







PARKER'S

The Hills of Desire

(Continued from page 45)

of sharing it with anyone, he knew that the thought that another had even looked at it would be enough to spoil it for Augusta.

And he, with this full knowledge of her fiercely proud little heart, had brought another woman in to despoil the sacred shrine of Augusta's love. He knew that she had thanked him for getting her pet back for her as the dearest thing he had ever done for her. And now when she should come to know the truth—as she would—it would embitter her to know that she owed it to another woman.

As the letters continued to come and the worry and humiliation of keeping up what seemed like an intrigue grew upon him he moodily wished that Augusta might learn the truth.

He could not tell her, for the very fact that must be his excuse, that he had done what he did for the love of her, would be the very reason why Augusta would resent his going to another woman. Explanations were always useless to Augusta. She cared not at all for the details. She would understand instantly, he thought, and understand instantly, he thought, and understand more justly than he could tell her. But she would be mortally hurt. It did not occur to him that Augusta would be just like every other woman. He never thought that Augusta in the supreme test when her love was threatened, would lose her almost inspired insight and go blind to everything except the one condemning fact—that he was corresponding secretly with another woman.

When the end came, when he came

that he was corresponding secretly with another woman.

thing except the one condemning fact—that he was corresponding secretly with another woman.

When the end came, when he came home that day to learn that Augusta had left him, and to read her note with its stark and yet prophetic finality, he was stunned by this thing which he had expected least of all.

The first emotion that he remembered was a furious anger with Augusta. It seemed that she had read but a part of one of the letters and had immediately jumped to the worst of conclusions. He was angry with Augusta, he remembered now, not because she had gone, but because she had allowed herself to be stupid.

How could she have misjudged him so? She must have been deliberately blind, for Augusta had not only an unerring instinct for truth; she had also a keenness of judgment such as he had hardly ever seen in man or woman.

But that was all very, very long ago, and he scarcely remembered now the boyish rage in which he had raved and had torn the hated letters and stamped them into the floor of the cabin.

He had chased feverishly to New York after her, and he had walked the city, without a starting point and without direction, looking for her, as he and she together had once walked the streets looking for Rose Wilding. Then, when at last he had become convinced that it was useless, that he would never find Augusta until the time that she should choose, he had gone back to the lake, to the Hills of Desire, to wait for her.

He found Donahue browsing contentedly among the trees much as he

her.

He found Donahue browsing contentedly among the trees much as he had left him, and a world mockingly unchanged.

unchanged.

Of course, he could not stay there. The haunting, whispering sweetness of Augusta's presence was there at every turn of his eyes, in the breath of every breeze that brushed his cheek, in the song of every bird that piped. There memories choked him, of the nights when she had fought the fever with him, of days when their hearts had danced together in the joy of work. There he had learned why the human race continues to wish to live—he had learned to know a sweet woman's heart.

ON THE morning of the fourth day he went down to the station and bought a ticket for Montreal. The station agent-post mistress told him with a The station with a

simper that there were letters for him.

"Will you please keep them," Wardwell requested politely, "until I call
on my way back. I—I might lose
them."

The next day he was a member of a Canadian infantry regiment, on his way to an assembly camp.

Through two years he had lived and

Through two years he had lived and fought, as others men lived and fought. He had lain sick and had thirsted and despaired, as other men did; and he had seen how other men died. About the last matter he was not surprised, except at the unwinking simplicity of it

it.

The sense of injury and misunder-



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