

LOVE AND WAR

PART I.—In France

Private Joseph Henry Truelove was "over the top with the best of luck." He reached the enemy trench without mishap, and after a cautious survey of the first dug-out entrance he came to, moved carefully down the rough stairway. At the foot of the stairs the dug-out branched to right and left. The left-hand portion appeared to be empty. The right was obscured by a curtain of sacking. Pulling this aside, Truelove whisked in.

To his surprise he saw a short, fat, German soldier, seated at a table, and apparently deep in thought. The Hun looked up as Truelove entered, but made no movement until he was close up, when, turning in his chair, he quietly asked in excellent English: "Are you a Spiritualist? If so, no doubt, you will forgive my absorption. I am trying to get into communication with my brother Friedrich, who departed this life near Ypres a year ago."

"A Spiritualist?" ejaculated Truelove with astonishment. "No I'm an infantryman."

"Just so—just so," responded the Hun soothingly. "I suppose your duty is to kill me with that bayonet of yours, but perhaps I may be of some slight service to you first. Is there any person, alive or dead, of whose welfare you are anxious to know?"

"Well, yes," said Joseph Henry, entering into the spirit of the proposal. "I'd like to know how everything is with my sweetheart Mabel."

"I see—" said the German, in a curious monotone, staring fixedly at the opposite wall, "I see a large brilliantly lighted restaurant. People come and go, but in a corner by themselves there ever remain in earnest conversation a young lady and an officer—a second-lieutenant of your Army Service Corps. She is tall, pale, with dark hair and small features—"

"Mabel," burst from Truelove.

"He is speaking to her in a low, passionate tone," continued the German, disregarding the interruption. "I can hear him say, 'Mabel, I have no fear for our future. I have loved you for fully three weeks.'"

"She answers: 'Albert, such constancy is really rather wonderful. I love you, too.'"

"I see—" continued the Hun, taking no notice of Joseph Henry's grief and anger, "I see her in a box at a theatre. The play is in progress, and a Colonial officer, who is seated beside her, squeezes her hand from time to time with a fatuous happiness in that occupation distinctly distressing in an intelligent-looking man of good physique."

"He speaks—he is saying: 'Since you admit that you love me, when will you marry me?'"

"Not until the curtain falls," she responds."

"E-e-nough!" shouted Joseph Henry. "Not one word more. For the great service you have rendered

me I spare your life. Let's go and see if we can spear a drink of something. I renounce women for all time—yes, the whole six of them."

PART II.—In England

Miss Mabel Dobson entered the clairvoyant's apartments with some little hesitation.

"I would like to get into communication with my former lover," said Mabel, blushing prettily as she plied her powder-puff before the old man.

"Is he living?" asked the Seer.

"I forget," she answered; "but if so, he is in France."

"Gaze into this crystal," said the Seer, "and concentrate your mind on your sweetheart."

Mabel gazed into the depths of the crystal. Nothing happened for a few seconds, but gradually its purity became clouded, and soon taking form and colour a picture grew into being before her astonished eyes.

She saw Joseph Henry seated in a chair in a large brightly lighted room. There was sand on the floor, and on a table beside him stood a glass from which he took a sip occasionally with obvious relish. A young girl leaned over his chair with love in her eyes and a jug in her hands.

Mabel could even hear the voices; and although Joseph Henry spoke a curious mixture which was neither English nor French, what Mabel did not understand she was perfectly able to guess at. Said Henry, unfolding a filthy piece of paper money, "Oui, Mam' selle, I compree O.K. I love you; lou love me. I take you to Canada avec moi apres la guerre."

"Oui, M'sieu."

"J'ai beaucoup money. Mon pere millionaire—compree? Beaucoup land—hundred and sixty acres."

"Parfaitement, M'sieu."

"Après la guerre I come back for you. Je n'aime pas les femmes anglaises—compree?"

"Oui, M'sieu. C'est tres gentil, mais je suis marie maintenant. Comprenez vous?"

"Eh, what! Sold again! Je vais au tranches ce soir. Au revoir, Madame."

"Au revoir, M'sieu."

"Wretch!" said Mabel, lifting her eyes from the crystal.

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The leave train came rumbling into Victoria station. Private Truelove jumped from his carriage and made for the exit. At the barrier he fell into the embrace of Mabel.

"Joseph Henry," she breathed, "I have waited."

"My only girl," he murmured, taking a fresh hold.

Thus are romances consummated in war-time!

From the Original L. P.