

WHAT HAPPENED TO HOAG

A Serial Story Told in as Many Pictures and as Few Words as Possible

PREVIOUS instalments show that Martin Hoag, office manager of Markhams, Ltd., has begun to get a glimpse of the life that for years he has been merely dreaming about. In getting away from the commonplace, so-called realities of routine, he found that his books, his shadow, his drunken fellow-man, the midnight woman with the baby, and the moving picture, all pulled him in the direction of what really—Is. The other women in the case—one of them sacrificed to the system, the other made by it, are both symbols of the other life that men don't have to die in order to realize. One of

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Continued from
Last Week

them reveals to him the power of sex; the other the power of sacrifice. In last week's instalment of pictures illustrated by little chapters, Hoag had the choice of the system that would make him comfortable, or the shadow that would make him really live. In the chapters following he sees Henry Markham beat down all opposition, including himself. And the need arises for a new personal force—a power greater, if possible, than the physical organization of Markhams, Ltd.; more mysterious than the mystery which enables Markham to organize the forces of society, industry and public opinion.

XXIII.

The Sword and the Anvil

HENRY MARKHAM knew almost as much about opera as about iron. Opera cost him thousands of dollars a year. He believed that every large-sized Canadian city should have opera. And he paid more of the deficit than all other guarantors combined.

Sitting in the box with Miss Munro before the curtain began to go up on Siegfried, Markham told her why he liked opera, and the kinds he liked best.

"Not so much the French, no. Too much love. And the Italian, too much intrigue and sentiment. I think that for heroic opera we must hand it to those Germans."

"To Wagner, of course?"

He regarded her pityingly.

"Who else is there?" he asked. "Who else has ever made the stage feel as big as creation, and the people on it like—"

"Shakespeare," she interrupted.

"Poh! Without music. You do not understand. It takes the universal art of music to magnify men to the size we get them on the Wagner stage. Super-men!"

"Oh, I thought you believed in them. Yes. I don't blame you."

And the curtain went up. The house was packed. The stage was in a twilight; one of those cave scenes—all very puzzling to Helen, who frankly preferred the lyric operas and would have yawned several times in that first act of Siegfried but that she was afraid of Markham, who somehow seemed to know every detail of the thing. Some of his mutterings were quite unintelligible, but she knew they expressed his sensations. And the thing, of course, suited him; all about iron and a magic man and a great sword and a dragon.

Some climax was to come. She let him go. He was already in some next world. Evidently he was a perfect Wagnerite and he knew this

thing; knew what was coming; kept telling her broken bits of it which she could not understand.

"Wait," he said, once, in a whisper, during an outburst from the orchestra. "Wait till Siegfried smashes the anvil—"

And from that on he lost altogether any sense of the woman beside him, who to anybody near the box was infinitely more interesting than most of the people on stage. Helen Munro was conscious that she was charming. She knew this big iron-master was conscious of it, too, and that he would not have enjoyed even this music drama of iron and the sword and the superman half so much if she had not been present. It was still a new world to her; a world of mystery and of magic which cost Henry Markham much money to help keep up for a few weeks each year in what might have been otherwise a musically dull Canadian city. She let the man overpower her into liking this dull mystic drama; let him pull her into its atmosphere which he had so often imbibed in New York; consented to become so far as he was concerned just part of the drama itself until the moment when Siegfried, at a scream and a crash from the orchestra broke to pieces the anvil as he struck it with the great sword—

And at that moment Markham rose, leaned over the box and shouted in exact pitch with one of the trombones. What he said she knew not; something between Hoch! and Bravo; and a thousand people looked his way, at her—even Siegfried almost seemed to look at the box and there was almost a pause in the music, till Mr. Markham settled down again and smiled at her, such a smile!

He said to her, going home, afterwards:

"I always get excited over Siegfried, because I suppose it is an iron-master's drama. Eh?"

XXIV.

A Final Offer

NEXT day the strike. Not a pound of coal burned at Markhams after the boilers were let down. Duke's Acre a holiday. At the Labor Hall crowds. In Markham's office, however, not a trace of excitement. Helen had never seen Markham so cool. He hummed a Siegfried aria between smokes, and only lost his poise when he read the Clarion; then he cursed. When he buzzed for Mr. Hoag, however, he was smiling.

"You—know what's up, Mr. Hoag. You expect me to ask your advice. Instead, I ask your help. This strike—is psychologic. It must be so handled. The men have no grievances. They have been influenced. Well—a long, grumpy smoke—we shall defeat them. I have seen the managers. They understand. Now I have sent for you because your understanding is different from theirs. It goes deeper. It can be more useful. I can trust you. Eh?"

Through all the camouflage Markham made it quite clear that he intended to break the strike. None of the newspapers except the Clarion was encouraging it. Public opinion was largely against the strikers. He must justify that by defeating the men.

"And I have never been beaten, Mr. Hoag."

He leaned over the great desk.

"And I never will live to see myself beaten."



The faces of the men as he turned were a frizzle of unreality.

Those men must be given to understand that they may go back, but they are to refuse. All depends upon the statement of the case; on the way it is put. So I leave that to you, to see the men's committee. You will not refuse because you are needed, and you are a man who does his duty. A word to the wise—"

Markham rose and glared at the iron master pictures on the wall. He stalked across the room. Hoag rose.

They faced each other. What masks they wore neither of them knew.

"I tell you one thing only, Mr. Hoag," came the thick, mysterious voice, "that within four weeks I intend to have the works at full capacity. More I can't say yet. You must pass that on to the committee in a way that will arouse their most violent opposition."

He swung open the door; politely bowed Mr. Hoag out.

XXV.

A Message that Went Wrong

HOAG let himself subject to the suggestion in full. He went behind the stage with the unexpressed Markham. Perhaps he understood just what was meant. When he went before the committee at Labor Hall he was met with cold, black looks. None of these five men were in any mood to capitulate. Some of them knew Hoag from the days of the elder Markham, when he was book-keeper at the little foundry. They trusted him, but not because of Henry Markham.

Whatever there may be in crowd psychology, so much talked about, Hoag had only begun to study it. He observed first the tremendous impression Markham had made upon him. Hours after leaving the man he could repeat the exact tones, gestures, looks and all the evident face-maskings of the man. In so doing Hoag was an actor by suggestion; common enough—but he had it high in the gauge. And it was his only hope. He had no personal desire to go before



He leaned over the box and shouted in exact pitch with the trombone.