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## The MASQUERADER

By Katherine Cecil Thurston, Author of "The Circle," Etc. Copyright, 1904, by Harper & Brothers

### CHAPTER XIX.

AND so it came to pass that Loder was freed from one responsibility to undertake another. From the morning of March 27, when Lakeley had expounded the political programme in the offices of the St. George's Gazette, to the afternoon of April 1, he found himself a central figure in the whirlpool of activity that formed itself in Conservative circles.

With the acumen for which he was noted, Lakeley had touched the keystone of the situation on that morning, and succeeding events, each fraught with its own importance, had established the precision of his forecast. Minutely watchful of Russia's attitude, Fraide quietly organized his forces and strengthened his position with a statesmanlike grasp of opportunity, and to Loder the attributes displayed by his leader during those trying days formed an endless and absorbing study. Setting the thought of Chileote aside, ignoring his own position and the risks he daily ran, he had fully yielded to the glamour of the moment and in the first freedom of a loose rein he had given unreservedly all that he possessed of activity, capacity and determination to the cause that had claimed him.

Singularly privileged in a constant personal contact with Fraide, he learned many valuable lessons of tact and organization in those five vital days during which the tactics of a whole party hung upon one item of news from a country thousands of miles away. For should Russia subdue the insurgent Hazaras and, laden with the honours of the peace-maker, retire across the frontier, then the political arena would remain undisturbed; but should the all important movement predicted by Lakeley become an accepted fact before parliament rose for the Easter recess, then the first blow in the fight that would rage during the succeeding session must inevitably be his. At the moment it was Fraide's difficult position to wait and watch and yet preserve his dignity.

It was early in the afternoon of March 29 that Loder, in response to a long standing invitation, lunched quietly with the Fraides. Being delayed by some communications from Wark, he was a few minutes late in reaching his appointment, and on being shown into the drawing room found the little group of three that was to make up the party already assembled—Fraide, Lady Sarah and Eve. As he entered the room they turned to speak, and all three turned to his direction.

In the first moment he had a vague impression of standing suitably to Lady Sarah's greeting, but he knew that immediately and unconsciously his eyes turned to Eve, while a quick sense of surprise and satisfaction passed through him at sight of her. For an instant he wondered how she would mark his avoidance of her since their last interview; then suddenly he claimed himself for the passing doubt. For, before all things, he knew her to be a woman of the world.

He took Fraide's outstretched hand, and again he looked toward Eve, waiting for her to speak.

She met his glance, but said nothing. Instead of speaking she smiled at him—a smile that was far more reassuring than any words, a smile that in a single second conveyed forgiveness, approbation and a warm, almost tender sense of sympathy and comprehension. The remembrance of that smile stayed with him long after they were seated at table and far into the future of the remembrance of the lunch itself, with its pleasant private sense of satisfaction, was destined to return to him in retrospective moments. The delightful atmosphere of the Fraides' home life had always been a wonder and an enigma to him, but on this day he seemed to grasp its meaning by a new light as he watched Eve often under its influence and felt himself drawn imperceptibly from the position of a speculative outsider to that of an intimate. It was a fresh side to the complex, fascinating life of which Fraide was the master spirit.

These reflections had grown agreeably familiar to his mind. The talk, momentarily diverted into social channels, was quietly drifting back to the inevitable question of the "situation" that in private moments was never far from their lips, when the event that was to mark and separate that day from those that had preceded it was unceremoniously thrust upon them. Without announcement or apology, the door was suddenly flung open and Lakeley entered the room.

His face was brimming with excitement, and his eyes flashed. In the first haste of the entry he looked to see that there were ladies in the room and, crossing instantly to Fraide, laid an open telegram before him. "This is official, sir," he said. Then at last he glanced round the table.

"Lady Sarah?" he exclaimed. "Can you forgive me? But I'd have given a hundred pounds to be the first with this!" He glanced back at Fraide. Lady Sarah rose and stretched out her hand. "Mr. Lakeley," she said, "I more than understand!" There was a thrill in her warm, cordial voice, and her eyes also turned toward her husband.

Of the whole party Fraide alone was perfectly calm. He sat very still, his

thin figure erect and dignified, as his eyes scanned the message that meant so much.

Eve, who had sprung from her seat and passed round the table at sound of Lakeley's news, was leaning over his shoulder reading the telegram with him. At the last word she lifted her head, her face flushed with excitement. "How splendid it must be to be a man!" she exclaimed, and without premeditation her eyes and Loder's met.

In this manner came the news from Persia and with it Loder's definite call. In the momentary stress of action it was impossible that any thought of Chileote could intrude itself. Events had followed each other too rapidly, decisive action had been too much thrust upon him, to allow of hesitation, and it was in this spirit, under this vigorous pressure, that he made his attack upon the government on the day that followed Fraide's luncheon party.

That indefinable attentiveness, that alert sensation of impending storm, that is so strong an index of the parliamentary atmosphere was very keen on that memorable 1st of April. It was obvious in the crowded benches on both sides of the house, in the eagerness of purpose that insensibly made itself felt through the ranks of the opposition and found definite expression in Fraide's stiff figure and tightly shut lips, in the unmistakable uneasiness that lay upon the ministerial benches.

But notwithstanding these indications of battle the early portion of the proceedings was unmarked by excitement, being tinged with the purposeless lack of vitality that had of late marked all affairs of the Selborough ministry, and it was not until the adjournment of the house for the Easter recess had at last been moved that the spirit of activity hovering in the air descended and galvanized the assembly into life. It was then, amid a stir of interest, that Loder slowly rose.

Many curious incidents have marked the speechmaking annals of the house of commons, but it is doubtful whether it has ever been the lot of a member to hear his own voice raised for the first time on a subject of vital interest to his party, having been denied all initial assistance of minor questions asked on the important amendments made. Of all those gathered together in the great building on that day, only one man appreciated the difficulty of Loder's position, and that man was Loder himself.

He rose slowly and stood silent for a couple of seconds, his body braced, his fingers touching the sides of his chair that lay in front of him. To the waiting house the silence was effective. It might mean overassurance or it might mean a failure of nerve at a critical moment. Either possibility had a tinge of piquancy. Moved by the same impulse, fifty pairs of eyes turned upon him with new interest, but up in the ladies' gallery Eve clasped her hands in sudden apprehension, and Fraide, sitting stiffly in his seat, turned and shot one swift glance at the man on whom, against prudence and precedent, he had pinned his faith. The glance was swift, but very searching, and with a characteristic movement of his wiry shoulders he resumed his position and his usual grave, attentive attitude. At the same moment Loder lifted his head and began to speak.

Here at the outset his inexperience met him. His voice, pitched too low, only reached those directly near him. It was a moment of great strain. Eve, listening intently, drew a long breath of suspense and let her fingers drop apart. The speaker's watchful eyes that faced him, line upon line, seemed to flash and brighten with critical interest. Only Fraide made no change of expression. He sat placid, serious, attentive, with the shadow of a smile behind his eyes.

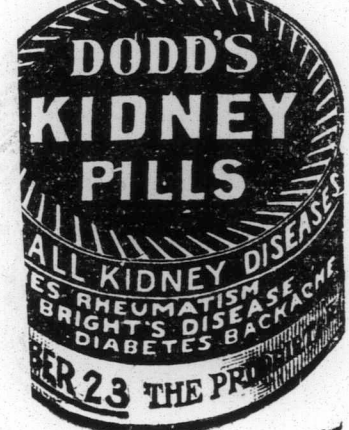
Again Loder paused, but this time the pause was shorter. The ordeal he had dreaded and waited for was passed, and he saw his way clearly. With the old movement of the shoulders he straightened himself and once more began to speak. This time his voice rang quietly true and commanding across the floor of the house.

No first step can be really great. It must of necessity possess more of the prophetic than of the achievement. Nevertheless it is by the first step that a man marks the value not only of his cause, but of himself. Following broadly on the lines that tradition has laid down for the Conservative orator, Loder disguised rather than displayed the vein of strong, persuasive eloquence that was his natural gift. The occasion that might possibly justify such a display of individuality might lie with the future, but it had no application to the present. For the moment his duty was to voice his party sentiments with as much lucidity, as much logic and as much calm conviction as lay within his capacity.

(To be continued.)

### Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

The amount spent by Detroiters last year on recreation was 99 cents per head; for charity 38 cents.



### How Those Seamen Laughed.

It was during that truce which the Turks first asked for and then entered by firing on the Triumph and torpedoing the Annie Rikmers, and the seaplane ship which was a prize captured by the Selborough ministry. The Annie Rikmers was torpedoed at night, and as her boats were got out one broke adrift and floated up the gulf until it lay close under the shore. On weeks a picket boat to bring it in was along side the round. When the Turks suddenly opened fire at almost point-blank range. The lieutenant in command, who was stepping on board the picket boat was wounded through the thigh immediately.

"They turned their Maxim on us," said the sailor who was telling the tale, "but they couldn't hit us even at that range. I could see the bullets making a hole in the water just ahead of the picket-boat. We tumbled on board again quick, I can tell you, bullets flying all round and going right through the funnel. We had a Maxim in the bows but it jammed after one round. We just had to get out quick. The stoker put his hand up on deck and got the knuckle grazed by a bullet. 'I'm hit!' he sings out. 'Down you go,' says the coxswain to me, 'and stoke her up all you know.' So I had to go crawling along the deck trying to keep out of sight as much as I could. I kept pretty low, but I knew part of me must be showing over the side and felt pretty uncomfortable. I can tell you, I found after that I had a bullet right through my cap, here—in here, out there. It was close enough, I can tell you. My we did laugh when it was all over." This is how they take it, laughing at the risks, whimsical even in their grumbling, patient, intelligent, above all brave. It is one of the compensations of war that brings out the splendid virtues of such men to be the pride of their contemporaries, the high example of Englishmen to come, Great souls, yet simple.

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A German shell exploded in Edinburgh a few days ago, seriously wounding one man, and blew out three fingers of a soldier, who was home on furlough. The shell was not fired by any raiding force, though the report of the explosion caused rumors of a Zeppelin raid in Edinburgh. With a piece of a "Jack Johnson" and a portion of a British-made projectile this small aluminum shell formed the gem of a collection of battlefield souvenirs brought home by an artilleryman who had deposited them for safe keeping in a public-house in Cowgate. Here they were being shown to some customers, including a second soldier, who it is alleged, having placed the fuse at zero, bumped it on the counter. The effect was disastrous. There was a terrific explosion, and the public-house was partly wrecked. The barman was badly wounded by a flying piece of metal, while the soldier had three fingers blown off and suffered injuries to his face.

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## PRZEMYSL FALLE

Archduke's A City—Bom ed Outer

By Special Wire to the Courier Vienna, June 3.—The Hungarian fortress of Prated between Lemberg, in the province of Galicia, captured by the Russians of last, after one of the most modern warfare. In the which have elapsed since however, the Austrians have made every effort to fortify, large forces being for this purpose from the fortress to the west. Cra

London, June 3.—The dmyl, as a Russian fort, ently, are numerous according to capture the five forts of front have been mentioned despatches. Austrian 25,000 and German 10-inch mortar pounding away at the forts provided on the west and of the fortress. The besiegers are within storming distance.

FIVE PORTS CAPTURED Capture of the five northern sector brings it before the intermediate gill fortifications, which erected in the interval of first and second sieges and Russians since then have further. This girdle makes the inequalities of the terrain, but it is believed able to offer only a brief delay. There is still a third line—the inner girdle of reinforced with guns, machine entanglements and concrete

## FURTHER S EVIDE

Sergt. Jay Mott is counted Cleared Up.

Following the d soldier being crucified who had left Brantford had exclusive information will relieve the anxiety

It was made public that Pte. Jay-Mott details to substantiate caused friends and is in a position to afford it for Sergt. Mott's Canadian Medical Service in the base hospital coupled with the fact three weeks, and not of a soldier in France others concerned with tion of these facts. A have revealed the in the person concerned

This morning received a wire from and would write later PTE

Following up the cluded from the evi man. In an interview uga, the following d wallah" (service man) Williamson on the 14