



A WORD--AND A BLOW.

(By Ellen Ada Smith.)

It would never have happened if the last scratch rehearsal had not gone so well, or if Major Hayhurst's neuralgia had not attacked him for hours, making havoc of patience and temper alike. He had kept his physical sufferings to himself very wisely as it turned out, for when the ladies had retired discomfited and out of heart with a nerve-racking performance, Hayhurst's own nerves were strung up to the highest point of irritation. Left to themselves in the wide hall, the men began chaffing him about the poor quality of his performance that afternoon; and one audacious youngster, not fully fledged enough to be entirely judicious, suggested that as a stage-lover Hayhurst was not acting up to Miss Eve Saxton, who was the only one of them who had gone satisfactorily through her part that disastrous afternoon.

Hayhurst could have kicked the lad for his inapposite joking, as just then his neuralgia was unbearable; instead of kicking him, he answered with the savagery for which repressed physical suffering was entirely responsible: "I am sorry to have marred Miss Saxton's brilliancy. It takes a better artist than I am to play the adoring lover to a plain woman; the two things are incompatible."

Now Hayhurst, like the average man, had always thought beauty the first duty of every woman; but, to do him justice, in his normal state he could no more have voiced such a brutality concerning a lady and a fellow-guest than he could have struck her with his hand. But retribution was swiftly upon him, as with one startled impulse the men turned their heads to see Eve Saxton with her foot on the last stair, practically in their midst.

There was nothing to be done or hidden; the words had been clearly uttered and clearly heard by all present; not a doubt about it. There was a moment of stunned silence, of general shock, and then Eve descended the last stairs and spoke to the host:

"I left my book here. I want to read until dinner-time. If we think about the rehearsal we are lost."

She looked straight at her host and at no one else. Coming forward, he took her hand and turned her gently to the staircase. She was not going to run the gauntlet of those panic-stricken, flustered men if he knew it.

"My dear Mignon," he said, using for the first time his wife's pet name for the friend of her girlhood, "I can't allow any books. You must just rest until dinner, or you will be tired out before the evening is over."

He kissed Eve's hand before he let it go, and they were all silent until her footfall had passed beyond hearing. Then Sinclair turned, full of righteous wrath, to confront the offender, from whom the others had somewhat withdrawn. That he had voiced practically their own sentiments was no condemnation, inasmuch as he had broken the letter of a gentleman's code. To blame a woman for her ugliness was entirely natural, but to let her know it in words was an offence almost without pardon. Hayhurst knew this as he spoke first.

"Sinclair! I can never forgive myself. Would you like me to go?" "I suppose you ought to go," admitted Sinclair, gloomily; "of course your going will wreck the performance, but we must make Miss Saxton our first consideration."

"Certainly. In any case she will probably refuse to act with me, and quite rightly, too. I had better await her initiative."

Angry as they all were with him, it was plainly evident that he was his own harshest judge. Sinclair softened as he saw how bitterly his friend took it to heart.

There was nothing more to be said, and they had to await the ruling of the woman who had gone to her room smarting with this rough touch to a living wound. For she was a worshipper of the beauty denied her; she had always regarded it in others with a passionate admiration quite beyond its real worth. She had idealized it in writing and in verse, envied its possessors with a wistful envy which had never contained a spite of malice. Many pretty women of her acquaintance were yet fairer for some added touch of grace suggested by her artistic eye and hand. But she was very human, very womanly; and although she had schooled herself to do without the thing she loved, the rough verdict against her from careless lips hurt intolerably.

And every man of the house-party had heard it, and without doubt endorsed its veracity. How could she possibly meet them all with a serene brow and carry out the evening's programme, which included enacting love-scenes with a man who had frankly told his fellows that she was so little to his taste? She felt at first that she could not; self-respect almost insisted upon her not doing so; but wise counsels prevailed at length, and she saw that the way of true dignity and right dealing lay straight in front of her with no turning either to right or left.

Nervous of temperament, she was not without a fine courage when it was needed; moreover, for a woman she was unusually just, and she knew instinctively that Hayhurst, really as he had spoken, must now will find relief in a well-aimed inflammation in the throat which she had done no other.

which had made the rehearsal so intolerable to him, and so recommended him to the mercy of her own judgment.

By dinner-time she was strong in good resolve, yet dreading unspokenly the evening's ordeal. She went down at the last moment to find the social atmosphere disturbed. The women were mystified and the men taciturn and uncomfortable, with a tendency to ostracize the offender in their midst.

Eve felt that with her lay the key of the position; if she could show herself bright and undisturbed all would be well. To this end she bent the whole strength of her will, for once rising entirely above the shyness which so often marred and obscured her real charm. Almost forgetting herself and her indignity in an unselfish effort to restore harmony and good feeling, she showed at her very best—that best which only her intimates had knowledge of. She talked for them all with such a tactful, kindly humor that very soon the meal, which had commenced with such dourness, blossomed into merriment and good cheer. She had lifted the cloud, and once even, noticing the undercurrent of feeling against Hayhurst, she had deliberately drawn him into the conversation with a friendly and direct question.

In answering he met her eyes full, and almost for the first time in his life his own fell in shame and contrition before those of a woman. Gallantly as she was bearing herself, the pain of the wound he had dealt her showed in the kind, blue eyes. And she was going to carry the whole thing through, a thing that must have become so distasteful to her as to be well-nigh impossible. How distasteful it was he only realized as they were starting in the omnibus that was to take them to the town hall; for in passing he had touched her dress, and she drew it away sharply with an impulse too quick and unconscious for her to control. Until the performance began he had no speech with her; she held court without him, for not a man of the house-party but was her sworn and loyal servant. There were many in the cast, many pretty girls; but for once they had to give place to Eve, the heroine of the occasion.

They had to give place, too, on the stage, for there the artist rose above the woman, bringing out a thousand subtle graces of voice and movement. She was not pretty, but she had her beautiful moments—an inspired brilliancy and charm of expression which could hold and fascinate an audience.

But it was not easy this night to forget the woman in the artist; she had to struggle hard to rise above self-consciousness and do justice to her part. Yet she did it, and Hayhurst played up to her with a zeal and earnestness of which the rehearsal had given no hint. He was one of those who invariably rehearse badly and perform well; but on this occasion he put his whole soul into an endeavor to adequately support her. No one did amiss, and the two chiefly concerned did so admirably that success was assured. Only at the last did Eve's splendid nerve fail her, when the time came for the curtain to fall upon the reconciliation and embrace of happy lovers. All the evening she had been dreading this as the impossible; and when the moment came she was helpless in the indignity of it, without power even to say the few words that ought to be said. Her faltering was Hayhurst's opportunity.

With ready quickness he turned his own speech so as to cover his own silence, and she was at the end of her endurance as she felt herself taken into a strong, sustaining hold. Totally ignoring stage etiquette, he kissed her delicately, but only as a man kisses the woman for whom he has the most reverential respect and admiration. The action was dictated by too sincere a feeling to admit of misinterpretation; but he had to carry Eve to the dressing-room, for she had fainted now that the day's work was over.

The next morning at breakfast Miss Saxton found among her letters, a summons to town. Under more fortunate circumstances she would hardly have obeyed it; but on the present occasion it furnished an excuse for an unobtrusive retirement from a position which had become a trifle conspicuous. She made the announcement openly; but only the women were deceived as to her true motive. Nina Sinclair declared hotly that she should not go—that if the worst came to the worst they would detain her by force.

"It's suicidal, Eve; I won't hear of it. You must be shockingly over-worked as it is. You looked deathly when you fainted, and you don't let her go, will you, Jim?" "Certainly not, unless she really wishes it," replied Sinclair, with a gravity which puzzled his wife.

"I expect I must go," said Eve, as brightly as she could; "it does not do to quarrel with one's bread and butter."

"You are not going," insisted Nina. "Only wait until I have sent the men off shooting, and then we will fight it out."

But one man refused to shoot that day, and as Eve stood outside on the terrace, wearily out of sorts and jarred in body and mind, Hayhurst joined her. She would infinitely have preferred his not doing so, as she made a civil remark about the beauty of the morning. But he was too desperately in earnest to answer remarks on the weather.

"Miss Saxton, I believe I am right in assuming that you are not leaving us because you must, but because I unwarrantably insulted you yesterday?" "Oh, no," she said, gently and coldly, for malaise and fatigue had blunted all the sting to her. "Please don't think me so petty and mean. My business is real, but I frankly admit that I thought my going might obviate any slight awkwardness—for others."

"Don't go!" he cried, passionately, and then got himself in hand again. "If you do it will be said, and truly, that I was guilty of driving a lady guest out of my host's house. My punishment will be just, but you will not inflict it?"

A far harder-headed woman would have been stirred by his man's remorse—and after all what a trifle it was—just a trespass from the law of conventional civility, and yet calculated to attract more censure from the witnesses than a graver offence against more important ethics.

"Major Hayhurst! this is just a storm in a teacup—a fuss about nothing. I know quite well that men are accustomed to criticize women frankly among themselves, and your only crime was in letting me hear the criticism—and that was pure accident."

"You are mistaken," he said. "Men, decent fellows, don't speak so of women, even among themselves; they don't, indeed. Miss Saxton, until yesterday I had always thought myself a gentleman. If you go away to-day I shall never feel myself one again, and it is more than probable that I shall be cut by my own messmates. Officers who are gentlemen will not associate with one who is not if they know it."

He did not spare himself; so it lay with her to spare him. With a gracious gesture she held out her hand in complete forgiveness.

"I will not go, Major Hayhurst—and the subject is closed between us. I quite realize that you were suffering, and, therefore, a little cross and cantankerous."

She used the quaint word purposely to lighten it to him; but as he took her hand he was not deceived into thinking that she would not rather have gone away.

Throughout the next fortnight the companionship between Hayhurst and Eve Saxton was an unusual one as between man and woman. The previous happening had entirely brushed aside conventionalities and the constitutional shyness which was Eve's misfortune. They never talked platitudes when they were together, and Hayhurst compassed her about with a watchful care, which met her, turn which way she would. He did not make these attentions conspicuous or lover-like; he would obey her instantly if she dismissed him that he might enjoy the smiles of beauty; but he would return again to her neighborhood at the earliest possible moment and divine, apparently by instinct, the thing she would best like to do.

With the enthusiastic collusion of Nina Sinclair he would plan excursions which effectually prevented Eve from working too hard; if she elected to remain behind, the two between them would make such a course practically impossible. And in so far as she could, Eve met Hayhurst's kindness in a like spirit; but he knew well enough that, although he had won the outer courts of her friendship, she would try to keep the door of the inner sanctuary barred against him. Womanly pride would keep sleepless watch and construe the entrance of love as an act of contrition.

For, pretty or plain, she had become more to him than any other woman in the world, and he would rather have watched her changing expression face than another acquaintance with perfect beauty. But as his love grew, his jealousy deepened.

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In Mission Fields.

(America.)

That the Protestant Missionaries in Korea are teaching rebellion is the serious charge made against them in the Japanese press. This startling indictment we here reprint verbatim from the Manila Cablenews-American of April 15, 1910:

"Under the heading of 'Christianity in Korea,' the Tokio Malmichi of the 20th instant (sic) says: 'If anyone desires to see a country which has a religion yet is irreligious, religionists without religion, and believers incapable of believing, the finger should be pointed to Korea, the protectorate of Japan. It is indisputable that such a condition is proving not only disastrous to Korea but also to the effective rule of Japan. The responsibility that has turned matters from bad to worse should partly be shouldered by Japan owing to her erroneous diplomatic policy, which has resulted in the present chaos. This unfortunate condition is gradually gaining ground and bids fair to disturb the Korean policy of Japan. Urgent necessity is therefore keenly felt for the clearing away of such a serious obstruction to the proper government of Korea.'

"It is in uncivilized parts of Korea that the most strenuous efforts are being made by the Mission Societies of Europe and America for carrying out their evangelistic work and Korea is perhaps a place destined for their efforts. We do not see anything to be excluded in the doctrine of Christianity, and as to its plan and logical reasoning we cannot but respect it. The characteristics of the Christianity according to Christ's teachings are very beautiful, but what is called Christianity by the Mission Societies is not the Christianity of Christ, but that of the Whites only, which is used for their policy of expanding their own interests under the name of religion. Take for example the Christian missionaries in Korea. There can be pointed out many un-Christianlike acts on their part in opposing the national interests and rights of Japan, which have been carried out under the guise of benevolence. Jesus taught the people to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,' while the missionaries teach the Koreans to render to the missionaries the things that are Caesar's. There are many cases which afford proof that the ownership of Korea has been temporarily transferred to the missionaries, who have caused their consuls to lodge protests and enter into disputes on their behalf. It is their common daily task to teach military training to the children, showing them the way to submit against their own design to be sent to the con-

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Synopsis of Canadian North-West HOMESTEAD REGULATIONS

ANY unnumbered section of Dominion Land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, excepting 3 and 36, not reserved, may be homesteaded by any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years of age, to the extent of one-quarter section of 160 acres, more or less.

Entry must be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land is situated.

Entry by proxy may, however, be made on certain conditions by the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of an intending homesteader.

The homesteader is required to perform the conditions connected therewith under one of the following plans:

(1) At least six months residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.

(2) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of the homesteader resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for, the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by some person residing with the father or mother.

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