

A LOST LEADER

A FASCINATING STORY OF MODERN LIFE
By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year nineteen hundred and seven, by McLeod & Allen, at the Department of Agriculture.

CHAPTER XXII.

"To be plain with you," Borrowdon remarked, "Manning's devotion would be irretrievable. He alone unites Redford, myself, and—well, to put it crudely, let us say the Imperialistic Liberal Party with Manning, and the old-fashioned Whigs who prefer the rule. There is no other leader possible. Redford and I talk till daylight this morning. Now, can nothing be done with Manning?"

"To be plain with you too, then, Sir Leslie," Bernice answered, "I do not think anything can be done with him. In his present frame of mind I should say that he is better left alone. He has worked himself up into a thoroughly sentimental and nervous state. For the moment he has lost his sense of balance."

Borrowdon nodded.

"Desperate necessity," he said, "sometimes justifies desperate measures. We need Manning, the country and our cause needs him. If argument will not prevail there is one last alternative left to us. It may not look like a very good one, but we should choose, but beggars must not be choosers. I think that you will know what I mean."

"I have no idea," Bernice answered.

"You are aware," he continued, "that there is in Manning's past history an episode, the publication of which would entail somewhat serious consequences."

"Well,"

"It was a most eloquent money-lender, but Borrowdon had gone too far to retreat."

"I propose that we make use of it," he said. "Manning's attitude is frankly foolish, or I would not suggest such a thing. But I hold that we are entitled, in the circumstances, to make use of any means whatever to bring him to his senses."

Bernice smiled.

"You are a small fellow in the park, watching the golf."

"Charlatanism in politics does not appeal to me," she said. "Any party who adopted such means would completely alienate my sympathies. No, dear Sir Leslie, don't stoop to such low down means. Manning is honest, but infinitely weak. Win him back by fair means, if you can, but don't attempt anything of the sort you are suggesting. I, too, like his history, but I believe of the episode tried to use it against him would forfeit my friendship!"

"Success then would be bought too dearly," Borrowdon answered, with a galantry which it cost him a good deal to assume. "May I pass on, Duchess, in connection with this matter, to ask you a question?"

"I think," Bernice said, calmly, "that I can spare you the necessity. You were going to speak, I believe, of the episode between Manning and Manning."

"I was," Borrowdon admitted.

"It does not exist any longer," Bernice said. "I should be glad if you would inform any one who has heard the rumor that it is without any foundation."

Borrowdon looked thoughtfully at the woman by his side.

"I am very glad to hear it," he declared. "I am glad to hear of any reason, and I am glad personally."

"Indeed," Bernice said, "I cannot imagine how it should have been personally."

"I perhaps said more than I meant to," she replied, calmly. "I am a poor, struggling politician myself, whose capital consists of brains and a capacity for work, and whose hopes are colored with perhaps too daring ambitions. Amongst them—"

"Mr. Manning has held out from off the green," she interrupted. "Positively immoral, I call it."

"Amongst them," Borrowdon continued, calmly, "is one which some day or other I must tell you, for indeed you are concerned in it."

"I can assure you, Sir Leslie," she said, looking at him steadily, "that I am not at all a sympathetic person. My strong views are of a political nature. I do not think that you would gain anything by it."

Borrowdon met his fate with a bow and a shrug of the shoulders.

"It only remains," he said, "for me to beg you to pardon for what might seem like presumption. Shall we meet them on the last green?"

Manning would have avoided Bernice, but she gave him no option. She laid her hand upon his arm, and volunteered to show him a new way home.

"You must be on your guard, Lawrence," she said. "Lord Redford is very fond of concealing his plans to the last moment, but he is not a fool. And Sir Leslie Borrowdon would give his little finger to catch you tripping. All this avoidance of politics is part of a scheme. They will spring something up on you quite suddenly. Don't give any hasty pledges."

"Thank you for your warning," he said. "I will be careful."

"Tell me," she said, "as a friend, what are your plans? Forgive that I am interested in politics altogether. I simply want to know how you are spending your time for the next few months."

"It depends upon them," he answered, looking downwards into the valley, where Lord Redford and Borrowdon were walking side by side. "If they ask me to resign my seat I shall go north again, and it is just possible that I might come back into the House at a labor member. On the other hand, if they are content with such support as I can give them, and to have me on the fence at present so far as the tariff question is concerned, I shall go back and do the best I can for them."

"You are not quite very over to the other side yet, then," she remarked, smiling.

"Not yet," he answered. "If ever there was an honest doubter I am one. If I had never left my study I should have been contained a more rabid opponent of any change in our fiscal policy than I am. I am like a small boy who is absolutely sure that he has worked out his sum correctly, but finds the answer is not the one which his examiner expects. There is something wrong somewhere. I want, if I can, to discover it. I only want to be true!"

"You were dimculted at spectacles when you took your walks abroad," she said, smiling. "No one else seems to have discerned so distressing a state of affairs as you have spoken of."

"Because they never looked beneath the surface," he answered. "I myself might have failed to understand it if I had not been shown. Remember that of our working man of the better class does not go marching through the streets with an unemployed banner and in a tin cup when

he is suffering. He takes his half wages and closes the door upon his sufferings. God help him!"

"Adieu, politics," she declared, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Let's that Clara playing croquet with Major Bristow? I wish I didn't dislike that man so much. I hate to see the child with him."

Manning sighed.

"Poor Clara!" he said. "I am afraid I have left her a good deal to herself."

"I am afraid you have," she agreed, in a little grave. "May I give you a word of advice?"

"You know that I should be grateful for it," he declared.

"Be sure that she never goes to the Bristows again, and ask her whether she has any other debt. It may be my fancy, but I don't like the way that man hangs about her, and looks at her. I am sure that she does not like him, and in his present frame of mind I should say that he is better left alone. He has worked himself up into a thoroughly sentimental and nervous state. For the moment he has lost his sense of balance."

"I am very much obliged to you," he said. "I will speak to her today."

"I don't know where I am going, or what I shall do for the autumn," she continued, with a little sigh, "but if you like to trust Clara with me I will look after her. I think that she needs a woman. Yes, I thought so. Redford and Sir Leslie are waiting for you. Go, and have it out with them, my friends."

"You are too kind to me," he said. "Kinder than I deserve!"

"Oh, I don't know," she answered. "I am afraid that my kindness is only an other form of selfishness. I am rather a lonely person, you know. Lord Redford is beckoning to you. I am going to break up that croquet party."

Manning joined the other two men. Bernice studied on to the lawn. Major Bristow eyed her coming with some disfavor. He was one of the men whom she always ignored. Clara, on the other hand, seemed to be properly interested.

"I want you to come to my room as soon as you possibly can, child," Bernice said. "I shall wait while you finish your game."

"Oh, I will come at once," Clara exclaimed, laying down her mallet. "Major Bristow will not mind, I am sure."

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tion of tariff is the sovereign, or even a possible remedy? Why, you yourself have been one of the most brilliant pamphleteers against anything of the sort. You have been called the Cobden of the day. You cannot throw principles away like an old garment."

"Let us leave for a moment," Manning answered, "the personal side of the matter. I have seen in the majority of our large cities terrible and convincing proof of the decline of our manufacturing industry. I have seen the outcome of this in hundreds of ruined homes, in a whole generation coming into the world half-starved, half-clothed—God help these children. I have always maintained that the laboring classes should be the happiest race of people in this country. I find them, without leisure or recreation, fighting life with both hands for food. Redford, the whole world has never shown us a greater tragedy than the one which we are witnessing here. I mean the struggle for life which is waged in every one of our great cities."

"We have statistics," Borrowdon began.

"I have juggled with figures myself in the old days, and I know how easy it is. So do you, and so does Redford. This is the worst of it. A thousand times over, I mean the struggle for life which is waged in every one of our great cities."

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PREPARE THE MIXTURE YOURSELF AS ADVISED

Recipe is Easily Prepared at Small Cost, and Many Swear By It.

Mix the following by shaking well in bottle, and take in teaspoonful doses, after meals and at bedtime:

Compound Karger, one ounce; Compound Syrup of Marshmallows, three ounces. A local druggist is the authority that these simple, harmless ingredients, when obtained at nominal cost from our home druggists.

The mixture is said to cleanse and strengthen the clogged and inactive kidneys, and to remove all kinds of urinary troubles, if taken before the onset of Bright's disease.

Those who have used this eye positively overcome pain in the back, clear the urine of sediment and regulate urination, especially at night, cure even the most obstinate bladder weakness.

Every man or woman who feels that the kidneys are not strong or acting in a healthy manner should try this simple, harmless mixture, and give it a trial, as it is said to do wonders for many persons.

The *Scranton (Pa.) Times* was first to publish this remedy in its issue of October, 1906, since when all the leading newspapers of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and other cities have made many announcements of it to their readers.

more. I have been lonely so long. I want a little happiness before I go."

"Don't!" he cried, hoarsely. "You know what comes before me."

She was a little indignant, but still tender.

"This woman does not want you, Lawrence," she cried. "Oh, Lawrence!"

He faltered. She laid her fingers upon his arm.

"Manning down the steps," he murmured, "and I will show you Lady Redford's rose-garden."

Her touch was compelling. He could not resist. He followed her. He lay the joy of her near presence. Side by side they moved along the terrace—it seemed to him that they passed towards their destiny.

They reached the end of the path, and she, rising like marble from the relief of her black lace dinner-gown, were alone. She looked at him with a smile. The gentle rustling of her clothes, with their slight mysterious perfume, was like music to him. A sudden wave of passion came over him. The primitive vitality of the man, awake at last, demanded its birthright.

And then under the lower step they met. Bernice and he placed himself squarely in their way.

"I am sorry to interrupt you," he said, "but I have something to tell you. I am looking for you, and to send you at once into the library. Something rather serious has happened."

"Manning turned towards the house. His nerves were all tingling with excitement. He was no longer in danger of yielding to that flood of delicious sensations. His voice had been almost steady as he carried the stairs up to his room. Bernice stood quite still. Her hand was pressed to her side, her dark eyes were lit with passion. She leaned forward towards him, and seemed about to strike him.

"You will find myself repaid for this, Sir Leslie," she said, "if you will only let me see you."

Then she turned abruptly away. For an hour or more she walked alone amongst the trellised walks of Lady Redford's rose-garden. But Manning did not return.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"You see, Manning," Lord Redford said, tapping the outspread evening paper with his forefinger, "the situation now presents a different aspect. I have no wish to remain here—a few hours ago I would have been glad to leave."

"I was only going somewhere to supper. I was going to call for Eva Faneborough, and I suppose she should have had some bridge afterwards. Come in instead, Lawrence. I can telephone to her."

"Already a promise of evil seemed to be forming itself in his mind. He would have given anything to have thought of some valid excuse."

"I have no excuse," he said, "but I am here."

"Why not now, then?" she asked.

"You have an engagement," he said.

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"I have no excuse," he said, "but I am here."

"Why not now, then?" she asked.

"You have an engagement," he said.

I believe that Sir Leslie would find his epilogue a little prosaic. I saw a great deal of Lawrence Manning in the country, and I think that I understand him as well as either of you. I believe that his day will come."

"Well, all I can say is," Lord Redford pronounced, "that I very much wish you had let him down at his country home. Between you and me, I have a very serious suspicion that he is going to be a great deal of trouble to you and me."

Bernice turned away with a little smile at her lips. She had a very little opinion of Lord Redford and his following. Alas! she saw the man whose career they counted finished at the head of a new and greater party. There were plenty of clever men of the coming generation, plenty of room for compromise, for the formation of a great national party out of the scattered units of a disunited opposition. She believed that Manning was strong enough to do this. She saw in it greater possibilities than might have been forthcoming even if he had been chosen to lead the somewhat feeble party represented by Lord Redford and his followers. For the rest, she had been very near the success she desired. Only an accident had robbed her of victory. If once they had reached the rose-garden she knew that she would have triumphed.

As the maid took off her jewelry that night, she looked at herself in the glass. She was thinking of that moment on the terrace. The glow had not wholly faded from her face—she saw herself with long, slender neck and smooth, untroubled complexion, still beautiful, still a woman to be loved. Her maid ventured to whisper a word of respectful compliment. True, Madame La Duchesse was growing younger!

What strange whim, or evil fate, had turned his feet in that direction? Manning often tried to trace backwards the workings of his mind that night, but he never saw the man whose career they counted finished at the head of a new and greater party. There were plenty of clever men of the coming generation, plenty of room for compromise, for the formation of a great national party out of the scattered units of a disunited opposition. She believed that Manning was strong enough to do this. She saw in it greater possibilities than might have been forthcoming even if he had been chosen to lead the somewhat feeble party represented by Lord Redford and his followers. For the rest, she had been very near the success she desired. Only an accident had robbed her of victory. If once they had reached the rose-garden she knew that she would have triumphed.

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