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# "SALADA"

(GREEN)

## JAPAN TEA

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CHAPTER XX.—(Cont'd.)

"I could not stop Mark drinking," Cayley's letter went on, "but I kept him within certain bounds. Yes, I kept him outwardly decent; and perhaps now I was becoming like the cannibal who keeps his victim in good condition for his own ends. I used to gloat over Mark, thinking how utterly he was mine to ruin as I pleased, financially, morally, whatever way would give me most satisfaction. I had but to take my hand away from him and he sank. But again I was in no hurry.

"Then he killed himself. That futile little drunkard, eaten up with his own selfishness and vanity, offered his beastliness to the truest and purest woman on this earth. You have seen her, Mr. Gillingham, but you never knew Mark Ablett. Even if he had not been a drunkard, there was no chance for her of happiness with him.

"I had known him for many years, but never once had I seen him moved by any generous emotion. To have lived with that shriveled little soul would have been hell for her; and a thousand times worse hell when he began to drink.

"So he had to be killed. I was the only one left to protect her, for her mother was in league with Mark to bring about her ruin. I would have shot him openly for her sake, and with what gladness, but I had no mind to sacrifice myself needlessly. He was in my power; I could persuade him to almost anything by flattery; surely it would not be difficult to give his death the appearance of an accident.

"I need not take up your time by telling you of the many plans I made and rejected. For some days I inclined toward an unfortunate boating accident in the pond—Mark, a very indifferent swimmer, myself almost exhausted in a gallant attempt to hold him up.

"And then he himself gave me the idea, he and Miss Norris between them, and so put himself in my hands; without risk of discovery, I should have said, had you not discovered me.

"We were talking about ghosts. Mark had been even more vain, pompous and absurd than usual, and I could see that Miss Norris was irritated by it. After dinner she suggested dressing up as a ghost and frightening him. I thought it my duty to warn her that Mark took any joke against himself badly, but she was determined to do it. I gave way reluctantly. Reluctantly, also, I told her the secret of the passage.

"There is an underground passage from the library to the bowling green. You should exercise your ingenuity, Mr. Gillingham, in trying to discover

it. Mark came upon it by accident a year ago. It was a godsend to him; he could drink there in greater secrecy. But he had to tell me about it. He wanted an audience even for his vices.

"I told Miss Norris, then, because it was necessary for my plan that Mark should be thoroughly frightened. Without the passage she could never have got close enough to the bowling green to alarm him properly, but as I arranged it with her she made the most effective appearance, and Mark was in just the state of rage and vindictiveness which I required. Miss Norris, you understand, is a professional actress. I need not say that her I appeared to be animated by no other feeling than a boyish desire to bring off a good joke—a joke directed as much against the others as against Mark.

"He came to me that night, as I expected, still quivering with indignation. Miss Norris must never be asked to the house again; I was to make a special note of it; never again. It was outrageous. Had he not a reputation as a host to keep up, he would pack her off next morning.

"I comforted him, I smoothed down his ruffled feathers. She had behaved very badly, but he was quite right; he must try not to show how much he disapproved of her. And of course



"Is there a joke?" he asked coldly.

she would never come again—that was obvious. And then suddenly I began to laugh. He looked up at me indignantly.

"Is there a joke?" he said coldly. I laughed gently again.

"I was just thinking," I said, "that it would be rather amusing if you—well, had your revenge."

"My revenge. How do you mean?"

"Well, paid her back in her own coin."

"Do you mean to try and frighten her?"

"No, no; but dressed up and pulled her leg a bit. Made her look a fool in front of the others." I laughed to myself again. "Serve her jolly well right."

"He jumped up excitedly.

"By jove, Cay!" he cried. "If I could! How? You must think of a way."

"I don't know if Beverley has told you about Mark's acting. He was an amateur of all the arts, and vain of his little talents, but as an actor he seemed to himself most wonderful. Certainly he had some ability for the stage, so long as he had the stage to himself and was playing to an admiring audience. As a professional actor in a small part he would have been hopeless; as an amateur playing the leading part, he deserved all that the local papers had ever said about him.

"And so the idea of giving us a private performance, directed against a professional actress who had made fun of him, appealed equally to his vanity and his desire for retaliation. If he, Mark Ablett, by his wonderful acting could make Ruth Norris look a fool in front of the others, could take her in, and then join in the laugh at her afterward, he would indeed have had a worthy revenge!

"How, Cay, how?" he said eagerly.

"Well, I haven't really thought it out," I protested. "It was just an idea."

"He began to think it out for himself.

"I might pretend to be a manager, come down to see her—but I suppose she knows them all. What about an interviewer?"

"It's going to be difficult," I said thoughtfully. "You've got rather a characteristic face, you know. And your beard—"

"I'd shave it off," he snapped.

"My dear Mark!"



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"He looked away, and mumbled, 'I've been thinking of taking it off, anyhow. And besides, if I'm going to do the thing, I'm going to do it properly.'"

"Yes, you always were an artist," I said, looking at him admiringly.

"He purred. To be called an artist was what he longed for most. Now I knew that I had him.

"All the same," I went on, "even without your beard and mustache you might be recognizable. Unless, of course—I broke off.

"Unless what?"

"You pretend to be Robert." I began to laugh to myself again. "By jove," I said, "that's not a bad idea. Pretend to be Robert, the wastrel brother, and make yourself objectionable to Miss Norris. Borrow money from her, and that sort of thing."

"Robert," he said. "Yes. How shall we work it?"

"There was really a Robert, Mr. Gillingham, as I have no doubt you and the Inspector both discovered. And he was a wastrel and he went to Australia. But he never came to the Red House on Tuesday afternoon. He couldn't have, because he died unannounced three years ago. But there was nobody who knew this, save Mark and myself, for Mark was the only one of the family left, his sister having died last year. Though I doubt, anyhow, if she knew whether Robert was alive or dead. He was not talked about.

For the next two days Mark and I worked out our plans. You understand by now that our aims were not identical. Mark's endeavor was that his deception should last for, say, a couple of hours; mine that he should go to the grave with him. He had only to deceive Miss Norris and the other guests; I had to deceive the world.

"When he was dressed up as Robert, I was going to kill him. Robert would then be dead, Mark (of course) missing. What could anybody think but that Mark had killed Robert? But you see how important it was for Mark to enter fully into his latest (and last) impersonation. Half measures would be fatal.

"You will say that it was impossible to do the thing thoroughly enough. I answer again that you never knew Mark. He was being what he wished most to be—an artist. No Othello ever blacked himself all over with such enthusiasm as did Mark. His beard was going anyhow—possibly a chance remark of Miss Norbury's helped here. She did not like beards. But it was important for me that the dead man's hands should not be the hands of a mannequin. Five minutes playing upon the vanity of the artist settled his hands. He let the nails grow and then cut them raggedly. 'Miss Norris would notice your hands at once,' I had said. 'Besides, as an artist—'

"So with his underclothes. It was hardly necessary to warn him that his pants might show above the edge of his socks; as an artist he had already decided upon Robertson's pants. I bought them, and other things, in London for him. Even if I had not cut out all trace of the maker's name, he would have instinctively have done it. As an Australian and an artist, he could not have an East London address on his underclothes. Yes, we were doing the thing thoroughly, both of us; he as an artist, I as a—well, you may say murderer, if you like. I shall not mind now.

"Our plans were settled. I went to London on the Monday and wrote him a letter from Robert. (The artistic touch again.) I also bought a revolver. On the Tuesday morning he announced the arrival of Robert at the breakfast table. Robert was now alive—we had six witnesses to prove it; six witnesses who knew that he was coming that afternoon. Our private plan was that Robert should present himself at three o'clock, in readiness for the return of the golfing party shortly afterward.

"The maid would go to look for Mark, and having failed to find him, come back to the office to find me entertaining Robert in Mark's absence. I would explain that Mark must have gone out somewhere, and would myself introduce the wastrel brother to the tea-table. Mark's absence would not excite any comment, for it would be generally felt—indeed Robert would suggest it—that he had been afraid of meeting his brother. Then Robert would make himself amusingly offensive to the guests, particularly, of course, Miss Norris, until he thought that the joke had gone far enough.

"That was our private plan. Perhaps I should say that it was Mark's private plan. My own was different. (To be continued.)

### Stefansson Says Island Important

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Stefansson said he did not see the value of the island in its present barren condition, but added that it could be made most important as a base for airplane and airship activities, and as a station for meteorological observations.

"It is quite true that, at present, the island is barren except for an Austrian log house," Stefansson said, "but I believe it can be advantageously used as a meteorological station and also for an airplane and ship base."

The explorer emphasized that air routes were most valuable in Arctic regions in view of the slowness of dog sled transportation.

"In more temperate regions," the explorer said, "airships must compete with railways, automobiles and ships. On the other hand, in the Arctic, the airplane and airship compete only with the most primitive modes of transportation, like in Alaska the dog teams and sleds, since there are often no railways and ships.

"In mid-winter it takes nine days for a dogteam to go from Fort Yukon to Fairbanks and it costs \$150, but an airplane can go 100 miles an hour at a cost of only \$125."

### Inter-Empire Trade

Victoria Times (Lib.): This question of more inter-Empire trade is one for serious examination by competent authorities in the various Dominions and in Great Britain. We refuse to believe that, with adequate marketing facilities, reasonable shipping rates, and the removal of most of the existing artificial barriers to trade, our present purchases from Great Britain could not be vastly increased in a very short time and our imports from the United States proportionately decreased, which would mean, of course, that we also would be selling more to the United Kingdom.

### JAMAICA AND CANADA

Kingston Jamaica Mail: Jamaica must not lose sight of what is an elementary truth, viz., that the future of the British West Indies is from the viewpoint of trade bound up with the Dominion of Canada. Jamaica can deliver the goods.

### Poetry

"Poetry is the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language at one point so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and the same time astonishes the intellect by a new aspect of the truth."—Dr. Bridges, the Poet-Laureate.

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### WHALING BASE

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Ottawa.—Jan Mayen Island in the Arctic, which Norway announces it will annex is not one of the worries of Canada, according to official information here. It is north of Iceland and east of Greenland and thus beyond any area over which Canada asserts a territorial jurisdiction.

Any disputed ownership is between Norway and Denmark, with the former seemingly having the stronger claim.

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Ottawa Journal (Cons): What is the answer? There can be but one. This country must recognize the right of the United States to make fiscal and other laws for the benefit of its own citizens. The matter is not debatable. But, on the other hand, it would be sheer recreancy to Canada, sheer economic and political madness, for the Government of this country not to meet what Washington has done with action prompt and suitable. There is no question of relation, no question of bad feeling, no question of an economic war. It is simply and solely a matter of Canada doing for her own citizens what the United States has done for her citizens. A question of putting Canada first.

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