

SMOKED GLASSES

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those whom they leave behind. Suppose, my young medical student, that you really had your degree and that your mother were enough of a Spartan to bid you Godspeed. What would you do?"

"I'd enlist for active service at once," Evan vowed earnestly, entering into the play with zest. "I'd extract shrapnel and soothe from shell shock and amputate splintered limbs instead of pattering with a lot of silly women whose only trouble is that they have no real work to do; that they fritter away their days at silly teas and over senseless cards; that they never treat their muscles to actual exertion nor their lungs to pantingly breathed outdoor air."

"But you wouldn't get as much money as you get here," Julia commented, in a voice that was innocently sweet. Evan could not see the wicked sparkle in the blue eyes gazing so low-lidded at the flickering flames.

"How much can I get here?" he demanded, fiercely, forgetting the character that he had assumed. "Enough to keep up a house exactly like that of the other houses in the village. Enough to clothe and to feed my family and to pay for a few books, a life insurance and an occasional trip. Perhaps I can make enough to send my sons to college if they are worth the effort. I sometimes doubt it. Life here seems to give the present generation mental rickets. Other men's sons turn out to be namby pamby. Mine may. But they won't if they have to fight their way up, and if they have the example of a hero father. Anyway, what is gold compared to honor? Besides," he added, whimsically, "My practice will soon be ruined here. Half of the ills of life are imaginary, and they do not tarry with those who are straining muscles in the doing of things that are worth while. And it won't be long until everyone here will be too busy solving real problems on life's blackboard to play tit tat toe behind the teacher's back."

"But my sister won't let you go," blazed Julia, facing him suddenly. "She prefers to have you putter around here where she has always lived. I know all about the splendid chance which she forced you to turn down last winter, too! Medical students indeed! Mending soldiers' rent bodies and agony-seared souls is a work for healers who know life as well as medicine. You think I am only a child. At my age our grandmothers were rocking their second babies. I've read and observed and thought and I can see. Jeanette is all right at heart, but she has allowed her eyes to be covered with the smoked glasses donated by the Demon of Domestic Dullness. She wasn't always like this. I remember her wedding morning. I was only a child then. I woke to find her kneeling by the eastern window of our little room, watching the sun rise. I crept out of bed to throw my arms about her. She put her head down on my shoulder and said:

"O, Julia, I am so happy. Evan is so good, so true, so kind, my lover and my king. I want to be worthy of him. Little sister, help me always to be his inspiration, his comrade, his better self. God grant that I may never make it hard for him to do that which his honor demands."

"Now I intend to help her," Julia rushed on with the impetuosity of youth. "She would have let you join a special expedition to China to fight the Bubonic plague then. There is no reason why she shouldn't send you overseas now as bravely as the other women have sent husbands and lovers, brothers and sons. The home is in her name. There is a good bit of solidly invested money and she had a profession before she married. She is a strong, healthy young woman and the children are all safely past the teething period. She needs something to open her eyes. I am going to do just that. I shall —"

"Stop!" Evan had risen to his feet and stood as if dazed before the furious onslaught of the girl's words. Now he spoke with the voice which neither nurse nor patient, nor officious relative had ever dared to disobey.

"You will in no way interfere. You forget that you are speaking of my wife, the mother of my children. We will settle our own domestic difficulties—if difficulties there be which I do not concede. Thank you for coming over this evening." His voice had grown coldly formal. "I have an engagement now. Good-night."

Dr. Scotney stepped out into the starshine and closed the door. Could he have seen through the solid oak, instead of the silent, crushed little figure that he had left he would have beheld a thrillingly alive and vivacious young woman. She bowed triumphantly to her reflection in the glass and murmured to the daring eyed vision that dimpled back at her:

"Oh, no, you'll not interfere! You are flattened into a door mat and you will creep away and hide. You are a sly little puss and you found out just what you wanted to discover. And you will now sit down and plan some amateur theatricals with yourself as the villainess, your sister as the Awakened Wife and Brother Evan in the limelight before the final curtain as the Happy Husband."

Evan shrank from the next meeting with his sister-in-law. He could not quite remember what he had said. He was sure that he had not mentioned Jeanette's name. Yet he had the uncomfortable feeling that he had bared his soul for this slip of a girl. He knew that she was quite capable

of executing any plan, however venturesome. He had helped her through too many girlish escapades to have the slightest doubt on that score.

However, his fears were quickly soothed. Julia came over quite as often as before. She made no reference to the conversation. At first she wore such a hurt, childish expression that Evan melted. Probably the infant had not realized what she was saying. Moreover, the babies adored her, and she was so devoted to Jeanette. The doctor became quite kind in his desire to make amends for his harshness. Julia revived by degrees and soon they were back on the old familiar footing. Evan had completely forgotten the episode when a telegram was handed him some weeks later. He tore it open and found that it was from a physician in another part of the state, a man who had been a college friend of his father and who had helped Evan himself with many a bit of sage counsel when he was a young practitioner. He read:

"Come for consultation. Arrange leave practice. Stay week. Important."

Evan glanced at his watch. The express was due in exactly eighty minutes. He hurried into the living room. Julia was there, tranquilly mending. The baby played at her feet.

"Where's Jeanette?" he demanded.

"She has gone to a meeting of the club," Julia responded. "Harold and Roland are at school.

DR. BELAND

Canada's Greeting Upon His Return From Europe.

By J. W. BENGOUGH.

Little Bateese, go on de garden now,
And pick de flower pure w'ite and bring to me,
Dat's for put on de botton-'ole for show
Docteur Beland is 'ome from 'cross de sea.

Pick de w'ite flower, dat's match de soul of 'im
In all de year 'e suffer grief and pain,
Weeping de bitter tear till eye is dim
For bride dat's die, 'e will not see again.

W'ite flower—dat's like de love de docteur show
De poor Belgique w'en she is trample down;
Not try for ron away from dere, Oh, no!
But, lak de hero, stay for face de Hun.

W'ite flower—dat's tell de story how he look
W'en he is prisoner of de brute de Bosche,
Lak' rose dat's 'mong de ogly blisters took—
I go and fight dose devil too, 'ba gosh!

I lak' for strangle such beast on de t'roat
Dat's murder pauvre mere and little child,
And drown de babies w'en dey'll sink de boat;
Give me de gun, Bateese, my blood is wild!

Ah! I'm old man—pas' age for armee now,
But young Canayan habitant he'll go;
De beeg young feller strong as ox or cow,
He's got de stuff, by gar, let German know!

De w'ite flower on my botton-'ole, dat's prayer
De bon Dieu bless you always, chere Beland,
And w'en Quebec boy 'e get over dere
'E'll settle wit' dose Bosche, you understand!

hostess. If Jeanette knew that you were going she would feel obliged to rush home and pack your bag and see that you had on fresh linen and a newly pressed suit. Too bad to deprive her of the afternoon's pleasure."

"That's so," Evan commented after a moment's thought. "Very well. I'll write a message for her. Pack the bag while I see Oswald and arrange for him to take over my practice. He'll be only too glad. He's having a hard time to get a foothold. Three doctors for every patient now. I'll be back in half an hour."

When Evan returned, his bag was ready and his clean linen and fresh suit were on the bed. In exactly thirty minutes he appeared in traveling trim, kissed the baby and gave Julia a note.

"Give this to Jeanette, please," he said. "Good-bye, little sister. You are a trump. Take care of my family."

He was off in a whirlwind rush for the train.

"Am afraid I have called you here on a fool's errand, my boy," the genial old doctor remarked as his guest emerged from the sleeper the

next morning. "My patient rallied miraculously. It turned out to be quite an ordinary case after all."

Evan's face showed distinct disappointment.

"Tut, lad," the doctor rallied. "You look positively sorry that the man is recovering."

Evan pulled himself together.

"It wasn't that," he declared. "But I had been looking forward to the week with you. You are always as good as a tonic and I'm feeling rather done. However, it doesn't matter. I can get the morning express."

"Now, why?" the old man demanded. "I've a chance to go on a fine camping trip and to bring a friend. Your practice is arranged for. Your wife doesn't expect you. Why not come along?"

Evan found a fresh objection for every hour of the day. Each was overruled. Next morning the two men took an early train which would end at a trail—a trail which would plunge them into the heart of the woods. Evan had written a letter to Jeanette the night before and entrusted it to Dr. Ryall. It had been posted—enclosed in a fresh envelope to Julia.

It was a long, healing week spent close to nature. They fished and hunted and trapped. There were fragrant evenings by the dancing camp fire when Evan drank in the shrewd old man's philosophy or laughed at his kindly humor. Too, there were dreamless nights on beds of balsam, and awakenings to a plunge in the sparkling stream and to trout for breakfast. Mother Nature yielded the balm which she always gives to those who ask her to soothe their workaday hurts. It was with steadied nerves and with a saner outlook upon life that Dr. Scotney turned his face homewards.

At the end of the journey he swung from the train and hurried toward his office. There might be important mail. He was anxious to get Oswald by wire and to inquire about the progress of the more important cases. At the door he stopped in utter bewilderment. Jeanette, red-eyed and white cheeked, was sorting over his private papers.

"In the name of —," he began, but Jeanette rushed into his arms and burst into a torrent of weeping.

"There, there, pet," he comforted awkwardly. "What is the trouble? Has anything happened to the children?"

"O, you've come back, you've come back," she managed to gasp between her sobs.

"Come back?" he repeated, wonderingly. "Of course I've come back. What else would I do?" He held her close until her sobs were quieted.

"Now tell me all about it," he insisted.

"You were gone when I came from the club," she began, in a trembling voice. "The children had stopped to play on their way home from school and knew nothing about you. Baby said: 'Papa say bye, bye,' but I thought you had just gone for a call. Julia was in a hurry to get home and I suspected nothing wrong. When you didn't come for

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TO MY MOTHER

If I should die, grieve not that one so weak and poor as I should die—
Nay, though thy heart should break, think only this:—
That when at dusk they speak of sons and brothers of another one—
Then thou canst say "I too had a son. He died for freedom's sake."
(Unknown.)

Sister took Marian with her. Mrs. Lawton suggested that she could play with her Molly under the care of the nurse. Anything wrong?"

"A telegram from Dr. Ryall," Evan explained, hurriedly. "Important consultation. I really ought to leave on the five-forty. Can you get Jeanette by phone?"

"Yes," was the judicial response, "but it would spoil her afternoon and disturb the meeting. Why is it necessary? I can pack your bag. I always pack daddy's. Jeanette hasn't been out for an afternoon in a month, and she was anticipating such a pleasant time. There is a celebrated author present and you know that Mrs. Lawton is an ideal