

Early Closing

The earnest request of our employees we have decided to close our place of business at 5 o'clock 5 days in the week, commencing Monday July 3rd, and continuing until the 10th of August. Saturdays and days before holidays are excepted. To make this a success we would respectfully ask for cordial cooperation. This is our fifth year in our endeavor to shorten the hours of our employees and ourselves. The urgency of the times is to shorten the hours of labor and you can greatly assist by making purchases before 5 o'clock in the afternoon. We appeal to you in all confidence to aid us in obtaining this boon of 3 or 4 hours of open and sunshine for ourselves and employees.

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FAUCONBERG

Sir Wm. Magnay Bart

She looked up at him boldly now. "From what I have heard I should have imagined you would have known best."

He flushed angrily. "What have you heard?"

"Nothing particular," she returned in a hard voice. "Nothing that need annoy you."

"You seem annoyed."

"I hate gossip, as you know; that's all. What do you mean?"

"There was a challenge in her eyes. 'Shall I tell you? People say that Barbara Evandale is the attraction at the Hotel de Saint Cyprien.'"

"For me?" he demanded. "The attraction for me?"

"I suppose so."

"You know it."

"Is it true?" There was a fierce hunger in the dark eyes now.

"I wish people would mind their own business," he said.

"Mr. Fauconberg—Jack is it true?" Ignoring her intonation, he answered with an easy evasion. "Of course; if everybody says so."

She rose suddenly and came to him, so close, that when she spoke her breath was on his cheek.

"Jack, you might tell me." The emphasis was significantly on the pronouns. Her voice was low and vibrating with hardly repressed feeling. He was forced to look her in the face as he replied.

"I should think the fact that I have been working hard here for months while Miss Evandale has scarcely been with us at all should be a sufficient answer. I very seldom see her."

He spoke half defiantly with an excess of denial necessary to cloak his disingenuousness. For she was looking at him as though to probe his very soul.

"It is not true then?" Her tone was far from conviction. Where her heart was concerned, a man can never deceive a woman unless she helps him by deceiving herself.

"What?"

He hated his fencing, since it made her sick at heart.

"That you are in love with Barbara Evandale?"

For a moment he hesitated between a deal and a bold avowal. An impulsive desire to be free of his false position brought the word "Yes" to his lips. Had not a footstep made Sybilla draw back and turn her head quickly, she must have seen his lips from the

monosyllable, and the emphasis nod of his head. But the word did not rise above his breath, for Hascombe came in to tell Sybilla that her next song was due.

Her expression changed to a smile as she turned and went back with him. Few women were less prone to give away their secrets than Sybilla Caspary. Fauconberg, with a sense of reprieve, strolled after them as far as the first doorway, halting as the others crossed the next room. Hascombe went first, up the steps leading to the platform. As Sybilla prepared to follow him she turned for a moment and looked back across the room to Fauconberg. There was love in her face and a pleading entreaty for the answer she had missed. Actuated by a weak impulse of denial he shook his head. Sybilla gave a little laugh of joy and touched her lips with the tip of her closed fan.

Then he hated himself for the lie, but it was too late.

CHAPTER XVI.

When Prometheus made man he had used up all the water in making other animals; so he moistened his clay with tears.

The weakness that rises from a want of moral courage is responsible for more of the disasters, to say nothing of the petty troubles of life, than can be laid to the account of downright, active evil-doing. We most of us live largely in the future, yet where the convenience of the present moment is concerned, we are invariably prone to ignore it, or at any rate to let it take care of itself. And this especially the case where the pistol is held to our head through some fault of our own. We hate to be cornered by circumstances for which we are responsible, and are inclined to send the messenger Deceit to summon to our assistance that most untrustworthy ally called Time. And Time, like John, will turn the messenger behind him, and come, not to our help, but to our undoing.

For some time a certain coldness had been springing up between Hascombe and Fauconberg. It began by a barely perceptible change in Paul's manner; the old frankness, once so unbounded, suffered a check; this intercourse between the two men became just a shade less familiar. The slight lessening of warmth—it did amount to coldness—began on Hascombe's side, and for a while Fauconberg did not notice it. Then suddenly one day it flashed upon him, and he remembered many indications that his friend's manner towards him had altered. With the recognition came a guilty explanation of the cause; upon that, a corresponding reserve on his own part and the estrangement in an hour sensibly widened. They were still to all intents friendly enough; only they themselves knew of the thin veil of mist which had fallen between them. Hascombe's feeling was one of hurt and disappointment, which only his nature, strong in its very gentleness, prevented from turning to bitterness. Fauconberg guessed his friend's suspicions, and could not blame him for them. He felt that if Hascombe had conceived a contempt for him it was natural and justified. Heaven knew, he despised himself. But upon one point Paul was greatly in the yet shirked, an opportunity to set him right.

One evening, however, brought it. They had both come in tired, and Fauconberg, noticing with sudden concern the gray, drawn face, told himself that his friend looked desperately ill.

In answer to his sympathetic question, Hascombe admitted that he was far from well. His heart and his breath were troubling him; but it would pass off; he had often felt as bad, or nearly so.

An access of remorse and self-reproach swept over Fauconberg. He knew Paul was not the man to be nervous about himself or to complain without cause, and he blamed his own abominable selfishness for that poor worn face.

"You are worried, Paul," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "I have noticed that you have not been quite the same lately—at least to me."

Hascombe was looking into the fire. He did not change his position as he replied, "I have been rather worried."

Fauconberg drew up a chair and sat by him.

"Tell me," he said.

The other kept still and silent for some moments. Then he shook his head, still gazing into the fire.

"No," he replied. "It would serve no good purpose. And the difficulty must be over before long."

For a while there was silence again. Then Fauconberg spoke in a low voice, almost timidly.

"Won't you tell me as a friend what your trouble is?"

But he only shook his head again and kept silence.

"We seem to have worry enough," Fauconberg remarked, as his friend did not respond. "I may not know yours, will you let me tell you a trouble of mine?"

Hascombe glanced up now into the other's face with a look half-sympathetic, half-apprehensive.

"Of course, my dear fellow. You might be sure of my interest in all that concerns you."

He had not spoken to him in that tone since the evening he surprised his confidential talk with Sybilla. "I am sure of that," Fauconberg acknowledged, a little shamefacedly. "Well, it is soon told. I am worried about Miss Caspary."

The apprehension in Hascombe's look was now mingled with something like sternness. But his voice was calm as he said, "Tell me."

For the first time to real delicacy of the position came upon Fauconberg in all its painfulness. Still he could not draw back now.

"She seems to think," he said, "that I ought to be in love with her; and I'm not, as you know."

"Why ought to be?"

The obvious question was put with the merciless directness of a straightforward nature.

Fauconberg made a quick, uneasy movement, as he answered, quite frankly—

"It is my own fault, of course. There was once a little love episode between us which really meant nothing."

"On your part?"

With a half-laugh he accepted the interpolation.

"On my part. It was just at the time when I was so downy my luck—you remember—and I practically made up my mind to cut the whole concern of life. I thought I was saying good-bye to the world, and that there would be no harm to either of us in a farewell. That's all, upon my honour, Hascombe."

And then, when I had done my mind, I met Barbara Evandale."

Hascombe was looking away into the fire again, leaning his head on the hand which hid his face from Fauconberg.

"The old story," he said, and the other could not tell from his voice in what mood he spoke the words.

"I suppose," Fauconberg continued, "the right thing to do would be to tell Sybilla Caspary the truth; that, as I like her—and with all her worldly manner, she is good sort—I like somebody else better."

"Yes," Hascombe assented. "That being in fact, the case, it seems nothing else to be done, but if Miss Caspary is really in love with you, it is a cruel thing to have done."

Fauconberg wondered at the calmness with which he spoke.

"Yes," he replied; "and what makes it harder is the splendid way Sybilla behaved when she thought I had given up all hope. She often says—"

"I was going to my grave that night; it was my last day on earth, and I felt I should like some one to remember it. A kiss to a dying man does not seem much."

"But you were not a dying man. You had no right to take the future into your own ordering."

"You are very hard on me, Paul."

Hascombe's face softened.

"Forgive me if I seem so. But can I, or any one, be harder than the result, the inexorable logic of your act? Surely nothing I say can enhance that."

"No, no," Fauconberg agreed contritely. "And the worst of it is the punishment falls heavily on me, who am most to blame. Paul, what am I to do? What ought I to do?"

Hascombe leaned against the mantelpiece in silence.

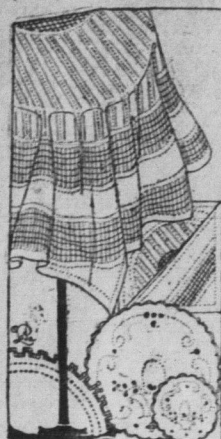
"I do not feel competent to advise you," he said at length. "And yet the misunderstanding cannot go on as it is."

"No. Yet how can I tell the girl that she is nothing to me? She might see it for herself."

"You can hardly blame her," Hascombe said gravely. "For shutting her out to it."

(To Be Continued)

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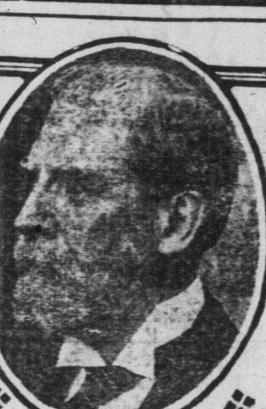
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In this world the greatest gifts and blessings are the little things, and the greatest forces for good are the comparatively silent influences of character.

Sometimes we feel that our influence is so small that it is almost a negligible quantity; then when we reflect upon the influence that has been wielded by humble and obscure lives in the faithful performance of life's small duties we take heart.

In one of his essays James Russell Lowell points out the fact that even the great reform movements are the humble deeds of humble persons taken up and repeated by an entire people.

Te modern "Red Cross" movement had its origin in a most humble way. Back in the days of the Crimean war two English nurse girls made their way by steamer to the scenes of action.

At first these courageous girls seemed strangely out of place among the wounded horses and dead and dying men.

Faithfully and patiently they kept their own counsel and did their work in their own way. Many new buildings.

years have passed. Now the Red Cross service thanks to the fidelity of these two nurse girls has become a mighty force in the relief of suffering humanity. Its ministrations are seen upon every field of battle.

The majority of us cannot do great deeds. There are armies of one and two talented men but the ten-talented men are few and far between.

The world advances in righteousness and truth not by the spectacular deeds of a few great men but through myriads of unnoticed deeds of humble and obscure people.

The force of humble fidelity is illustrated upon every page of the world's history.

His Proper Sphere. "What will they do with that eldest son of theirs? I heard his father say he had neither judgment nor foresight."

"Then why don't they make him a weather sharp?"—(Baltimore American.)

Jacob Youngblood of Alton Mo., was arrested charged with throwing his wife Cora into the Mississippi River from a boathouse. After he saw her struggling in the water he jumped in and rescued her.

Coriscana (Texas) State Orphanage has just dedicated three large new buildings.

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