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By B. MARCHANT

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Thirteen-year-old Lalla was the only one who never shrank from her grandfather, Squire Trevor, of Oakenhurst Manor. One day when visiting the picture gallery with picture turned face to the wall, the maid told her it was the picture of the squire's eldest son, who had been discovered by his father. The picture was turned for Lalla to see. What a nice kind face he had! Perhaps if he had come back you would never be mistress of the Manor, said the maid. During a thunder storm Lalla lost in the woods. She is found by a young sailor lad, who carries her towards home.

She was playing in the picture gallery one day, a little while ago, of the maid being with her, when she discovered the panel door of the painting-room was open, and had knowing that it was forbidden

ground, went in from sheer curiosity, for until then she did not even know that there was a room there; then the turned picture caught her eye, and she told the maid in attendance to move it for her to see. I knew nothing of the occurrence then, Lalla said she did not even remember it herself, until last night, when she dreamed she was in the painting-room again; and seeing the picture once more, instantly recognised its likeness to her kind friend of yesterday. Mrs. Trevor was braver now, and could speak without trembling.

It may be nothing but an accidental resemblance, for remember, it was not strong enough for her to recall at the time who the stranger was like; I came away without having mustered the courage to turn it round," he said presently, speaking as much to himself as to his companion. Then he asked in a different tone, "Did this young sailor make any mention of his family, or—of his father?"

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Lalla was frightened, miserable, and in pain, too occupied with her own wretchedness to pay heed to anything else; yet in her sleep, when her brain was freed from its waking activity, the glow of the likeness was gathered up and made clear to her in her dreams.

"Dreams are mostly unaccounted for," the Squire exclaimed impatiently. "Very often they are; but there was reason in this one, I think—especially when we remember the very peculiar conduct of the young sailor, who spoke up to the half-door and rung a peal on the bell that resounded through the whole house; then when Simpson rushes to fling the door wide under the impression that at the very least it is the duke who has come to call, stuffs Lalla into his arms, coat and all, and runs away."

There was so much conviction in Mrs. Trevor's tone, and so much reason in her arguments, that the Squire, disarmed, only sat staring out through the window, with eyes that saw nothing at all of green lawn or blue sky, their gaze being turned to the chambers of memory.

"I must have left that panel door ajar, when I went up there a week or ten days ago. It looks by being closed, and I expect I forgot it. I went up there to look at his picture; but though I stayed there an hour or more, I came away without having mustered the courage to turn it round," he said presently, speaking as much to himself as to his companion. Then he asked in a different tone, "Did this young sailor make any mention of his family, or—of his father?"

"Yes; he said that he had no brothers or sisters, that his mother was dead—had been dead for years, I believe—and that his father was lost."

"Lost!" ejaculated the Squire, with a bewildered look; "what did he mean?"

"He said that a long time ago his father went a journey, seam which he had never returned, but he—the son, I mean—would not allow himself to believe that his father was dead, and confidently expected to happen upon him at some time in the course of his wanderings."

"I wish I had seen him! What ever could Simpson have been about to let him get away like that?" exclaimed the Squire, restlessly.

"Simpson was too much surprised at the manner in which the bundle was thrust into his arms, to have his wits about him, I suspect," Mrs. Trevor said, with a faint smile. "Besides, he has only been in the family for a dozen years, or so, therefore the likeness to Edward, however strong it might have been, would have no meaning for him."

"No, but it would for Parker, if she had seen upon the scene; and if this young man was a Trevor, and did not care to be recognised, his running off without his coat was a very natural action. Dear me, dear me! and the old man rose from his chair, and began to pace the room in uncontrollable agitation.

But Mrs. Trevor had a word of warning to give him that must be spoken without delay. "Grannie must not be told of this, unless, indeed, we find the young man again. It would be too cruel," she said softly.

The Squire stopped in his walk and looked at her, as if failing to comprehend the necessity for keeping Lady Alicia in ignorance on the subject.

"His father was lost, you know," she went on, dropping her voice almost to a whisper; "Grannie would only grieve afresh over this new and aggravated uncertainty."

He nodded, then took another turn or two up and down the room, finally coming to a stand in front of his daughter-in-law again. "What shall I do, Amy? I can't go into her room just yet; I must quiet down a little, or she will guess at the first look into my face that I had heard news of some sort, and it might bring on one of those dreadful heart attacks."

"I will go and read the paper for Grannie, and any letters that may interest her. I can say, and truly, that business is keeping you for a little while; because, of course, you will endeavour to trace this young man, if only for the sake of satisfying yourself concerning him."

"Yes, but suppose he does not care to be traced?"

"Mrs. Trevor smiled. "At least a careless man should not be hard to find; and if, when found, he turns out to be other than what we think, then five pounds, or even ten, will not be too big a reward for his goodness to Lalla. But if your theory is right, you can take your own way of giving his due."

The Squire frowned. "Don't talk nonsense, Amy! There is your child to be thought of."

"I am thinking of her," asserted Mrs. Trevor, clasping her hands tightly from sheer nervousness, whilst a crimson spot of excitement glowed in either pale cheek. "Lalla will not be penniless in any case; but even if she were compelled to earn her bread by toil of hand or brain, I would rather she should do it, than inherit wealth to the exclusion of

another to whom it naturally and morally belongs."

"The Squire made no reply beyond an impatient ejaculation, then left the room hastily, as he went brushing against Mrs. Parker, the housekeeper, who was coming towards the door, with her hand on her forehead, and something held carefully covered up in one hand."

CHAPTER VII. A Silent Witness. "Can't speak to you for a minute, if you please," asked Mrs. Parker, appearing at the door of the breakfast-room.

"Certainly, Parker; come into my sitting-room, will you; we shall not be interrupted there," said Mrs. Trevor, leading the way to her own private sitting-room on the other side of the hall, and guessing from the look on the housekeeper's face that the matter to be discussed was of considerable importance.

"I found it in the pocket of the coat in which Miss Lalla was brought home," Mrs. Parker said, tendering a much worn clasp-knife for inspection.

Mrs. Trevor reached out her hand and took it with fingers that trembled a little, despite her effort at outward calm. "Yes," she queried nervously, instinctively knowing that in this case she was dealing with the identity of the young stranger, who was so like the turned picture in that closed room upstairs.

"It is the knife I gave to Master Edward more years ago than I can count, when he was a boy at school, and just about the time when I came here to live after my poor husband was killed," Mrs. Parker said, with a little, half-strangled sob. Her history, poor soul! had been tragic, for her husband had been shot in an encounter with poachers in the Oakenhurst woods.

"Are you sure?" asked Mrs. Trevor, quietly.

"Quite sure, ma'am. Master Edward had been opening a box for me with his knife, and broke the blade in doing it. He said, laughingly, that he would have to wait a month before buying another, because he had spent all his pocket money, and his father would not let him have a feather more until it was done. So I bought him one with my money, and I had engraved on it the letters, 'E. T. from S. P.'—and there they are, ma'am, still plain to be seen."

"The plain which was let into the black horn handle of the knife."

"Then you think—" began Mrs. Trevor, but stopped short because she did not know how to put her idea into words.

"It was not Mr. Edward himself, ma'am," interposed the housekeeper quickly; "for this man was young—an impudent young fellow," Simpson called him, "and he has never served the family long, and would not know if there was any likeness. If only I had chanced to see him myself, I should have been as sure as I could be of a feeling that it might have been Mr. Edward's son."

A moment Mrs. Trevor looked silent counsel with herself; then, resolving to take this old and faithful servant into her confidence, she said, "There was a very strong likeness, Parker. Lalla saw it, and spoke of it to me; and the young man's voice reminded her of the Squire's."

With an ejaculation of mingled thankfulness and amazement, Parker sat down heavily on the nearest chair; she apologised afterwards, but declared that for the moment she was too overcome to be aware of what she was doing.

"Perhaps that was why he went away without staying for his coat. He would have heard from his father of the trouble in the family, and was too proud to even accept a thank-you from the house to which he belonged, and which he was so proud to have been a part of."

The days that followed were fraught with anxiety for some in the household. The Squire had advertised in the daily and county papers for the young man who had so timely come to the succour of his grand daughter; he had sought the aid of the police in tracing him, but all to no avail. The young man had disappeared completely; and when the weeks passed on, bringing no word or trace of him, the Squire was fain to believe that the silence was intentional, and that his son's son refused to hold any intercourse with the family to whom he belonged.

Meanwhile, a dog had been procured as a playfellow and companion for Lalla—a big, handsome bloodhound, tan in colour, despising to black down the spine, a beautiful creature, bold as a lion and gentle as a lamb. Lalla fell in love with the animal upon her first introduction to it, and promptly gave it the name of Bloom, because of its deep, and resonant baying.

A large amount of outdoor liberty was allowed to the little girl during those golden hours of her life; for, although she had taken no perceptible cold from her wetting her feet, she was a long time in getting well; and she had a thin, fragile appearance, which frightened those who loved her best, causing them, for the time at least, to disregard every consideration saving that of health.

"Let her run about barefoot, like the children of the Scottish poor," said the great physician from London, who was called in to say why Lalla was not so rosy and plump like other children at her age. "No, no, sandals—I do not believe in them; children should either have proper shoes, or none at all. In the country, in summer-time, they are better with only Nature's covering. There is a phosphorus in the earth, my dear madam, which is only communicated to the human frame through the soles of the feet; cover the feet and you lose the phosphorus, that is obvious."

So saying, the big man pocketed his fee—which was, of course, in proportion of his reputation—and went away, leaving Mrs. Trevor to carry out his instructions with reference to the pampering of Lalla's shoes and stockings; though, indeed, she rarely did wear any in the summer

time, mostly contenting herself with sandals.

(To be Continued.)

PROVINCES WITH ONE EXCEPTION USED MONEY

With the exception of Alberta, where it appears there has been some delay owing to divided responsibility in highway matters, all the provinces of the Dominion, it is stated, have taken advantage of the Federal Aid to Highways plan, and Highways Department officials feel that the appropriation of \$20,000,000 which the Federal Government set aside in 1919 will be used up before the end of the five-year period covered by the appropriation.

The estimated cost of highway improvement projects undertaken in January 1, 1922, under agreement with the Federal Government was \$29,247,667, with a total mileage of approximately 4,230 miles. The Dominion Government's share of the projects under agreement is \$11,699,666, and the net has yet almost three years to run.

It is expected that before the expiration of the appropriation there will be requests from the various organizations interested in highway building and improvement for increases in the federal grant for the purpose.

Saskatchewan leads the provinces in respect to the mileage of projects under agreement, with 1,220 miles at an estimated cost of \$1,374,092 and Ontario is well in the lead in cost of roads built, however. The figures for this province are: projects 23; mileage, approximately 663; estimated cost, \$12,863,153; average cost per mile \$22,980.

Figures for the other provinces are: Alberta, none; British Columbia: mileage 337; estimated cost \$2,612,693; average cost per mile, \$7,731. Manitoba: mileage, 764; estimated cost \$3,478,902; average cost per mile \$4,546. New Brunswick: mileage 1,209; estimated cost \$3,985,708; average cost per mile \$2,571. Nova Scotia: mileage 168; estimated cost \$1,799,325; average cost per mile \$10,695. Prince Edward Island: mileage, 181; estimated cost \$329,565; average cost per mile \$1,818. Quebec: mileage 243; estimated cost \$2,718,226; average cost per mile \$11,116.

The total number of projects under agreement is 170, with an average per province of 21, and the average cost per mile of all the roads constructed or being constructed under agreement is \$6,182. Highway plans must be approved by Federal officials before payment of the 40 per cent. cost is allowed.

EMPLOYEES OWN LITTLE. New York.—The "partnership" fair deal that steel trust publicity agents love to relate, when defending agrism, is not sustained by the steel trust's report on common stock ownership.

It is shown that the holders of this stock total 167,439 persons. The number of workers employed by the trust in normal times approximates 250,000. If all the stock was held by employees, ever yshare would be divided between more than two workers.

UNCLE SAM REDUCES FLEET WAGES. A reduction of the shipping wage board scale paid to deck officers and men will be made effective on February 8, it was announced by Vice-President Jos. Powell, of the Emergency Fleet Corporation. The amount of the cut to be made has not yet been determined by the board, but it will be discussed with the chairman and representatives of merchant marine officer and crew organizations, which were advised of the reduction. It is understood that the reduction will follow the cut made in private enterprise, a schedule of which was submitted to Chairman Lasker by the American Steamship Owners' Association, and which was reported to range from 10 to 30 per cent. for officers and men.

TORONTO MEETING

BRITISH EMPIRE STEEL

Members of the Board of directors of the British Empire Steel Corporation held a meeting in Toronto, Vice-President D. H. McDougall stated after the meeting that the corporation was facing the process of deflation in wages, as well as wages were deflated, in both the steel and coal divisions, it was not expected that business would be very brisk.

Wages \$31, steel \$286, deflated, he said, "before we can regain our market in the St. Lawrence for coal, and before we can compete in steel with European and American prices. We are now rolling some rails at Sydney to fill orders from the railways, and are mining coal only for current requirements."

Mr. McDougall said that the transfer of stock in the old companies for the securities of the merger corporation is proceeding steadily, and about 70 per cent of the old stock has already been exchanged.

ONTARIO LABOR MINISTER TO URGE CONFERENCE. According to Hon. Walter Rolfe, Provincial Minister of Labor, the mooted interprovincial labor conference has not yet been arranged because Senator Robertson, Minister of Labor in the Meighen Government, declined to call the provincial representatives together, on the ground that Ontario was the only province making the request. The conference was proposed to discuss giving effect to decisions of the international labor conference at Washington.

MR. FACING-BOTH-WAYS. Chattanooga, Tenn.—In commenting on the "can't-strike" suggestion by Ben W. Hooper, vice-chairman of the railroad labor board, the Labor World of this city says: "The present attitude recalls a former campaign in this state when he was dubbed a 'ya political opponent.' Mr. Facing-Both-Ways."

Mr. Hooper is an ex-governor of this state. He was appointed a member of the public group on the railroad labor board, and is supposed to be neutral. While addressing a New York gathering of railroad executives he lined up with the railroads by favoring legislation to outlaw strikes.

CITED FOR CONTEMPT. Hudson Falls.—Supreme Court Justice McPhillips has cited John T. Burke and Frank Barry to show why they should not be punished for contempt of court in violating a labor injunction. The former is president and the latter is vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers' union. The injunction was issued at the request of the International Paper company.

Clutus Sweeney, a striker, was fined \$50 by Justice McPhillips for throwing a snowball at a strike-breaker.

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