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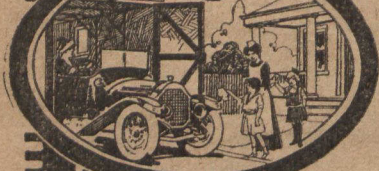
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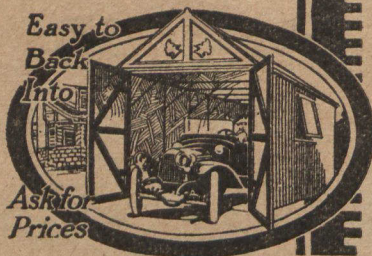
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his business affairs, must she not therefore have shared the cruel code which had terrorized Eaton for the last four years and kept him an exile in Asia and which, at any hour yet, threatened to take his life? A grim set came to Eaton's lips; his mind went again to his own affairs.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### The Man From the Train.

IN the supposition that he was to have less liberty, Eaton proved correct. Harriet Santoine, to whose impulses had been due his first privileges, showed towards him a more constrained attitude the following morning. She did not suggest hostility, as Avery constantly did; nor, indeed, was there any evidence of retrogression in her attitude towards him; she seemed merely to be maintaining the same position; and since this seemed difficult if they were often together, she avoided him. Eaton found his life in the house after that first day more strictly ordered into a routine which he was obliged to keep. He understood that Santoine, steadily improving but not yet able to leave his bed, had taken up his work again, propped up by pillows; one of the nurses had been dismissed; the other was only upon day duty. But Eaton did not see Santoine at all; and though he learned that Miss Davis or another stenographer, whose name was West, came daily to the house, he never was in a position again to encounter any outsider either coming or going. Besides the servants of the house, he met Blatchford, with whom Eaton usually breakfasted; he also lunched with Blatchford, and Harriet sometimes—sometimes with Avery; he dined with Blatchford and Avery or with all three.

At other times, except that he was confined to the house or to a small space of the grounds about it and was kept under constant surveillance, he was left largely to his own devices; and these at least sufficed to let him examine morning and night, the vase in which he was to find the signal that was to be left for him; these permitted examination of window locks in other rooms, if not in Santoine's study; these permitted the examination of many other items also, and let him follow at least the outline of the method of Santoine's work.

There was no longer room for Eaton to doubt that Harriet had the confidence of her father to almost a complete extent. Now that Santoine was ill, she worked with him daily for hours; and Eaton learned that she did the same when he was well. But Avery worked with the blind man too; he, too, was certainly in a confidential capacity. Was it not probable then that Avery, and not Harriet, was entrusted with the secrets of dangerous and new matters; or was it possible that this girl, worshipping her father as she did, could know and be sure that, because her father approved these matters, they were right?

A hundred times a day, as Eaton saw or spoke with the girl or thought of her presence near by, this obsessed him. A score of times during their casual talk upon meeting at meals or elsewhere, he found himself turned towards some question which would aid him in determining what must be the fact; but each time he checked himself, until one morning—it was the fifth after his arrival at Santoine's house—Harriet was taking him for his walk in the garden before the house.

It was a bright, sunshiny morning and warm—a true spring day. As they paced back and forth in the sunshine—she bare-headed and he holding his cap in his hand—he looked back at the room in the wing where Santoine still lay; then Eaton looked to the daughter, clear-eyed, clear-skinned, smiling and joyous with the day. She had just told him, at his inquiry, that her father was very much stronger that morning, and her manner more than evidenced her pride in him.

"I have been intending to ask you, Miss Santoine," Eaton said to her suddenly then, "if your belief in the superiority of business over war—as we were discussing it ten days ago—hasn't suffered a shock since then?"

"You mean because of—Father?"

"Yes; you can hardly go back far enough in the history of war to find a time when the soldier's creed was not against killing—or trying to kill—a sleeping enemy."

She looked at him quickly and keenly. "I can't think of Father as being any one's enemy, though I know, of course, no man can do big things without making some people hate him. Even if what he does is wholly good, bad people hate him for it." She was silent for a few steps. "I like your saying what you did, Mr. Eaton."

"Why?"

"It implies your own creed would be against such a thing. But aren't we rather mixing things up? There is nothing to show yet that the attack on Father sprang out of business relations; and even if it did, it would have to be regarded as an—atrocious outside the rules of business, just as in war, atrocities occur which are outside the rules of war. Wait! I know what you are going to say; you are going to say the atrocities are a part of war even if they are outside its recognized rules."

"Yes; I was going to say that."

"And that atrocities due to business are a part of business, even if they are outside the rules."

"Yes; as business is at present conducted."

"But the rules are a part of the game, Mr. Eaton."

"Do you belong among the apologists for war, Miss Santoine?"

"I?"

"Yes; what you say is exactly what the apologists for war say, isn't it? They say that war, in spite of its open savagery and inevitable atrocities, is not a different sort of combat from the combat between men in time of peace. That is, the acts of war differ only in appearance or in degree from the acts of peace. Is that what you believe, Miss Santoine?"

"That men in times of peace perform acts upon each other which differ only in degree from the acts of war?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that, Mr. Eaton?"

HE hesitated. "Do you want me to answer that question from my own experience or from what I would like to believe life to be?"

"From your own experience, of course."

"Then I must answer that I believe the apologists to be right as to that fact."

He saw her clear eyes darken. "But you don't believe that argument itself, do you, Mr. Eaton?" she appealed. "It is only the old, old argument, 'Whatever is, is right.' You don't excuse those acts—those atrocities in time of peace? Or was I mistaken in thinking such things were against your creed? Life is part right, part wrong, isn't it?"

"I am not in a good position to judge, I'm afraid; for what I have seen of it has been all wrong—both business and life."

He had tried to speak lightly; but a sudden bitterness, a sharp hardness in his tone, seemed to assail her; it struck through her and brought her shoulders together in a shudder; but, instead of alienating her, she turned with a deeper impulse of feeling toward him.

"You—you do not want to tell more—to tell how it has been wrong; you don't want to tell that—" She hesitated, and then in an intimate way which surprised and frightened him, she added, "to me?"

After she had said it, she herself was surprised, and frightened; she looked away from him with face flushed, and he did not dare answer, and she did not speak again.

They had come to the end of the gardens where he was accustomed to turn and retrace his steps toward the house; but now she went on, and he went on with her. They were upon the wide pike which ran northward following, but back from, the shore of the lake. He saw that now, as a motor passed them on the road, she recalled that she was taking him past the previously appointed bounds; but in the intimacy of the moment, she could