

in his voice, but she also liked the softer note. She smiled at him, but did not answer at once.

"Why should we wait?" he asked again—this time, as if he was half afraid he might have to wait a long time.

"Well," replied Peggy; "I should want a little time first, Max. There are such things as clothes to be got—and all the rest of it. Then you haven't asked Papa!" She laughed merrily.

"I hope the Colonel will not object," said Max.

"Perhaps not," she said, and laughed merrily again, as if there was some excellent joke. "I think that will be all right," she added. "He can deny his Peg nothing—not even you, Mr. Maxwell Hamilton!"

"But when is it to be?" asked Max, reverting to the subject.

"In three or four months," she said.

"What an eternity!" Max exclaimed.

"Besides my clothes which must be got," said Peggy, becoming serious all in a moment, "you may have to go to Germany, Max."

Max had forgotten all about it.

"Yes, that's true," he said soberly.

"By this time the taxi had reached the Willoughbys' house in St. Anton's Avenue—both thought the journey had never been done in so miraculously short a time before.

The Colonel and Mrs. Willoughby were at home, and they speedily heard how matters stood. Colonel Willoughby gave his consent willingly and blessed the lovers; Mrs. Willoughby was kind, but perchance there may have lurked in her mind the notion that her pretty Peggy might have made a more brilliant match. Still she was fond of Max Hamilton, and believed that he would make her daughter happy. She wondered how Captain Hollander would take it when he heard of Peggy's engagement; she had imagined that Peggy preferred him.

"It is the fortune of war," she said to herself; "and Captain Hollander is a soldier.

She meant that he would have to bear his disappointment like a gallant and brave man. No one ever denied that Hollander was brave, but there are different kinds of bravery; it is not the cowardly type of man that is really dangerous.

MAX explained his circumstances to Peggy's parents, and there was some talk of the marriage taking place in the spring, but no date was fixed. The engagement, however, was to be announced at once. It appeared in the "Post," indeed, not on the next day, but on that following, and was seen or heard of by all the friends of Peggy and Max. The usual congratulations were received by both parties, and everything for a few days went as happily as the proverbial "wedding bell." Captain Hollander, playing the game as usual, called on the Willoughbys, and said the proper thing.

During these few days the lovers were much together, and certainly were not less in love with each other. The dark fate of Sylvia Chase was a frequent subject of conversation; they did not forget her in the midst of their great happiness. Rather the contrary. For Peggy, on being asked by Max—a question asked by all lovers of each other—when she first knew that she loved him, had told him how much he owed, in the singular way it came about, to that tragic incident.

"It opened my eyes, as it were," said Peggy—and Max kissed the opened eyes!

Therefore Max was not less earnest, but more, in his efforts to penetrate Sylvia's secret. He had, however, to admit that he made no progress. Superintendent Johnson told him that "for the time being,"—this was a favourite expression of that officer—nothing more had been heard of "the man in the fur coat," the reward offered having proved of no avail.

By the end of the week after the finding of the body of Sylvia in the train by Max Hamilton, the attention of the public had passed to another subject—so quickly in these post-haste

days does one interesting theme supplant another. As after the disclosure that Miss Chase had been in receipt of fifty pounds a month from some unknown source, no fresh news appeared in the papers, because these journals could find nothing new—an excellent reason for their silence—to say about it, the public ceased to talk of it, and the dark mystery dropped out of sight practically altogether. Within a fortnight, the tragedy was remembered by very few.

Another subject, however, held the public interest absorbed in an almost painful degree.

This was the rumoured sale of the drawings of the new gun.

The short, but important, article which had appeared in "The Day" had created an immense sensation, not only in Great Britain and other parts of the British Empire, but in all parts of the globe. Though it was impossible to obtain absolutely definite information with regard to these drawings, the impression was universal that the German Army did have in their possession all that was necessary to enable them to construct similar cannon, and therefore that Great Britain had no monopoly of it.

ALL over the country there arose a great clamour, a tremendous outcry. How had the Germans procured these drawings?

An impenetrable reserve was maintained by the War Office; it refused to say one word about the matter. Had Parliament been sitting, questions would have been asked in the House, and some sort of reply might have been forced from the Minister for War, but the session did not commence till early in February.

One thing led to another. As Beaumont had foreseen, the agitation against Germany increased in England, while in Germany a similar ferment was at work with augmenting forces with respect to England. The tone of the Press on both sides of the North Sea became bitter and soon almost fierce. Many predicted the speedy outbreak of what would probably be the most terrible war in history. So critical was the situation that British journalists were privately asked by their Government to modify the expressions of their opinions in their newspapers.

On more than one occasion Max had been asked by his editor if he had everything ready to go to some point in or close to Germany, and Max had answered that he was ready; he had told his sweetheart of these occasions, and had warned her that he might be dispatched at such short notice that he might not be able to see her before setting out. This had given a keener edge to their meetings and partings.

And so it happened.

Some ten days after the murder of Sylvia Chase, Beaumont gave Max his orders. Max had gone to the office awaiting his arrival with much impatience.

"You will leave to-night for Luxemburg, Max," he said. "I have received information from a reliable source that Germany is about forcibly to annex the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. Several army corps are to be marched into it from Treves and Metz, and of course the Luxemburgeois are not in a position to make any resistance. The intention of Germany is to hold it, and overawe France, and through France Great Britain."

Max left for Paris in the evening.

(To be Continued.)

Progressive.

A clergyman had taught an old man in his parish to read, and found him an apt pupil. Calling at the cottage some time after, he found only the wife at home.

"How's John?" asked he.

"He is well, thank you," said his wife.

"How does he get on with his reading?"

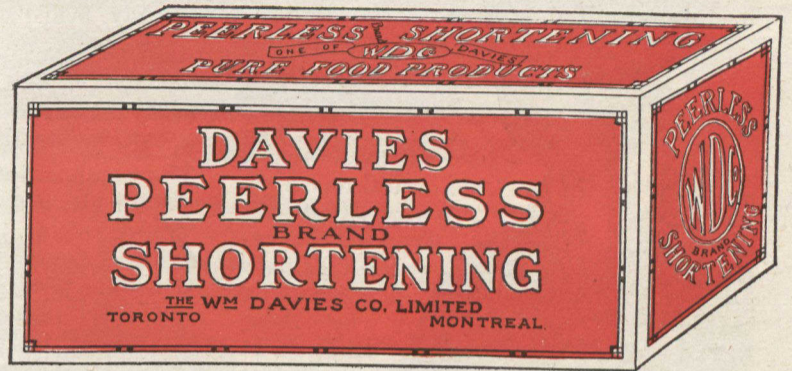
"Nicely, sir."

"Ah! I suppose he can read his Bible comfortably now?"

"Bible, sir! Bless you, he was out of the Bible and into the sporting papers long ago!"—Tit-Bits.

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is the Slogan of Every
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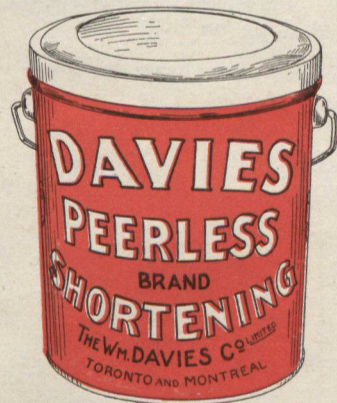


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