

One is never enough of Ganong's. The delicious coatings, made from choice, selected beans, with their daintily flavored centres, put them in a class far above ordinary chocolates.



**Ganong's Chocolates**

**GB**

tones of a man and a woman's voice. The Arch-duke entered first, and close behind him—to Saunders' astonishment—the Red Virgin. Was it imagination, or did a third form, a colourless, soundless figure, slink like a snake behind the half-open door? In the tricky light Saunders, for all his keen eyesight and sharpened faculties, was not certain. And now, eager though he was to get the abominable business over, the Englishman bided his time. The Red Virgin's presence meant something, and he wished to learn what.

"This is the best habitation I have to offer you," said the Arch-duke, tossing his hat on to the rickety table, and divesting himself of his cloak. "Will it serve?"

"It is a palace compared to some I know," replied the Red Virgin.

"And a kiss is as good in a cottage as in a palace, eh?" he asked, with a brutal laugh.

She turned on him calmly.

"As good—or as vile," she retorted.

Cyril's face was red, and the glow was not merely the result of a quick tramp through icy air. His eyes were afire, and the flame that lit them was not wholesome.

"Good or vile," he said, "it makes little difference to a man of sense. Come, my girl, you have promised something I mean having. Time is precious these strenuous days."

HE advanced with outstretched arms towards the Red Virgin, who had separated herself from him by the width of the room.

Saunders felt that the moment had come for shooting. Nevertheless, something restrained him. It was not pity, for he never felt more justified in blotting out an evil life. It was the sight at that moment of the Red Virgin. Drawing herself up to the fullness of her great height, one hand on her breast, the other outstretched towards her companion so that the palm of her hand was turned to him in a gesture of calm prohibition, she seemed in that dingy, ill-lit chamber to be robed in dignity, as with the shining garment of a saint. Her face took on a clear-cut purity, her eyes a glow that was borrowed from some unfathomable well-spring of the soul. Even Cyril in the grip of his ugly desire stopped like a man bewildered and oppressed.

Then occurred what Saunders afterwards described as his great hallucination.

The Red Virgin was standing so that the lamp was immediately behind her head, so as to give the perfectly natural but beautiful illusion of a halo. And the flame of the lamp rising and falling more spasmodically than ever as the oil drew near its end, played weird tricks with perfectly stationary objects, so that they moved and danced before his eyes. And to his harassed and deluded senses it appeared that the Red Virgin towered to more than her natural height, as if some power had lifted her bodily a foot or more above the floor.

As a sensible man and the son of a linendraper, he knew that nothing of the kind had actually happened. He knew that the deluding light of the expiring lamp, the emotion of the moment, the nervous reaction after a prolonged period of distressful waiting, were making him see things otherwise than they were. Even the theory, subsequently propounded by a friend, that a woman of curiously strong psychic force might momentarily dominate the minds of onlookers so that they were obsessed by a delusion, he rejected as fantastic and impossible.

He rubbed his eyes and gazed hard, wondering when the trick played by his brain was going to yield to sanity and common sense.

Reason, however, failed to adjust the ridiculous impression, and he turned his glance to the Arch-duke Cyril. The man's face was a picture. His features twitched, his eyes seemed bursting from their sockets. An army of superstitious fears had besieged his spirit. Always it appeared that he was fighting against Fate. Never would success crown his desires. Even now the thing he madly craved was held from him by some nameless force. What he saw, or thought he saw, no man can tell, but without a

doubt, put it how you will, some spirit of innocency, some rare and wonderful gift emanating whence he knew not, protected his victim from violence as with a hedge of steel.

He fought against the influence with the delirious fury of a madman. He swore a horrible oath, and dashed the sweat from his forehead. With the effort of one struggling in the sucking horror of quicksands he impelled his semi-paralyzed limbs towards the mystic figure who alike allured and repelled him. In another moment he would have grasped his prey. Then Saunders moved. The idea of killing a man from behind cover disgusted him, and he stepped out from behind the curtain with his weapon levelled at the outlaw's head.

"Cyril of Wolfsnaden," he said sternly, "if you happen to know a prayer I should suggest your repeating it. Whatever you say, curse or prayer, will be your last speech on earth."

For a second Cyril's eyes blazed from his white face; for a second, then the gleam was dulled as a mirror that is breathed on. The man was face to face with his doom, and he knew it. He read death in the Englishman's face, in his voice, in his rocklike pose. Fate had overtaken him, as he had often felt it would. He was no coward, but the horror of the coming darkness gripped him by the throat, and he moistened his lips before he could make reply.

"For God's sake kill quickly," he said hoarsely. "It is cold work waiting for death."

"Commend your soul—" began Saunders, but the wretched man interrupted him with a cry.

"Kill," he said.

Then Saunders, feeling the horror of the situation overmastering him, hastened to make an end. He fired—and missed! Of course the light of the quivering flame was impossibly bad, but even so—he, Saunders, the infallible, the very embodiment of self-assurance had blundered. It was more a sense of shame than fear of reprisal that for the moment overcame him. Then before he had time to think or move he saw the Arch-duke flinging himself at him, mad joy in his blazing eyes, a great hunting knife in his right hand. Cyril struck hard, with all the strength of a powerful arm nerved with the hate and fear of a trapped beast. But the keen broad blade never drank the blood intended for it. With almost superhuman agility the Red Virgin cast herself in an act of supreme devotion between the deadly knife and the man she worshipped. The steel buried itself in her breast, and the stricken girl fell, and, whether by chance or in a final conscious effort, she fell into Saunders' arms. Her eyes opened and gazed into his face searchingly, but without the gift of sight. Then for a brief moment vision blessed her orbs, her lips muttered "My king," she smiled, and then lay still and lifeless on his breast. And at the very moment her strange spirit sped the lamp went out, leaving the room in total darkness. Suddenly a match was struck in the darkness, and automatically his weapon was raised to kill the man who struck it. By a miracle he restrained himself from firing, for the man who struck the match was Langli!

MEYER'S man-servant, holding the match in one hand and a knife in the other, was kindling a candle stuck in a broken bottle-neck on the crazy mantelsheff. And the deed that Saunders had once failed to do, and was determined to do at a second effort, was already done!

Langli, the shadow behind the door, had been watching the course of events from his cover, even as Saunders had from his. Crossing the room, unseen, unheard, unsuspected, but a fraction of a second too late to save the woman he loved, he had buried his knife between the shoulder-blades of his enemy. Cyril was dying, but not dead. Like a wounded snake he crawled and writhed along the floor. His palsied fingers encountered the Red Virgin's skirt, he pressed the hem to his bloody lips, made the sign of the cross on brow and breast, then with a gasp fell over on his side, dead. "Langli!" exclaimed Saunders.

The man's face was as white as his

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