

The Vicar's Nephew; or The Orphan's Vindication

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd).

"Then you'll stay?"
"Wait a minute!" She pushed him back, and her face grew suddenly hard. "If I am to stay with you, you must promise me never to ask who the man is, never to ask any questions at all."

"Molly, I shan't look a gift-horse in the mouth! If ever he takes you from me, I shall know him then; and if not—"

"That will never happen. He has forgotten me." And left you to bear it alone.

"Stop!" she cried with gleaming eyes. "I love him. You shall not say a word against him; it was my own choice. He wanted me, and I gave myself; I never bargained or asked that he should marry me. He has had his joy, and I pay the cost of it. Why not, if I'm content? It was a free gift."

She stopped and put her hand up to the bruised temple.

"Oh, this pain in my head! I'm half blind. . . . Listen, Jack; if I am a coward at the end, and turn against him when I'm not my real self, you're to remember always that I say will be a lie. I have nothing to complain of—nothing."

Suddenly her eyes filled with tears. "See what a brute I am! I come to you like a starving dog begging for shelter; and when you take me in I do nothing but make conditions."

"My treasure, you shall make all the conditions you like if you'll only stay with me."

"Then let me make one more; a fearful one. Promise that if I die, next May, and the child lives, you'll adopt it, kill it—anything you will; but save it from uncle somehow."

He kissed her forehead solemnly. "There was no need to ask that promise."

"It's one that you probably won't be called on to keep. There's not a shadow of a chance of it."

She broke off; then finished the sentence deliberately. "Not much hope of that. We're frightfully strong we Raymonds."

"And frightfully lonely too, sometimes. Keep alive if you can, Molly."

Her eyes were fixed upon him, wide and wistful.

"Are you so utterly alone? I thought—you had some friends. They will all talk at once on these foggy days. The poor things seem to get flurried, like the cart-horses, with slipping about in the mud. I came in splashed up to my hat."

Molly put her arm round his neck. They had been living together for nearly four years now. No one else would have seen from the line of his mouth that he was depressed as well as tired.

"Is it bad news?" she asked softly.

"No, nothing in particular. I am an idiot to get down in the mouth now, just when I've got a good appointment at last, and this big stroke of luck with the Medical Congress."

"Perhaps that's why. I never used to worry over weekly accounts in the days when we couldn't get enough to eat, as I do now with three pounds a week for housekeeping."

"You needn't worry, old girl; the last shilling's worth of debt will be cleared off next month. You see our

difficulties are all over now; even the private practice is beginning to flourish."

She kissed him, laughing.

"And that's why you get the blues? You and I are contemptible frauds, Jack; our courage is only good for hard times; it all fizzles out at our fingers' ends at the first bit of prosperity."

"You're right," he answered gravely. "I'm not worth my salt. Two years ago, with the child ill and not a sixpence coming in, I shouldn't have got fidgeted by a fog and a few little worries; I'm getting spoiled. It's your fault, Molly; if you coddle me this way I shall end by growing fat and sensitive and ill-tempered, like a rich old patient with nothing to do but imagine troubles."

"You'd better not, or I shall hand you over to Johnny to be suppressed. He'll find you plenty to do."

"Yes, and I've plenty to do as it is, and here I am fooling about and wasting time. It's no use the congress people inviting me to show sections if I haven't got any ready to show. They ought all to be in Edinburgh by the 15th."

"Wait just a minute. You haven't told me what the 'few little worries' are? Hospital patients?"

"You had a letter this morning?"

"Yes, I'm anxious about him. He's written a set of Polish dances for stringed instruments, and he says the music takes on shapes and colors and dances round his bed all night."

Molly was still looking out across her brother's head, with wide, grave eyes. He sighed, and added in his patient way:

"He doesn't say who the woman is this time, but I suppose there must be one; it seems to be the inevitable condition of his doing creative work. It's a bit difficult to understand how any one's affections can jump about that way."

There was a sudden little pause; then the girl said softly:

"Still, there is this; if a rainbow is not a permanent thing, it is at least a clean and beautiful one. An artist is a kind of glorious child; his instinct protects him from sordid contentments."

"That makes it all the worse," Jack broke in gloomily. "If he got into vulgar intrigues with society flirts, as ninety-nine per cent. of the successful musicians do—"

"He would never have written the 'Crocus Field' Symphony."

"No; that's true; his music would have got vulgar too. But at least no one would suffer. As it is—Molly, my heart aches for the women that have loved him. That little Austrian princess—the year that Johnny was born, you know; I had a long talk with her. The poor child honestly believed he would be faithful to her, and the worst of it is that he believed it himself. I've no doubt she's got over it now, and married as her father wished; but do you think she'll ever be the same creature again? He has smashed her youth in pieces, and gone off to another toy."

"Just as Johnny would do if you gave him a precious thing to play with. It is the privilege of babies and of gods and of all things defenseless and divine; they take our joys and break them, and we comfort ourselves with the broken pieces."

"How you have softened, Molly, since the child came! Sometimes you remind me of Mother."

"Yes, or Christ's mother. She seemed to me like the Catholic idea of the Madonna: everybody's mother."

"So long as I am Johnny's mother—"

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play here till your tea is ready. You mustn't shake the table, though; Jack's cutting sections."

Johnny wriggled out of her arms, and ran up to the table, his blue eyes inquisitive and shining.

"Uncle!" he said, "I want to see. Uncle!"

Jack put up his left hand suddenly, and bit it. The next instant he remembered that the gods have some mercy, and that his childhood was over.

"I want to see!" Johnny repeated imperiously.

"Don't worry Jack, darling," said the mother; "he's busy."

"He doesn't worry me; I like to have him."

He stooped down and took the child on his knee.

"What is it you want to see, old man? There's nothing much to look at to-day."

"Can't you make the animals wiggle about?"

"Animals?"

"Infusoria, he means," Molly put in. "You showed him a drop of water the other day."

"Oh, those! No, chick, I've no pond water to-day, and we don't let animals wiggle about in the water from our tap."

"Why?"

"For fear they should wiggle about in your inside and give you a bad of the house. There, you can get the high chair and sit beside me, only don't jerk my elbow. Oh, confound the screw!"

He was stooping with knitted brows to adjust the microscope. The king of the household looked on critically.

"You're twisting him wrong," he remarked in a severe voice.

"True for you, sonnie; and that little head in my light doesn't help me to twist it right."

grass. His theory seems to be attracting a good deal of attention. If he had turned to the woman he scared eyes would have silenced him; but he was looking at Mr. Raymond, and the grey face never twitched.

"Yes, he is a relative."

"Really? How small the world is, to be sure! I spent a week in the same boarding-house with Dr. Raymond last summer; I was taking a holiday on the south coast and he was there with a sister of his, a young widow, I think, with a little boy—a beautiful child!"

(To be continued.)

OUR DAILY BREAD.

The Composition of a Single Grain of Wheat

The average person's knowledge of bread is very limited. He knows that it is made of flour—or supposed to be—and that it is dear, like the other things. But there is much else of interest.

If a grain of wheat be cut into thin slices three parts can be seen—the inner germ from which the future plant would grow; the kernel, which Nature intended as food for the germ, and the bran, or protective covering, composed of hard, woody fibre impregnated with mineral salts. The germ represents 1½ per cent. of the grain, the kernel 85, and the covering 13½.

Each part contains, in varying quantities, protein, the "life" basis of food, but the kernel holds most, in the form of gluten, the sticky substance which alone makes the manufacture of bread from flour possible. There is practically no "fat" in wheat; the little there is in the germ. Wheat could be eaten whole by prolonged soaking, then boiling in milk, and adding sugar, thus making "frumenty."

But for breadmaking the wheat is milled or ground to flour, and to obtain white flour much of the valuable part of the wheat is sacrificed, the germ and the bran being both discarded, and much protein and mineral salts—indispensable for body building—lost. This first loss in grinding is followed by a further big loss in baking; three-quarters of the fats go, and much of the protein and carbohydrates, the "energy" basis in food.

An ordinary loaf is nearly half water, too, though you may find it hard to believe.

Wholemeal bread, or "brown bread," is supposed to contain the whole grain of wheat, kernel, germ, and bran. It requires greater mastication, and has the advantage of retaining much that is lost to white bread.

Finally, there is no other article of food which lends itself better to adulteration than bread, and nothing which is more adulterated. Potato, alum, "bleachers," and other things best not known, all form part of "our daily bread."

INDIGO PRICES SOAR.

Natural Product Displaces German Synthetic Material.

The absence of the usual supplies of German synthetic indigo from the leading markets of the world has led to an eager demand for the natural product, and record prices are being paid for the small quantities of this indispensable blue dye which comes from India. India is the principal producing country, but the expanding demand for indigo has led to a revival of the industry in China, where interesting developments are expected.

An estimate from the Punjab district states that the area under indigo represents over 14 per cent. of the total area planted in British India; but the condition of the standing crops is said to be below average, and the yield from all standing crops will probably be small.

SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES.

General Smuts Says Germans Back Holy War Proposal.

General Jan Christian Smuts, Minister of Defense in the Union of South Africa, announced at a public meeting that the entire force asked for the East African expedition had been recruited, and that the Imperial Government had been informed the Union was increasing its forces to provide for contingencies.

Explaining the decision of South Africa to send an expedition to East Africa, General Smuts said this action was taken because of danger arising from the arming of natives by the Germans and the preaching of a holy war against the Christians, to which he declared the Germans were lending their assistance.

Battlefield Curiosities.

The recent frequency of accidents caused by explosions due to careless handling of curiosities from battlefields, such as shells and hand grenades in various homes in Paris, has caused the Prefect of Police to issue a warning against the danger to possessors of such curios in endeavoring to learn whether they have been exploded. The Prefect announces that any resident may report possession of trophies of the sort described and they will be examined and unloaded in the municipal laboratories.

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Of Interest to Farmers

Bookkeeping for Farmers.

Farmers take too little interest in farm accounting. During the summer of 1915, four hundred farmers in Ontario were visited by a representative of the Commission of Conservation. Among this number one claimed to keep a systematic set of farm accounts. Several claimed to do bookkeeping, but the system was far from complete. Many farmers stated that they knew how their business was going without keeping books.

These men have only an estimate, and it is impossible to depend on estimates, or to consider any one phase of their business of farming independent of its relations to the rest of it.

In Tazewell, Co., Ill., a series of meetings was held in March, 1915, which resolved themselves into farm bookkeeping classes. The County Agent supplied each member of the classes with a booklet especially designed to fit the conditions of the county. The work is stripped of bookkeeping technicalities and made easy for all who are disposed to carry on the work. It is noteworthy that the classes for studying system in bookkeeping were attended largely by successful farmers, who were bent on making their business still larger and more successful.

This very important subject might well engage the attention of district representatives and college demonstrators when arranging their short course classes for the present winter.

Another way in which systematic farm accounting could be brought into more general practice would be to arrange the arithmetic lessons in the public school in such a way that the keeping of farm accounts would be an easy and simple matter to those who wished to undertake it. If the school work could be projected into the home and detailed records kept by the scholars of time, cost, and income, it would enlist the interest of parents and educate them in the subject, thus affecting the work on farms in the district.—F. C. N. in Conservation.

Print Butter Shrinkage.

The Cornell Experiment Station has been making some interesting investigations on the shrinkage of print butter and has issued the following summary as a result of the work:

1. The variation of pore space, which ranges from .5 of 1 per cent. to over 6 per cent. in freshly made butter, is important in the printing process.

2. Print butter gradually loses weight in storage.

3. The rate of loss depends principally on the temperature and humidity of the storage room.

4. If the temperature is kept down to 50 degrees F. and the humidity is kept above 90 per cent. at least a month, and perhaps much longer, will be required for the shrinkage to approximate the limit set by the New York law, provided the prints are packed in boxes.

5. If the temperature is 60 degrees F. or above, and the humidity is 85 per cent. or below, the shrinkage will approximate the limit set by law in a space of 10 days to two weeks, even if the prints are packed in boxes.

6. The degree of shrinkage is not inversely proportional to the weight of the wrapper used, as is generally supposed.

7. The degree of shrinkage decreases to a considerable extent when the prints are placed in cartons. The other two months of packing, however.

17,000 Free Meals a Day.

Some interesting figures on charity work in Vienna are given in a recent issue of the Neues Wiener Tageblatt. The Committee for the Feeding of Poor Children before the war served on an average 1,500 meals a day. Since that time the number of meals served daily has steadily increased, until in November the average number will prove to be upward of 17,000 a day. More than 4,000,000 free meals have been furnished in the first twelve months of the war.

GOOD DIGESTION.

When your digestion is faulty, weakness and pain are certain and disease is invited.

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Says Souls of His Slain Comrades Answered and Routed the Foe.

No incident of the war has taken so strong a hold on the French imagination as that of the soldier who, in the press of the fighting, when most of his comrades lay dead around him, called upon them as the Germans repeated their attack. "Up with you, ye dead men!" and with the help of their spirits, assisted by a few wounded, routed the foe.

The story is told in the Echo de Paris: "The Germans had swarmed into a French trench and broken down the resistance of the defenders, whose bodies covered the ground. Suddenly a man rose, and, seizing a sack of grenades, he shouted 'Debout les morts!' At this summons the wounded in the trench staggered to their feet and drove the enemy out."

The hero of the episode was Lieutenant Pericard, a man of 33, "whose hair is already white." He started the campaign as a sergeant, but was quickly promoted to the commissioned ranks. Pericard is a man of intense religious feeling. This is his own story, as repeated by the Echo's interviewer:

Seized with a Holy Madness.

"The trench was full of corpses, with blood everywhere. At first I walked delicately, uneasy. I alone with all these dead. Then, little by little, I grew bolder and ventured to look at them. They seemed to be watching me. From our trench behind my men were watching me with terror in their eyes, thinking 'he's sure to be killed.' It is true that the Boches were redoubling their efforts. Their grenades were pouring down and the stream of them was rapidly getting nearer. Was their sacrifice to be useless?"

"I was seized with a holy madness. Of what I did, of exactly what I said, I no longer remember. I know only that I cried out, 'Debout les morts!'"

"Was it madness? No, because the dead answered me. They said, 'We are following.'"

"And as I cried to them their souls joined my soul and made a glowing mass of it, a dream of fused metal. Nothing could astonish or stop me. I had the faith that moves mountains, the exaltation of the worker of miracles, who by his will causes the miracle. My voice, which was hoarse and worn out with shouting orders for two days and nights, came back to me clear and strong. I feared nothing. I felt I was master of destiny."

The Might of a Giant.

"One of the men of my section, wounded in the arm, kept on throwing grenades that were stained with his blood. As for me, I have the impression of having had an increased bodily size. I was a giant with superabundant, limitless energy, an extraordinary case of thought, which let me have my eyes in 10 places at once, to give orders to one, to dictate an order to another, to shoot with a rifle, and at the same time to avoid a threatening grenade. It was a prodigiously intense life, with extraordinary circumstances. Twice we ran out of grenades, and twice we found at our feet sacksful of them mixed with sandbags. All day we had gone over them without seeing them. But it was the dead who had placed them there."

"All that night I kept the religious emotion that had seized me when I called on the dead. I felt something comparable with what is felt after fervent communion."

MINISTERIAL SALARIES.

British Cabinet Considers Scheme to Reduce Them.

The London Daily Chronicle's parliamentary correspondent says: "Not content with preaching the urgent necessity for economy, the Government intends itself to set an example. The Cabinet is considering a scheme for an all-around reduction of ministerial salaries by one-third, to apply to ministers without as well as those within the cabinet. It is probable that the members of the House of Commons will also be invited to renounce one-third of their salaries."

"It is to be hoped that official pensions as well as salaries will be restricted. We have three ex-Lord Chancellors, each drawing a pension of £5,000 (£25,000) a year, viz., Lords Halsbury, Loreburn and Haldane. There is plenty of room for renunciation in the salaries of our six law lords, £6,000 (£30,000) and that of the High Court Judges, which are £5,000 (£25,000) a year with the exception of the Lord Chief Justice and the Master of the Rolls, who receive £8,000 (£40,000) and £6,000 (£30,000), respectively."

His Own Privilege.

Manager—What do you mean by talking like that? Are you the manager here, or am I?

Clerk—I know I'm not the manager. Manager—Very well, then. If you're not the manager, don't talk like an idiot.

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