

THE CONSUL'S NIECE

(Continued from page 20)

Whatever the contents of the telegram, he kept them to himself, and presently went off with his usual kindly greeting.

Her uncle gone, Millie looked round the table with housewifely eyes.

Partly through an innate feminine instinct of tidiness, and partly through recently acquired habits of caution, she gathered up the scraps of paper left on the table.

From one crumpled bit the word "Onondaga" sprang at her like a threat, and without hesitation she smoothed out the sheet.

The words had been jotted down separately as deciphered, but their consecutive meaning was clear enough.

"Two cruisers ready to intercent Onondaga leaving harbour. Others following."

The paper in her hand, she went up to her room and shut the door. The rain beat against the window and she crouched near it in the armchair from which she was wont to enjoy the seaward view.

The inland-born girl had loved that horizon line, ever varying, ever the same with its mystical suggestions of some far-off, unattainable land of peace.

Now that mist-hidden outer sea was a cruel trap awaiting its prey, a foe with sword bared to smite.

"I ought to be glad! I ought to be glad!" she said over to herself, all the time knowing that she was not glad, that the thought of Jack Carter's life in peril of shot and shell and sinking ship was intolerable to her.

Whether one hour or two had passed she did not know, when she stood up and mechanically began preparing to go out in the rain.

From out that trance of passive suffering had come clear-cut and complete her determination that at whatever cost to honour or patriotism she must warn Jack Carter of the immediate danger.

The only remaining question was how to accomplish her purpose.

No direct communication between the consul's niece and the rebel officer seemed possible, but there must be some way to manage if only she thought hard enough.

She did think so hard, standing there shrouded in the stiff folds of the earlier type of waterproof from which our own smarter wrap has been evolved, that there came the helpless pain in her forehead that the difficulties of the multiplication table had caused in her school-days.

The solution of her problem that dawned upon her was not a pleasant one. Still, it was a solution.

Adeline Lester was her only sure messenger. For her own sake, for her country's sake, she would see that Jack or some of the Onondaga's officers were told of the need to be gone.

One heart-broken sob came as she murmured, "Let her have the credit of it! At any rate it saves his knowing how mean I was for him."

Out into the storm she went, into the streets whose solitude made her task the easier, gaining an angry joy in her struggle with the beating rain, with the gusts that waylaid her at corners, lashing her clothes around her and loosening her hair.

She knew her destination well enough. Often in passing she had

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