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## When the War Was Over

BY FREDERICK R. BURTON.

Author of "Her Wedding Interlude," "Josef Helmuth's Goetz," "A Pot of Gold," "The Strange Object of Thornton Wetmore," etc.

## CHAPTER XXI.—THE MALINGERING.

Mrs. Warren met the doctor and Father Reardon at the door. She greeted respectfully to the priest, and opened the sitting room door.

"May I speak with the doctor a moment, Father?" she asked, "before you see the patient?"

"Of course, Mrs. Warren," replied the priest. "It is the doctor who has sent for me, and you must know whether the summons is urgent."

"I am very sure the patient is in no immediate danger," she said, "and I shall detain you but a moment."

There was a bright light in her eyes and a red spot glowed on either cheek as she withdrew the doctor into the hallway. He could not tell whether her changed manner was expressive of hope or excitement due to renewed fear.

"Doctor," she said, "I believe he is as conscious as you or I."

"Have you spoken with him?"

"I have spoken to him, but he has not answered."

"What does he do?"

"He keeps his eyes intently on me, listens to all I say, but gives no sign. Sometimes he seems to wander, as if he were trying to remember something, but the expression of his eyes is intelligent. There is none of the vacancy of delirium in them."

"H'm," murmured the doctor. "What do you think?"

"This doctor, that he knows my face, but cannot yet understand where he is or how he came here. Doctor, if he comes to speak, I beg you let me be the one to hear him."

"But you asked me yourself about the priest last night?"

"Yes, I remember. I thought then he was going to die."

"I had but just got home when Father Reardon came jogging by. He too, had been at a bedside pretty much all night, for his parishioners, you know, are as scattered as my patients—and as few in number, I guess. Well, you are acquainted with him, as we all are, and you know how readily his sympathies are aroused. I never repeated to him in vain. When I told him about the stranger of his faith who had fallen into trouble, and of the inquiry you had made, there was no other course open to him, and he saw it, but to come."

"I wouldn't for anything," said Mrs. Warren, as if speaking to herself. "Stand between Freeman and his religion. It is more than probable that he would like to see the Father, and it is more probable still that he would speak to the priest when he would not to me. Dr. Nason," and she looked up at him appealingly, "is it true that Catholic priests always respect the secrecy of the confessional?"

"I never heard of an instance," he replied gravely, "where a priest disclosed a single word told to him in his capacity as confessor. Even if there were exceptions, I am sure that you could trust Father Reardon."

"Yes, yes, he is a good man, and yet, I wish he had not to hear—doctor, you will let him be the only one? You won't permit this Mr. Golding to speak with the patient?"

"The doctor drew a long breath. "Without your permission," he replied.

"Thank you," she said. "Will you see the patient before the priest goes in?"

"Certainly. As the curer of the body I must see that he is in safe condition to meet the father."

Dr. Nason entered the sick chamber and Mrs. Warren watched him as he stood by the bed, felt Dutton's pulse and asked him in a cheery voice how he felt.

Dutton's eyes contracted slightly as he gazed at the doctor doubtfully. Then he turned them upon Mrs. Warren steadily for a moment, finally closing them and answering nothing.

The doctor did not repeat his question, but thrust a thermometer into Dutton's mouth. The patient took it in as matter-of-course fashion as if he were perfectly alive to the situation, but he kept his eyes closed and uttered no sound.

Presently Dr. Nason put up his thermometer and went into the hall, closing the door behind him.

"There is no danger to the patient," he said, "in the priest's visit, no matter how serious their conversation may be."

Father Reardon was accordingly notified.

"Is he in extremis, doctor?" he asked, as he stepped toward the sick room.

"Far from it, apparently," returned the doctor.

The priest bowed slightly and passed on, and after he had entered the room Mrs. Warren opened the door and sat down near it. Had she tried she could not have overheard the words of the priest to the patient's bedside, but she was not listening for words, nor was

the doctor, who stood beside her. Both listened, however, with the same purpose, but with very different views of it.

At first they heard only the low murmur of Father Reardon's voice. He appeared to be asking questions of the sick man, and Dutton seemed to be treating his inquiries as he had those of Mrs. Warren and the doctor.

After two or three minutes of this there was the sound of another voice, speaking apparently in impatience, and Mrs. Warren exclaimed, without looking up at the doctor:

"He speaks. I knew he would tell the priest," and she buried her face in her hands.

Dr. Nason made no comment, but he looked very thoughtful, and his face grew even graver as the patient's voice continued, losing its sharp quality of tone and sinking to a steady, even murmur, as of a man telling a long story.

Meantime Mr. Warren had gone to the kitchen, where he was trying to reassure Elsie, who was in a very nervous condition. He had not intended to go into the sick room unless summoned, but he was almost glad that his daughter's apprehensions gave him so convenient a means of keeping clear of Golding.

That energetic, resourceful individual had joined the group of neighbors at the log in the yard, and was further instilling their minds with the poison of suspicion, while he kept his eyes open for the reappearance of the priest.

"You see how serious it is," he said, "when the doctor thinks it advisable to bring a priest to the unfortunate man's bedside."

"I thought you said last evening," remarked King, who had been profoundly impressed by Mr. Warren's denance, "that this Dutton or Freeman, as you called him then, had done a great wrong."

"So I did, and it was true. But didn't I say that Freeman would come with me and do as I said? I had in mind what I could not very well tell you then, that I was following him in a spirit of forgiveness. The man had long been my friend and partner."

What if he had gone wrong for once? And, especially now, shouldn't I tell you then, that I was following him in a spirit of forgiveness. The man had long been my friend and partner."

"Guess that's so," said King, not knowing what else to say, but feeling a doubt, nevertheless, as to Golding's sincerity. Had either of the others at that moment declared their belief in Warren, King would have hastened to rank himself on the old soldier's side as against all strangers and against all suspicion.

After several minutes had passed, Golding could not resist the impulse that drew him to the house, and he went around to the front door and knocked gently. Mrs. Warren only said to him. She did not invite him to enter.

"Madam," he said, "with the shadow of death upon my friend, you cannot refuse me the privilege of seeing him, the small hope of a last word with him."

"I do not think he will die," replied Mrs. Warren, without moving. "But the presence of the priest—"

"He was sent for when the case looked dangerous."

"Then Freeman is better?"

"I think so."

She would have attempted to withdraw, but Golding was clearly upon urging his requests anew, when Father Reardon opened the door of the sick room and came out, closing it carefully behind him. He stepped into the sick room to get his hat, while the doctor rose, and Mrs. Warren gazed at him apprehensively, and Golding edged his way into the hall.

The priest found his hat, and as he turned to go he made some commonplace remark about the weather.

"Father Reardon," said Mrs. Warren, "we have but recently finished breakfast. You have a long way to go. Won't you have a cup of coffee or tea and let Elsie get you something to eat?"

"I have had breakfast, thank you," he replied, "but I would be glad of a cup of coffee."

Mrs. Warren called to Elsie, who promptly opened the door at the end of the hall, and gave her the needed instructions. Then, while Father Reardon went down the hall to the kitchen, followed by the doctor, Mrs. Warren turned and closed the front door, Golding was standing on the threshold, but he was not proof against her plain determination to shut him out.

She bolted the door and went into the sick room. Dutton's eyes were closed, but he opened them as she came in, and for an instant he looked as if he were about to say something. Mrs. Warren eagerly approached the bed, but he shook his head very slightly and closed his eyes again. Mrs. Warren opened the door into the kitchen, and drawing a chair to the threshold, sat down where she could keep her eyes upon the priest and yet see at the same time what might go on in the sick room.

Father Reardon was seated at the table sipping his coffee and chatting pleasantly with Mr. Warren about farm topics and such other matters as entered into the ordinarily uneventful life of Granite people. The priest and the old soldier were more than acquaintances, though their friendship could hardly be said to be close. They entertained a high regard for one another, and never met without pausing for more or less conversation. Father Reardon was evidently not disposed to talk at length this morning, for he declined a second cup of coffee and pushed back his chair, preparing to go.

Just then Golding stalked in at the back door, his face marked with a frown of determination.

"Father," he said at once, "I make no complaint against the people of this house, who see fit to keep me from my friend's dying bed, but I appeal to you in the name of Christianity and ordinary humanity. Freeman Dutton is my friend and partner. I have the right to know—"

"Pardon me," interrupted the priest, rising. "Dr. Nason is here. Your question properly should be addressed to him. I am not a physician for the body."

"Well, but," protested Golding, "here is a dying man, and his chief friend is forbidden the house. Won't you tell me whether he has spoken to you? Is there no message that he confided to you for me? My name is Ben Golding."

The priest shook his head, and there was an incomprehensible smile on his lips as he answered:

"The patient spoke to me, yes. He gave me no message for you or anybody else. As to what else passed, I can only say with absolute frankness that the man in that room had no need or desire for the services of a priest."

Golding stared his discomfiture, while the priest bowed gravely and left the room. He turned back after he had entered the hall to add:

"You will, of course, interpret nothing that I have said as meant to influence in the slightest degree the conduct of my friends in a matter that apparently concerns only themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Warren are their own judges as to what is right to do."

The priest said "Good morning all round, and when he departed Mr. Warren was standing in the doorway that led from the kitchen to the sick room. Golding near the kitchen stove and Elsie, her father and the doctor, in the hall. The latter three went into the sick room.

Dr. Nason, with a look of surprise, exclaimed Golding, after a moment, "I demand the privilege of speaking to him. He'll speak to me. I'm sorry to make trouble, but this is my right, and I intend to assert it."

This was spoken in a voice that was perfectly audible in the spare room, and during the speech Dr. Nason kept his eyes fixed upon the patient. Mrs. Warren did not stir. She leaned slightly against one jamb of the door and extended her right arm to the other, indicating her resolution to prevent Golding from entering.

Dr. Nason bent to her ear and whispered:

"I advise letting him come in. I feel very sure there will be no danger with your family present. I will withdraw if you like."

"No, stay," she returned, and she lowered her arm.

"You may come in," she said to Golding.

He stepped quickly forward with a triumphant expression and approached the bed. Mr. and Mrs. Warren stood just back of him, looking on with painful anxiety, while Elsie and the doctor came a little apart, but still within their circle of vision.

What they could see and hear everything that happened. The patient's eyes opened as Golding bent over him and asked:

"Dutton, do you know me?"

Dutton stared steadily into the man's eyes for a moment, and then turned a vacant, meaningless glance upon the others. It could not be said with certainty that he had recognized his partner.

"Freeman," whispered Golding, bending lower and speaking with appealing earnestness, "what have you done with—where is the 'President'?"

The sick man's eyes took on a slightly puzzled expression for an instant, and then they closed, while he sighed wearily.

"Man, man," exclaimed Golding, feverishly, "aren't you going to tell me?"

Dutton remained motionless.

After a moment of waiting Golding straightened up and gazed fiercely at the group about the bed. Mrs. Warren glanced inquiringly at the doctor, evidently anxious that he should interpose and end the scene on the ground that the patient was being unduly excited, but Dr. Nason smiled in silence.

"Well," blurted Golding, striding across the room, "there are other ways. You've got him in your power and under your control now, but we'll see if we can't find a way to see."

He unbolted the front door and went out.

Dr. Nason motioned to his friends to follow him and led them into the sitting room.

"You see I was right, Mrs. Warren," he said.

"Yes," she responded, with evident relief, "but wasn't it a dangerous experiment?"

"I think not. Shall I tell you why?"

All three looked their intense interest.

"I believe that the man is malingering."

"Malingering," repeated Mrs. Warren, doubtfully; "what does that mean?"

"Your husband knows," responded the doctor with a smile.

"A malingering, Martha," said Mr. Warren, "is a soldier who feigns illness in order to escape duty."

"And, you think Freeman is well, doctor?" exclaimed Mrs. Warren, in amazement.

"He's not well, but the fever has abated; he is conscious, as we know from the fact that he talked with Father Reardon, even if there was no other proof. I should call him a convalescent with every chance of speedy recovery. I know nothing of his reasons for feigning non compos mentis, but it is pretty evident, isn't it, that he doesn't intend to have any talk with you and Golding? Believe me, Mr. Dutton is perfectly able to speak and speak as intelligently as any of us."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

## METHODIST MISSIONS.

The M. W. M. S. Choose Officers and Authorize the Expenditure of \$35,000.

Toronto, Oct. 21.—The Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, at its annual conference, last week before concluding their convention. The estimates for the home and foreign mission fields were considered and approved as follows:

Japan, \$14,000; China, \$7,000; Chinese Reserve Home, Victoria, B. C., \$1,500; Indian Girls' Home at Port Simpson, \$2,500; Port Simpson Hospital, \$600; Chillyack Institute, \$2,750; French work, Montreal, \$1,200; French Institute, \$2,750; interest on building, \$600; Methodist Orphanage, Newfoundland, \$500; literature and publishing committee, \$25; extra appropriation, \$200; total, \$35,000 of surplus over last year, \$800.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Mrs. Gooderham, Toronto; vice-president, Mrs. Carman, Belleville; recording secretary, Mrs. Kent, Toronto; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Strachan, Hamilton; treasurer, Mrs. Thompson, Toronto; editor of Outlook, Mrs. Gordon Wright, London.

Brampton is the next place of meeting.

## FOR TEMPERANCE.

Meeting of the World's W.C.T.U. at Baltimore—Miss Willard's Opening Address.

Baltimore, Md., Oct. 21.—Five hundred women delegates, from all over the world, assembled Friday in attendance upon the 14th annual conference of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union. Miss Frances E. Willard called the convention to order amid much clapping of hands. Then the delegates and many speakers were joined in singing "America." After transacting the usual routine business Miss Willard delivered her address, in which she said:

"The temperance reform of the time, and the favorite beverage of those who ride to win. Men who drink take less, and more men do not drink at all than in any previous year. This is the testimony of railway managers, life insurance agents, police captains and the general public. Steam and electricity have put level heads at a premium and the trend of invention has paralleled with the white path of reason in every line of the habits of life. Legislation follows on after individual progress. Temperance reform is the universal solvent, bringing brotherhood to the front and sending sectarianism and sectionalism to the rear."

At the conclusion of her address a large white silk banner, studded with 50 gilt stars, representing the States and Territories wherein the W. C. T. U. have representation, was presented to Miss Willard.

The superintendent of the narcotics department, Mrs. E. B. Innes, of St. Louis, referred to cigarette pictures and called attention to one which represented a baby carriage filled with tobacco and labeled "A good thing to push it along." She said that Mr. Pullman had been petitioned not to place smoking apartments in his cars and that she understood that the millionaire car builder was not placing these compartments in the sleeping cars and that smokers would therefore be forced into the ordinary smoking car.

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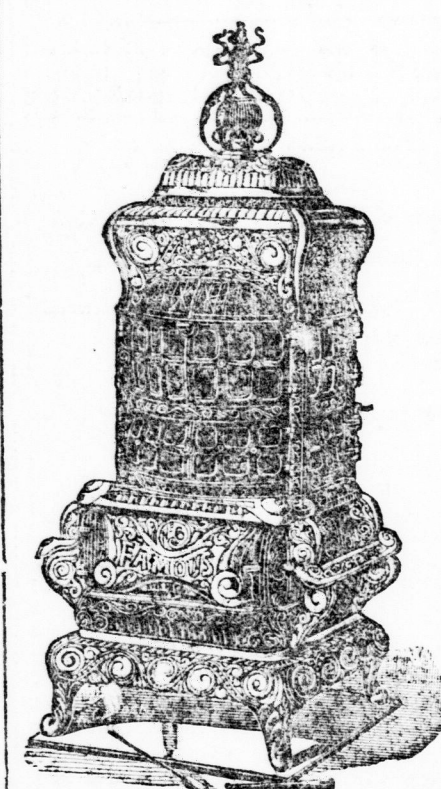
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