



# Apollinaris

"THE QUEEN OF TABLE WATERS"

Supplied Under Royal Warrant of  
Appointment to

## HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.

### The Earl's Son;

### TWO HEARTS UNITED.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Veronica started and turned quickly and nervously. She saw an elderly man with a weather-beaten face and grey hair. He was dressed in a rough serge suit somewhat the worse for wear; but both face and figure were those of a gentleman.

"It is Miss Gresham, is it not?" he said, with a smile. "I'm afraid you don't remember me. My name is Sainsbury. We met at a dinner-party at my cousin's—the Hall is near Lynne Court, you know."

Veronica's brows unbent.

"Oh, of course, yes!" she said. "I remember you. You are Mr. George Sainsbury."

He smiled rather grimly.

"Yes; the black sheep of the family, you know."

Veronica coloured, and shook hands with him.

"Are you staying in town?" he asked, rather hesitatingly, for he had noticed the plainness of her dress and the pallor of her face.

"Yes; I am living in London, Mr. Sainsbury," said Veronica. "I have left Lynne Court—Oh, and I ought to ask you, please, not to tell them at the Hall that you have seen me. I—I am too long a story; but I am estranged from Lord Lynborough and have left the Court for ever."

He inclined his head.

"I am sorry," he said, with the quiet sympathy of the gentleman. "I hope you are—you are cared for here in London and are not alone—not without friends."

"No," said Veronica, as quietly. "I am living with an old friend, a girl I know. I have quite cut myself off from the old life, and that is why I asked—"

"You have nothing to fear from your meeting with me, Miss Gresham," he said, gravely. "In no case should I tell anyone that I have met you, as you do not wish me to do so; but, indeed, I am not likely to have an opportunity of telling my people. I, too, am estranged from them. I have had a run of bad luck—my own fault, my own fault!—and I have just returned from Australia, where I

have failed in an undertaking— But I need not bore you with that."

"Australia!" said Veronica. "For your true lover everything turns on one pivot. Perhaps he could help her to find Ralph!"

"Yes," he said, noting her sudden eagerness. "Is there anything I can do for you? Are you interested in Australia? I am staying at an hotel near here—quite a modest little place—with my child, my Ada. I should like to see her. She is the sweetest—but I must not indulge in a father's rhapsodies, though, of course, I am very proud of her. She is all the world to me. Will you come and see her? She has no lady-friend—no one but her old nurse. But it is asking too much, Miss Gresham!"

"I will come with you and see her," said Veronica.

She turned and walked with him, and he talked of his bad luck, of his people at the Hall, but mostly of the child. As they talked a fire engine dashed past them. They reached the street in which the hotel stood, and to their surprise they found themselves in the midst of a huge crowd fringed round a couple of fire engines at work. The street was full of smoke and flames were springing from one of the houses.

George Sainsbury uttered a cry of terror that thrilled Veronica.

"The hotel!" he gasped. "It is the hotel! Ada!"

He forced his way through the shouting mob, and Veronica, her heart beating painfully, mechanically followed him.

It was the hotel, and it was burning fiercely. In a group in the centre cleared by the firemen were the landlord and the people belonging to the place, and they were gazing with horror-stricken eyes at the windows through which the smoke and flames were issuing. As Mr. Sainsbury rushed towards them crying hoarsely "My child! Ada, Ada! Have you got my child?" a woman, the nurse, threw herself upon him and, clutching him, cried in tones of agony:

"She's in there—in there! Oh, God! master, save her! I'd gone out—I left her for a few minutes! She's not here—all the rest are saved! Oh, the child, the child!"

The distracted father would have rushed to the burning house, but a stalwart fireman caught him and held him back, though he struggled fiercely.

Veronica stood, wringing her hands, and almost fainting under the

strain of the terrible scene; but she was roused to full consciousness by a roar that went up from the spectators. A young man had made his way through the crowd, had paused a moment to look at the house, as a general might pause to scan a fortress he intended to assault, then had plunged into the door-way.

He had come and disappeared so quickly that the firemen had been unable to stop him, and the crowd roared still more excitedly when, a moment or two later, he was seen at one of the upper windows with a child in his arms.

He was framed by the blackened window, through which the smoke belched in a thick volume, and the flames, darting from one below, lit up his face. Veronica, gazing with horror, uttered a cry and staggered; for, to her overwrought mind, it seemed to be the face of Ralph!

He held the child to his breast and looked down as if waiting, looked down with an apparent calmness and assurance which was not misplaced, for the firemen shouted encouragement. The fire escape had not arrived—alas! here, in England, we are not abreast of the times in the matter of our fire department, and our gallant firemen are often sadly handicapped by the lack of proper appliances—but some of the men stretched out a tarpaulin beneath the window, and the man who held the child saw it, and, stooping as low as possible, gently dropped his still living burden.

A roar of applause went up from the crowd as the father rushed forward and caught her to his breast; but the roar grew more frantic, almost savage in its intensity, as the rescuer was seen to stagger and fall against the now burning window-frame, as if he were swooning.

"Jump! Jump, for God's sake!" yelled the crowd.

Veronica's tongue clave to the roof of her mouth and she could not cry out; but her heart seemed bursting as his strained eyes were fixed on the figure amidst the flames and smoke.

"Jump—jump!" cried the crowd again; and the roar almost drowning the crackling of the burning wood-work and the fall of the walls, seemed to reach the ears of the man. He was seen to pass his hand over his face as if he were struggling for breath, then he mounted to the window-sill and dropped.

A shout of satisfaction, a moan of doubt, arose from the thousands of throats as the crowd saw him fall. He was caught in the tarpaulin, and some of the firemen closed round him while others kept back the frantic and half-maddened mob.

Borne forward by the press, Veronica found herself amongst those surrounding him. The flames lit up the scene, and fell upon his face. A cry rose from her parched lips, a cry that went to the hearts of the firemen, accustomed as they were to such scenes.

"Ralph! Ralph!"

The name pierced the air; and as she uttered it, in the accents of a woman's anguish and terror, she fell on her knees beside him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was some days before Ralph returned to consciousness—in fact, the papers which had gushed over his "deed of heroism," and the public which had read the account with the emotion that is easily roused in these times of stress and strain, had quite forgotten him—and when he opened his eyes and peered from under the thick lead bandage, he was under the impression that his mind was still wandering.

But his first rational thought was for the child.

"The fire—Ada! The child!"

A tremulous voice piped, tearfully, quite close to him:

"It's all right, Mr. Big Man; I'm here; I'm twice safe!" and two warm little arms went round him, and a soft little face was pressed against what was uncovered of his.

He got his arm round her neck and held her caressingly and closely, as if to make sure that she was still alive and present in the flesh.

"I'm here all right," she repeated, lovingly, and in the soothing, comforting accents which seem to come so naturally even to the youngest girl-child—you hear them when she is "mothering" to her doll. "I'm so glad you've tum awake at last. You have been here with me nearly every day for ever so many days; haven't you, papa?"

A hand closed on Ralph's and a grave voice said:

"Yes, Ada; and he knows why—How do you feel, Mr. Farrington? Strong enough to receive a father's thanks for the life you have saved, a life more precious to him than his own, the life of his only child?"

Ralph looked puzzled for a moment, then he nodded and returned the pressure of the hand.

"I remember. I—I had an idea that we were both dead—burnt. You are her father? Yes, I remember you came home. Was—was she hurt at all? Were you, Ada?" he asked, anxiously. "Not burnt at all?"

"No, thank God—and you!" said Mr. Sainsbury. "You had covered her face with the blankets, you had forgotten nothing, even in that awful moment, and she was not injured in the least. But you—"

Ralph drew a breath of relief.

"Oh, I'm all right," he said, cheerfully. "I feel well enough to get up, if—if I could move this arm and one of my legs: what's wrong with them?"

"They are bandaged too tightly for you to move," said Mr. Sainsbury. "You have been badly burned, my poor fellow. For a time we feared—"

he paused to steady his voice—"but, thank God, you have passed the corner—a terrible corner!—and will soon get well and strong again. For that time we all of us pray, but none more devoutly than Ada and I. It was the noblest, the bravest deed ever performed!" his voice shook—"it was one of those forlorn hopes in which such heroes as you risk their lives—"

Ralph felt and looked uncomfortable; no man likes to be called a hero to his face.

## Evening Telegram Fashion Plates.

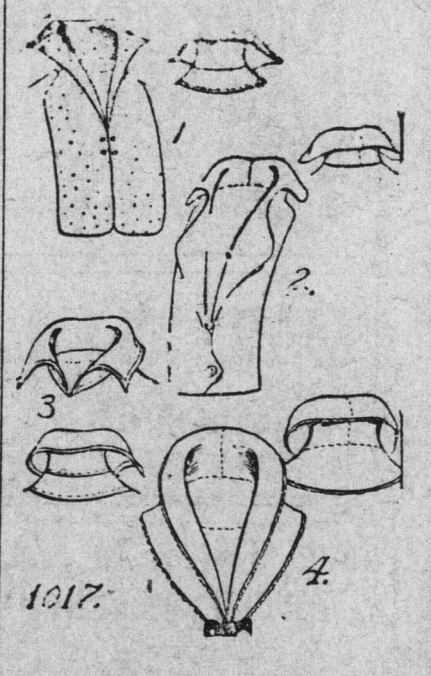
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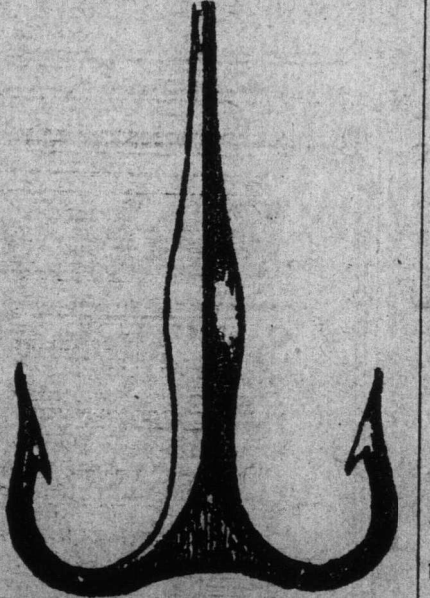
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