



CAPTAIN DREAMS AGAIN.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES KING.

In the midst of the hot weather that made Chicago intolerable in mid-September of '97, Captain Dreams was induced to go into town on a certain evening to see a certain play then on the boards at a certain theater. Mrs. Dreams and the olive branches were away—summering in cooler climes and awaiting the Captain's announcement that bearable weather had returned before they followed suit. The Captain rarely went anywhere outside the post without previous consultation with his better half, who was as keenly alive to his best interests as he was apparently dead to them. Mrs. Dreams was what Fort Sheridan called a wide-awake woman, and she had to be, for with all his unquestioned erudition in his profession and his charming qualities of heart and mind, her liege lord was a prey to that class of mental ma'ady known as absent-mindedness, and in its acutest form. His exploits when under the influence of his own especial weakness would fill a book. His experiences following upon a certain meeting of the Loyal Legion several months previous had led to his resolution not to trust himself in town again without a guardian—of some kind—and a more recent episode, culminating in his incarceration at Waukegan for having driven off with the horse and buggy of an implacable farmer, leaving his own rig standing for hours in front of the drug store, had led to his promising Mrs. Dreams never again to set foot in a vehicle until assured by competent testimony that no trespass was possible. Yet both these precautionary measures were turned to naught, and all because his brother officers persuaded him there was at least one character in the play he must really see and study, and a very pretty niece had induced him to include herself and husband in his order for seats. "They can be my guardians," said Dreams. And then, as the Webbs lived far out in the suburbs, it was proposed they should dine together at the Waterloo at six, and go from there to the play.

The night was hot. For nearly a week the mercury had stood at 95. Chicago sweltered and swore, and the managers of the theaters, gazing upon their empty rows, emulated and anathematized Chicago, yet Dreams, after a refreshing bath, came down from his room in evening dress, and looking cool and unperturbed. The clerk at the desk affably congratulated him on being able "to take it so easily," and handed him a telegram: "Missed train. With you sharp at seven. Have dinner ready." So Dreams confabbed with the head waiter, who knew the Webb's desires in the way of little dinners. That was all readily arranged. And then, lest there should be delay or discomfort in walking through the sultry streets or crowding into cable cars, Dreams befought him of still another precaution.

"Better have a nice carriage for me here sharp at eight," said he to the clerk.

"All right, Captain," answered that

magnate, giving his gong bell a jab. The porter came. "Order a nice carriage for Captain de Remer sharp at eight," were the porter's instructions, and then the Captain possessed his soul in peace and quiet, and, to fill in the time until the arrival of his friends, sat him down and wrote to his beloved better half:

"With Kate and her husband for guardians, and one of Lane's best carriages to convey us, there is no likelihood of my getting into trouble to-night, so you may feel safe for once."

That letter reached Mrs. de Remer less than thirty-six hours thereafter at Mackinac, and, so far from conveying reassurance, served only to augment the anxiety occasioned by the receipt of a telegram three hours previously saying: "Newspaper accounts absurd. Matter will be readily adjusted. Return to-night."

"Newspaper accounts of what?" exclaimed that admirable but sorely tried helpmate. "For pity's sake, what has that blessed old blind man done now? Twice within six months he has been in the hands of the police, once for walking off with another man's overcoat, once for driving off with another man's buggy. Now what can it be?" she demanded of a pretty but mischievous sister.

"Run off with another man's wife, perhaps," was the demure damsel's demure suggestion. Whereat Mrs. de Remer whirled upon her.

"Matilda! Never dare hint such a thing to me—to anyone—if you value my love in the least!"

All the same Mrs. de Remer was down at the dock when the mail came in, and the newsboy could not too quickly supply her eager demand for a copy of every Chicago paper he had—"Record," "Chronicle," "Times-Herald," "Inter-Ocean," even the "Tribune," which had long since lost caste and subscribers at Sheridan, and with these she rushed to her room and spent a frantic half-hour of search, racing through column after column with impetuous haste, looking, despite herself, for news that her liege lord had indeed run off with another man's wife, and finding absolutely nothing. Then she wired:

"Captain de Remer, Fort Sheridan, Ill. What has happened? Where are you? Of course I return to-night."

"HORATIA."

She could hardly wait for the answer, yet lost no time in packing and preparations. The pretty sister was deputed to buy the tickets and make the necessary engagement of berths, etc. The magnificent "Duluth" would be down from the Sault Sainte Marie at sunset, and on the morrow they would be at home.

Meantime Captain Dreams was having his hours of perturbation in Chicago, wondering the while what Horatia would say when she heard what had happened, and all the while being blissfully ignorant of what she had said.

For this is what had happened. "Mischievous Mattie," his demure

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