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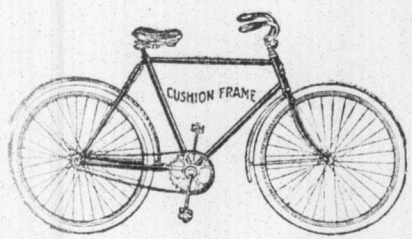
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The MASQUERADER

By Katherine Cecil Thurston,
Author of "The Circle," Etc.
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"There was a crash of music from the orchestra. Loder sat straggling in his seat. He was conscious that the blood had rushed into his face.
"Oh, indeed?" he said quickly. "One of them had a wife?"
"Exactly!" Again Kalne chuckled. "And the point of the joke is that the wife is the least lucky person under the sun. See?"
A second hot wave passed over Loder's face. A sense of mental disgust filled him. This, then, was the wonderful garden seen from another standpoint! He looked from Lillian, graceful, skeptical and shallow, to the young girl beside him, so frankly modern in her appreciation of life. This, then, was love as seen by the eyes of the world—the world that accepts, judges and condemns in a slang phrase or two! Very slowly the blood receded from his face.

"And the end of the story?" he asked in a strained voice.
"The end? Oh, usual end, of course. Chap makes a mess of things and the bubble bursts!"
"And the end of the wife?"
"The end of the wife?" Lillian broke in, with a little laugh. "Why, the end



"Outline the story for him, Lennie," she said.

of all stupid people who, instead of going through life with a lot of delightful human stumbles, come just one big cropper. She naturally ends in the divorce court!"
They all laughed boisterously. Then laughter, story and denouement were all drowned in a tumultuous crash of music. The orchestra ceased; there was a slight hum of applause, and the curtain rose on the second act.

CHAPTER XXXI.
A FEW minutes before the curtain fell on the second act of "Other Men's Shoes" Loder rose from his seat and made his apologies to Lillian.

At any other moment he might have pondered over her manner of accepting them—the easy indifference with which she let him go. But vastly keener issues were claiming his attention, issues whose results were wide and black.
He left the theater and, refusing the overtures of cabmen, set himself to walk to Chilcote's house. His face was hard and emotionless as he hurried forward, but the chaos in his mind found expression in the unevenness of his pace. To a strong man the confronting of difficulties is never alarming and is often fraught with inspiration, but this applies essentially to the difficulties evolved through the weakness, the folly or the force of another; when they arise from within the matter is of another character. It is in presence of his own soul, and in that presence alone, that a man may truly measure himself.

As Loder walked onward, treading the whole familiar length of traffic-filled street, he realized for the first time that he was standing before that solemn tribunal—that the hour had come when he must answer to himself for himself. The longer and deeper an oblivion the more painful the awakening. For months the song of self had beaten about his ears, deadening all other sounds; now abruptly that song had ceased, not considerably, not lingeringly, but with a suddenness that made the succeeding silence very terrible.

He walked onward, keeping his direction unswerving. He was passing through the fire as surely as though actual flames rose about his feet, and whatever the result, whatever the flier of the man who emerged from the ordeal, the John Loder who had hewed his way through the past weeks would exist no more. The triumphant egotist, the strong man who by his own strength had kept his eyes upon one point, refusing to see in other directions, had ceased to be.

Keen though it was, his realization of this crisis in his life had come with characteristic slowness. When Lillian Astrupp had given her dictum, when the music of the orchestra had ceased and the curtain risen on the second act of the play, nothing but a sense of stupefaction had filled his mind. In that moment the great song was silenced, not by any portentous episode, not by any incident that could have lent dignity to its end, but, with the full measure of life's irony, by a trivial social commonplace. In the first sensation of blank loss his faculties had been numbed. In the quarter of an hour that followed the rise of the curtain he had sat staring at the stage, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, filled with the enormity of the void that suddenly surrounded him. Then from habit, from constitutional tendency, he had begun slowly and perseveringly to draw first one thread and then another from the tangle of his thoughts, to forge with doubt and difficulty the chain that was to draw him toward the future.

It was upon this same incomplete and yet tenacious chain that his mind worked as he traversed the familiar streets and at last gained the house he had so easily learned to call home.
As he inserted the latchkey and felt it move smoothly in the lock a momentary revolt against his own judgment, his habit, from constitutional tendency, he had begun slowly and perseveringly to draw first one thread and then another from the tangle of his thoughts, to forge with doubt and difficulty the chain that was to draw him toward the future.

The mounting of a staircase is often the index to a man's state of mind. As Loder ascended the stairs of Chilcote's house his shoulders lacked their stiffness, his head was no longer erect. He moved as though his feet were weighted. He had ceased to be the man of achievement whose smallest opinion commands consideration. In the privacy of solitude he was the mere human flotsam to which he had once compared himself—the flotsam that, dreaming it has found a harbor, wakes to find itself the prey of the incoming tide.

He paused at the head of the stairs to rally his resolutions. Then, still walking heavily, he passed down the corridor to Eve's room. It was suggestive of his character that, having made his decision, he did not dally over its performance. Without waiting to knock, he turned the handle and walked into the room.

It looked precisely as it always looked, but to Loder the rich, subdued coloring of the books and flowers—the whole air of culture and repose that the place conveyed—seemed to hold a deeper meaning than before, and it was on the instant that his eyes, crossing the inanimate objects, rested on their owner that the true force of his position, the enormity of the task before him, made itself plain. Restation came to him with vivid, overwhelming force, and it must be accounted to his credit in the summing of his qualities that then, in that moment of trial, the thought of retreat, the thought of yielding, did not present itself.

Eve was standing by the mantel-piece. She wore a beautiful gown, a long string of diamonds was twisted about her neck, and her soft, black hair was coiled high after a foreign fashion and held in place by a large diamond comb. As he entered she turned hastily, almost nervously, and looked at him with the rapid, searching glance he had learned to expect from her. Then almost directly her expression changed to one of quick concern. With a faint exclamation of alarm she stepped forward.
"What has happened?" she said.
"You look like a ghost."

(To be continued.)

BIG RUSSIAN ORDER COMES TO CANADA

Canadian Steel Foundries Closes a Contract for 5,000,000 Shells.

New York, June 28—Wilson W. Butler, Vice President of the Canadian Steel Foundries, Limited, and the Canadian Car and Foundry Company, who arrived here to-day from Liverpool on the steamship Philadelphia, declared that while abroad he closed a contract in Petrograd for 5,000,000 artillery shells, which he asserted was one of the largest contracts ever granted by Russia for foreign-made ammunition. The shells will be manufactured in Canada and will be delivered to the order of the Russian Government at Canadian ports.
While in Britain Mr. Butler conferred with the Boothe Committee, an advisory organization to the War Department. He said that he objected to Britain's efforts to draw upon Canada and other British colonies for a large supply of skilled labor.
NEED OUR SKILLED LABOR

"Canada has already generously responded to the call of Great Britain with thousands of the best of her young men," said Mr. Butler. "The efforts to also draw from us our skilled labor I resent, for we need these men ourselves."

Mr. Butler confirmed an interview he gave before sailing in which he complained that Canadian firms were not given an equal opportunity with firms of the United States in supplying ammunition and war supplies. He declared further that the need of the allies now was for shells of a character that would break down and destroy trenches constructed of reinforced concrete and steel, such as, he said, the Germans have built all along the western battle line.

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and the Waterous close and excit- Tutela Park on the Stars winning he started in the and pitched good when he became alters replacing 7, two men on he held them safe O'Connor, who entices, was hit Stars. Leonard, n. Waterous' n. This is eleven Stars. They play ping at Agricul-

"ALERTS" TEN INNINGS
d. in which the represented, the at the Terrace fought eleven day afternoon at

two bad innings behind the pitch- all was played, done on both were hammered hits were well able to connect inches, but the with hits when son's home run nning drove in broke up the gett of Paris d gave general

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