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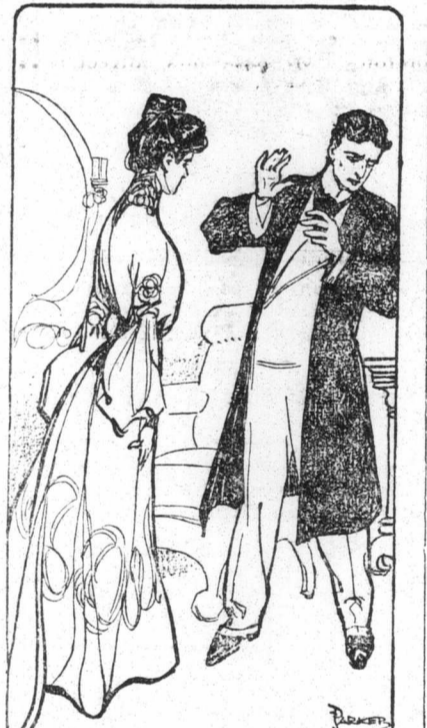
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The MASQUERADER
By Katherine Cecil Thurston,
Author of "The Circle," Etc.
Copyright, 1904, by Harper & Brothers

"The last three weeks must be buried," he said hurriedly. "No man could free himself suddenly from—from a vice." He broke off abruptly. He thought of Chilcote; he hated himself. Then Eve's face, raised in distressed appeal, overshadowed all scruples. "You have been silent and patient for years," he said suddenly. "Can you be patient and silent a little longer?" He spoke without consideration. He was conscious of no selfishness beneath his words. In the first exercise of conscious strength the primitive desire to reduce all elements to his own sovereignty submerged every other emotion. "I can't enter into the thing," he said; "like you, I give no explanations. I can only tell you that on the day we talked together in this room I was myself—in the full possession of my reason, the full knowledge of my own capacities. The man you have known in the last three weeks, the man you have imagined in the last four years, is a shadow, an unreality—a weakness in human form. There is a new Chilcote—if you will only see him.

Eve was trembling as he ceased; her face was flushed; there was a strange brightness in her eyes. She was moved beyond herself. "But the other you—the old you?" "You must be patient." He looked down into the fire. "Times like the last three weeks will come again—must come again—they are inevitable. When they do come, you must shut your eyes—you must blind yourself. You must ignore them—and me. Is it a compact?" He still avoided her eyes. She turned to him quietly. "Yes—if you wish it," she said, below her breath.

He was conscious of her glance, but he dared not meet it. He felt sick at the part he was playing, yet he held to it tenaciously. "I wonder if you could do what few men and fewer women are capable of?" he asked at last. "I wonder if you could learn to live in the present?" He lifted his head slowly and met her eyes. "This is an experiment," he went on. "And, like all experiments, it has good phases and bad. When the bad phases come round I—I want



"No, I haven't got the right," you to tell yourself that you are not altogether alone in your unhappiness—that I am suffering too—in another way." There was silence when he had spoken, and for a space it seemed that Eve would make no response. Then the last surprise in a day of surprises came to him. With a slight stir, a slight, quick rustle of skirts, she stepped forward and laid her hand in his. The gesture was simple and very sweet. Her eyes were soft and full of light as she raised her face to his, her lips parted in unconscious appeal. "There is no surrender so seductive as the surrender of a proud woman. Loder's blood stirred, the undeniable suggestion of the moment thrilled and disconcerted him in a tumult of thought. Honor, duty, principle, rose in a triple barrier; but honor, duty and principle are but words to a headstrong man. The full significance of his position came to him as it had never come before. His hand closed on hers; he bent toward her, his pulses beating unevenly. "Eve," he said. Then at the sound of his voice he suddenly hesitated. It was the voice of a man who has forgotten everything but his own existence. For an instant he stayed motionless. Then very quietly he drew away from her, releasing her hands. "No," he said. "No, I haven't got the right."

CHAPTER XVIII.
THAT night for almost the first time since he had adopted his dual role Loder slept ill. He was not a man over whom imagination held any powerful sway. His doubts and misgivings seldom ran to speculation upon future possibilities. Nevertheless, the fact that, consciously or unconsciously, he had adopted a new attitude toward Eve came home to him with unpleasant force during

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the hours of darkness, and long before the first hint of daylight had slipped through the heavy window curtains he had arranged a plan of action—a plan wherein, by the simple method of altogether avoiding her, he might soothe his own conscience and safeguard Chilcote's domestic interests.

It was a satisfactory if a somewhat negative arrangement, and he rose next morning with a feeling that things had begun to shape themselves. But chances seldom lend a disconcerting knack of forestalling even our best planned schemes. He dressed slowly and descended to his solitary breakfast with the pleasant sensation of having put last night out of consideration by the turning over of a new leaf, but scarcely had he opened Chilcote's letters, scarcely had he taken a cursory glance at the morning's newspaper than it was borne in upon him that not only a new leaf, but a whole sheaf of new leaves, had been turned in his prospects by a hand infinitely more powerful and arbitrary than his own. He realized within the space of a few moments that the leisure Eve might have claimed, the leisure he might have been tempted to devote to her, was no longer his to dispose of, being already demanded of him from a quarter that allowed of no refusal.

For the first rumbling of the political earthquake that was to shake the country made itself audible beyond denial on that morning of March 27 when the news spread through England that, in the face of the disorganized state of the Persian army and the shah's consequent inability to suppress the open insurrection of the border tribes in the northwestern districts of Meshed, Russia, with a great show of magnanimity, had come to the rescue by dispatching a large armed force from her military station at Meru across the Persian frontier to the coast of the disturbance.

To many hundreds of Englishmen who read their papers on that morning this announcement conveyed but little. That there is such a country as Persia we all know, that English interests predominate in the south and Russian interests in the north we have all superficially understood from childhood, but in this knowledge, coupled with the fact that Persia is comfortably far away, we are apt to rest content. It is only to the eyes that see through long distance glasses, the minds that regard the present as nothing more or less than an inevitable link joining the future to the past, that this distant, debatable land stands out in its true political significance.

To the average reader of news the statement of Russia's move seemed scarcely more important than had the first report of the border risings in January, but to the men who had watched the growth of the disturbance it came charged with portentous meanings. Through the entire ranks of opposition, from Fraide himself downward, it caused a thrill of expectation—that peculiar prophetic sensation that every politician has experienced at some moment of his career.

In no member of his party did this feeling strike deeper root than in Loder. Trained with a lifelong interest in the eastern question, specially equipped by personal knowledge to hold and proclaim an opinion upon Persian affairs, he read the signs and portents with instinctive insight. Seated at Chilcote's table, surrounded by Chilcote's letters and papers, he forgot the breakfast that was slowly growing cold, forgot the interests and dangers, personal or pleasurable, of the night before, while his mental eyes persistently conjured up the map of Persia, travelling with steady deliberation from Merv to Meshed, from Meshed to Herat, from Herat to the empire of India! For it was not the fact that the Russians had risen against the shah that occupied the thinking mind, nor was it the fact that Russian and not Persian troops were destined to subdue them, but the deeply important consideration that an armed Russian force had crossed the frontier and was encamped within twenty miles of Meshed—Meshed, upon which covetous Russian eyes have rested ever since the days of Peter the Great.

So Loder's thoughts ran as he read and reread the news from the varying political standpoints, and so they continued to run when, some hours later, an urgent telephone message from the St. George's Gazette asked him to call at Lankester's office.

(To be continued.)

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23 THE PROSPECT

THE OFFICER'S EXPENSES.

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The average citizen knows little what the cost—or rather the privilege—of being an officer in the militia means. He is not presented with his uniform, sword, binoculars, revolver, and what not. He must go to his bank and write out a big check for it all, or, failing that, borrow from some one and lose that "some one" as a friend.

The big item is not what he wears on his back; it is what the privilege costs him. A citizen when he takes out a commission for the first time merely goes to his tailor and orders his equipment. If he enlists in war times the cost of that is comparatively small, for he needs only a service uniform and equipment. Usually, however, he purchases two uniforms, for khaki does not wear for a year.

But in peace times he must buy a service uniform, a dress, and a mess uniform with the thousand and four requisites. To-day were a citizen to place his application for a commission as lieutenant in one of the Toronto regiments he would be asked to purchase only a service uniform and service equipment, and this would be about what it would cost him: Jacket, \$21; breeches, \$18; great coat, \$30; hat, \$3.50; Sam Browne belt, \$7; leggings, \$6; boots, \$8.50; wrist watch, \$12; shirts, \$8; sword, \$25; revolver, \$25; binoculars, \$40. Total, \$202.

Of course, the officer's grannie, mother, foil and all his female acquaintances furiously knit socks, mufflers, and other woollen garments, all of which, if they were sold in a store, would net the officer enough to pay for his outfit. The officer must also have gloves, a cane, a waterproof cover for his hat, khaki handkerchiefs, etc., all of which are not included in that list. Then he must buy books of all colors, shapes and sizes, and when his military library is complete that has cost him about \$15. Incidentals will thus raise the cost of what he carries on his back to about \$225.

Now comes the privilege! First of all there is the regimental fund. The rock bottom price to lieutenants for that is \$50. For captains, majors, and the higher-up officers, it costs more in accordance with rank. It is the officer's mess, for which the fee might well be anything, and which is a constant drain on his financial resources. Then he must contribute his money to the Sergeants' Mess. There are dinners to officers so lucky as to have been gazetted with overseas forces, dinners to the men going away, all manner of dinners, concerts, and band concerts among the men, whom the officers must patronize to remain in their good graces. Such are a few of the "privileges," although the word is rather poorly used, or abused if you like. They are "evident" privileges. Beyond these "evident" ones, there are hazy, misty, clouded privileges innumerable, that might take one all day to put down on paper. Those are left to the reader's imagination. Thus the privilege item runs well up into \$200 a year. Total to the present \$425.

War costs more in peace times than in war times—at least so far as most officers are concerned, for as yet no mention has been made in this article of mess and dress uniforms. Although these uniforms must be cut on regulations, well-nigh any price can be paid for them. Leaving the reader to do the subtraction, it costs an officer, all fringes clipped off, just about \$600 to wear his stars or crowns with good grace.

Comforts Reaching the Men.
In a letter received from J. G. Colmer, secretary of the Canadian War Contingent Association, in England, he tells of the work which is being done for Canadians at the front. "We are in communication," he says, "with all the different units and sending the consignments of comforts to them each week, as requisitioned, and often when they are not requisitioned, as we have a very good idea of the men's wants. Socks and other woollen comforts have been forwarded, and towels and handkerchiefs, tobacco, pipes and cigarettes, matches, soap and candies have been arranged for and are on the way. Shipments will be continued at frequent intervals as far as our resources will allow. We are also seeing what can be done for the recreation of the men in conjunction with the Y. M. C. A., when they are not in the trenches or on active work. Papers and magazines are also being sent to them, and any requisitions we receive from the front will, you may be sure, receive special attention."

Canadians Offer Homes.
The Minister of Militia has received offers from several wealthy Canadians of the use of their summer homes as convalescing hospitals for wounded Canadians invalided home from the front. They include Sir William Mackenzie's home on the Victoria County Lakes, Sir Rodolphe Forget's at Ste. Irene, Que., and D. Lorne McGibbon's at St. Agathe, Que. The Militia Department has appointed a committee to act in conjunction with the Red Cross in looking after the invalids. It is made up of Lieut.-Col. Maunsell, Lieut.-Col. Hallack and Lieut.-Col. Jacques of the headquarters staff.

Increased Production.
Nature has been aiding one of our subscribers this spring in complying with the request of the patriotism and production campaign. Mr. Joel Grimshaw's flock of sheep have evidently caught the spirit, as two of his ewes gave birth to three lambs each and all are living and smart. It is hard to beat that for increased production. — Mount Forest Representative.

Ontario's Indians.
Ontario has an Indian population of 23,044.
Recruiting sergeants enrolled soldiers on Toronto's streets on Saturday.

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