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The MASQUERADER

By Katherine Cecil Thurston,
Author of "The Circle," Etc.
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CHAPTER XXV.

HAVING taken a definite step in any direction, it was not in Loder's nature to wish it retraced. His face was set, but with determination, when he closed the outer door of his own rooms and passed quietly down the stairs and out into the silent court. The thought of Chilcote, his pitiable condition, his sordid environments, were things that required a firm will to drive into the background of the imagination, but a whole inferno of such visions would not have daunted Loder on that morning as, unobserved by any eyes, he left the little courtyard with its grass, its trees, its pavement—all so distastefully familiar—and passed down the Strand toward life and action.

As he walked his steps increased in speed and vigor. Now, for the first time, he fully appreciated the great mental strain that he had undergone in the past ten days—the unnatural tension; the suppressed but perpetual sense of impending recall; the consequence of high pressure at which work and even existence had been carried on. And as he hurried forward the natural reaction to this state of things came upon him in a flood of security and confidence—a strong realization of the temporary respite and freedom for which his price would have seemed too high. The moment for which he had unconsciously lived ever since Chilcote's first memorable proposition was within reach at last, safeguarded by his own action.

The walk from Clifford's inn to Grosvenor square was long enough to dispel any excitement that might have risen in Loder's mind. He had unconsciously lived ever since Chilcote's first memorable proposition was within reach at last, safeguarded by his own action.

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It was on this day, at the reassembling of parliament, that Fraide's great blow was to be struck. In the ten days since the affair of the caravans had been reported from Persia public feeling had run high, and it was upon the pivot of this incident that Loder's attack was to turn, for, as Lakley was fond of remarking, "in the scales of public opinion one dead Englishman has more weight than the whole eastern question." It had been arranged that, following the customary procedure, Loder was to rise after questions at the morning sitting and ask leave to move the adjournment of the house on a definite matter of urgent public importance, upon which—leave having been granted by the rising of forty members in his support—the way was to lie open for his definite attack at the evening sitting. And it was with a mind attuned to this plan of action that he retired to the study immediately he had breakfasted and settled to a final revision of his speech before an early party conference should compel him to leave the house. But here again circumstances were destined to change his programme. Scarcely had he sorted his notes and drawn his chair to Chilcote's desk than Bewick entered the room with the same air of important haste that he had shown on a previous occasion.

"A letter from Mr. Fraide, sir. But there's no answer," he said, with unusual brevity.

Loder waited till he had left the room; then he tore the letter open. He read:

"My Dear Chilcote—Lakley is the recipient of special and very vital news from Moscow—unofficial, but none the less alarming. Acts of Russian aggression toward British traders are reported to be rapidly increasing, and it is stated that the authority of the consulate is treated with contempt. Pending a possible confirmation of this, I would suggest that you keep an open mind on the subject of tonight's speech. By adopting an anticipatory—even an unprepared—attitude you may find your own position strengthened. I shall put my opinion before you more explicitly when we meet. Yours faithfully,

HERBERT FRAIDE.

The letter, handed by Fraide's usual messenger, had a certain impression on its recipient. The thought that his speech might not only express opinions already tacitly held, but voice a situation of intense and national importance, struck him with full force. For many minutes after he had grasped the meaning of Fraide's message he sat neglectful of his notes, his elbows resting on the desk, his face between his hands, stirred by the suggestion that here might lie a greater opportunity than any he had anticipated. Still moved by this new suggestion, he attended the party conference that

Fraide had convened and afterward lunched with and accompanied his leader to the house. They spoke very little as they drove to Westminster, for each was engrossed by his own thoughts. Only once did Fraide allude to the incident that was paramount in both their minds. Then, turning to Loder with a look of encouragement, he laid his fingers for an instant on his arm.

"Chilcote," he had said, "when the time comes, remember you have all my confidence."

Looking back upon that day, Loder often wondered at the calmness with which he bore the uncertainty. To sit apparently unmoved and wait without emotion for news that might change the whole tenor of one's action would have tried the stolidism of the most experienced; to the novice it was well nigh unendurable. And it was under these conditions and fighting against these odds that he sat through the long afternoon in Chilcote's place, obeying the dictates of his chief. But if the day was fraught with difficulties for him it was fraught with dullness and disappointment for others, for the unrecurrent of interest that had stirred at the Easter adjournment and risen with added force on this first day of the new session was gradually but surely threatened with extinction as hour after hour passed bringing no suggestion of the battle that had on every side been tacitly expected. Slowly and unmistakably speculation and dissatisfaction crept into the atmosphere of the house as moment succeeded moment and the opposition made no sign. Was Fraide striking the attack or was he playing a waiting game? Again and again the question arose, filling the air with a passing flicker of interest, but each time it sprang up only to die down again as the ordinary business of the day dragged itself out.

Gradually, as the afternoon wore on, daylight began to fade. Loder, sitting rigidly in Chilcote's place, watched with suppressed inquiry the faces of the men who entered through the constantly swinging doors, but not one face, so eagerly scanned, carried the message for which he waited. Monotonously and mechanically the time passed. The government, adopting a neutral attitude, carefully skirted all dangerous subjects, while the opposition, acting under Fraide's suggestion, assisted rather than hindered the programme of postponement. For the moment the eagerly anticipated reassembling of parliament seemed far off and it was with a universal movement of weariness and relief that at last the house rose to dine.

But there are no possibilities so elastic as those of politics. At half past 7 the house rose in a spirit of boredom and disappointment, and at 8 o'clock the lobbies, the dining room, the entire space of the west building, was stirred into activity by the arrival of a single telegraphic message.

The new development for which Fraide had waited came indeed, but it came with a force he had little anticipated. With a thrill of awe and consternation he read and re-read the astounding news that, while personally exercising his authority on behalf of British traders, Sir William Breece-Field, consul general at Meshed, had been fired at by a Russian officer and instantly killed.

The interval immediately following the receipt of this news was too confused for detailed remembrance. Two ideas made themselves slowly felt—a deep horror that such an event could obtrude itself upon our high civilization and a strong personal dismay that so honored, distinguished and esteemed a representative as Sir William Breece-Field could have been allowed to meet death in so terrific a manner.

It was in the consciousness of this feeling, the consciousness that in his own person he might voice not only the feelings of his party, but those of the whole country, that Loder rose an hour later to make his long delayed attack.

He stood silent for a moment, as he had done on an earlier occasion, but this time his motive was different. Roused beyond any feeling of self-consciousness, he waited as by right for the full attention of the house; then quietly, but with self possessed firmness, he moved the motion for adjournment.

(To be continued.)

GRAND TRUNK APPRENTICE

In Royal Flying Corps. Among the twelve hundred Grand Trunk men who have enlisted for overseas service are several apprentices from the railway department of the railway. These young men are variously employed, many of them in the firing line with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, while others have turned their technical skill to advantage in the other branches of the services. Among those who enlisted from the Grand Trunk shops at Battle Creek, Mich., on the outbreak of the war was an English apprentice, A. J. Locke, and the Master Mechanic, Battle Creek, has just received the following letter from the young man's mother, who resides at Godalming, Surrey.

"I am writing to thank you very much for the gift of money sent through you to my son, A. J. Locke, and to thank you also for your kindness and interest in him while he was employed in the G.T.R. shops. I can assure you that both my husband and myself will ever feel grateful to you for the welcome you extended to him amongst you, and for the very thorough tuition which he must have had while with you, though for a short time (these unusual circumstances interrupting his apprenticeship) which has enabled him to go out and do his duty for King and country. He is working as a fitter (1st class air mechanic) in the airship factories of the Royal Flying Corps, somewhere in France, and I am glad to tell you that he is keeping well, working very hard, long hours too, cheerfully, loyally doing his share amidst many dangers, to keep these vile bar-

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barians away from our homes, and it is just what I should have him do. He is my one boy and I wish I had others—who could help in this awful struggle—for such it is and will be until we finally crush the monsters forever, which, by God's help, we shall do, at a terrific cost, we know, and great sacrifices."

AMERICAN RAILWAY SYSTEM.
When the steel passenger car was introduced into American railway systems, the immediate object was to diminish loss of life in collisions. The replacement of equipment will have cost the railways approximately \$60,000,000, and incidentally has considerably increased the cost of operation, as heavier locomotives are required to haul the trains. The President of the Chicago and Great Western Railway says:

These heavier locomotives, with heavy steel equipment behind them, running at high speed, in case of accident become more destructive than any of the trains in the days of the wooden car; in fact, we have records of the complete destruction of steel sleeping cars in rear-end collisions, and it will be impossible to build a steel car that would resist the shock of a rear-end collision from a train running fifty or sixty miles an hour.

The substitution of steel for wooden cars has also dealt a serious blow to the lumber industries of the Pacific Northwest and has increased the danger of forest fires. Car material provides a market for the common grades of lumber and the elimination of this market has meant a large proportion of waste left in the woods. Waste left in the woods means increased forest fires hazard, and greater difficulty in clearing land for agricultural development, so that in the opinion of the Pacific Coast lumberman the cost to Uncle Sam has been much more than \$60,000,000—indeed, it would be more like a billion dollars—all of which has ultimately to be paid by the public.

To the Public

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County of Brant

FAIRCHILD'S AND MANWARING CREEK BRIDGES, GOVERNOR'S ROAD.

SEALED TENDERS, clearly endorsed on the outside "Tender for Reinforced Concrete Abutments, Fairchild's Creek and Manwaring Creek Bridges" will be received by the County of Brant up to 12 noon on Wednesday, 30th of June, 1915.

The bridges are each of 60 feet clear waterway, 16 feet roadway, and are situated within 3/4 mile of each other, 3 1/2 miles south-west of Harrisburg Junction.

The abutments contain 152 cubic yards and 170 cubic yards of concrete respectively.

Plans and specifications may be seen at the office of the County Engineer, Jackson & Co., Temple Building, Brantford, from whom tender forms may be obtained.

Tenders must be addressed to the County Clerk, County Building, Brantford.

Township of Brantford

MORDE AND WILLIAMS BRIDGES OVER JONES CREEK, FIRST CONN.

SEALED TENDERS, clearly endorsed on the outside "Tender for Morde and Williams Bridges" will be received by the Township of Brantford up to noon on Saturday, 19th June, 1915.

The bridges are both of 12 feet span and 14 feet roadway, and are situated on the side roads between Lots 42 and 43 and 36 and 37 respectively. They contain 112 and 60 cubic yards of reinforced concrete respectively.

Plans and specifications may be seen at the office of the Township Engineer, Jackson & Company, Temple Building, Brantford, from whom tender forms may be obtained.

Tenders must be addressed to the Township Clerk, County Building, Brantford.

ALAN MAIR JACKSON, Township Engineer.

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Tommy Atkins' Smile.....	10c
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Chop Suey.....	10c
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