed by their officers, and a sharp order brought the angry company raging into their trench. Amongst them were men who had experienced the worst that the war has revealed in German treachery and diabolical ingenuity; and one of them at least it is true that the bitterest memory of the war is not of the use of poison gas or burning liquid, or even of the murder of wounded. It is the memory of the enemy cheering and exulting over the destruction of a passenger ship, and the drowning of many women and children.

HEROINE OF RUSSIAN ARMY.

As Bride Put on Uniform and Went to Front With Husband.

Some time ago, travelling on the same train to Warsaw, were a man and a woman—the man a young undergraduate who had joined the Russian army as a volunteer, and the woman, the daughter of a princely landowner in the Caucasus, who bore one of the noblest names in the history of Russia. The man, who was an officer, was going to join his regiment, and during the two days' railway journey the two young people, who had fallen in love at first sight, became engaged. On arriving at Warsaw they went straight to the nearest Orthodox Greek Church, where a kindly priest married them.

The girl refused to leave her husband, and, managing to obtain a soldier's kit and assuming the name of Lourenty, followed him to the firing-line. She soon obtained her baptism of fire, for the position where she and her husband were stationed was one of the most critical on the River Raska and subjected to continual German attacks. During one encounter her husband, who was only a lieutenant, found himself the only officer in a condition to command four companies, and his wife acted as lieutenant. The Germans were mowing the Russians down, and the young officer sent one of his men to the front line of trenches to give the order to retire. But the front line men, excited beyond control, refused, owing to an order given by their late commander. Twice the husband sent, but the men refused to move. Then the husband, as a last resort, sent his wife. She tried to persuade them, but without success. Every moment the Germans were getting nearer, and their fire became hotter, while their coming meant instant death for every man; so the girl lifted the butt end of her rifle and brought it down on the soldiers of first one man and then another. Her angry voice and forceful action had the desired effect, and the men evacuated the trenches and ran towards the back line, Laurenty staying till every man had reached a safer place. As she stood there a sharp shell hit her right arm. In another ten minutes not a single man would have been left alive in that trench.

When Laurenty returned she found her husband wounded in the leg; husband and wife were sent to the same hospital, and the soldier-princess was soon presented to the commander-in-chief and received the Cross of St. George, the V.C. of Russia, for her valor.

VILLAGES RUN BY WOMEN.

Shortage of Men in Europe Making Great Changes.

Owing to the war, women in England and France are taking up many odd callings to make up for the shortage of men, but in the country women have already done whatever lies nearest to their hand.

In the village, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, may all be women, and there is at least one small town in Devon in which women form the chief business element. The principal hotel is run by a woman and her daughter, a woman deftly cuts the joints and orders her son about.

A bakeress bakes the nicest bread, and her daughter trudges far into the country with two baskets slung on her back, a picturesque figure of the female worker. The wine merchant is a woman who worked up a nice little business, while a chemist's shop is owned by a woman, to say nothing of the trades which are to be found everywhere, sweetstuff shops, fancy shops and the like.

France, being a country where universal service is the rule, is nowadays depending largely on the work of women, but even in the times of peace there were places where they were the chief workers. At Prouisay, in the Department of the Oise, most of the public appointments are held by women, and will be until their present holders die.

There is a postmistress instead of a postmaster; the telegraph department is run by a woman; a station mistress directs the porters at the local station; a lady barber cuts the hair of the community, and the town crier also tacks "ess" on to the name of her calling.

Solving a Problem.

The arithmetic lesson that day had been hard and trying and now, at the closing hour, Tommy stood before the teacher waiting to hear results.

"Your last problem was wrong," was the verdict. "You will have to stay after school and do it again."

Tommy looked at the clock. "Tell me, please, how much am I out?" he asked.

"Your answer is 2 cents short."

Tommy's hand dived into the pocket where his most treasured possessions were stored. Swiftly he separated two pennies from a bunch of shoe strings, a penknife and some marbles and pieces of chalk.

"I'm in a hurry, please," he said; "if you don't mind, I'll pay the difference."

Her Opposite.

Nell—Do you believe people should marry their opposites?

Belle—Yes; my fiancee lives just across the street.

An optimist is a man who smiles at kicks, and a pessimist is a man who kicks at smiles.

BRITISH NAVAL POWER.

A Paris Paper Enumerates Its Benefits to the Allies.

In a long article headed, "What We Owe to the British Navy," the Temps enumerates the benefits conferred on the Allies by their naval supremacy, which, while safeguarding their colonial possessions, has transferred German colonial possessions to other flags. Millions of square kilometers of territory and millions of inhabitants are no longer covered by the German flag.

But for the British naval power, instead of the siege being laid to Tsing Tau, the German China Squadron could have a free hand against the Indo-China possessions. It would not have been Duala and Edea in the Cameroons which have been bombarded, but St. Louis and Dakar in Senegal. The Koenigsberg, unbottled, would have rained shells on French towns in the Indian Ocean, deprived of their communications with the Mother Country. The troops of the great French colonies in Africa and Asia would have been unable to hold out for long. This is what is now happening in the German territories, all of which are to-day virtually captured. All German commerce destroyers have disappeared. The distant seas are free to the Allies, and neutral shipping, and their navigation is unimpeded.

After eleven months of war there is not a German port outside of Europe. Except in the Baltic and on the North Sea there is not a single ship able to sail under the German flag. Short-sighted people are hypnotized by the incessant torpedoing by submarines, but when they reflect that not a single transport, store ship, or modern warship, has been torpedoed they are forced to admit that the German submarine action is without military importance.

A Puzzler.

The type of youth who indulges in loud clothes and a hat forced back over his ears dropped into the dental chair.

"I'm afraid to give him gas," said the dentist to his assistant.

"Why?"

"How can I tell when he's unconscious?"

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