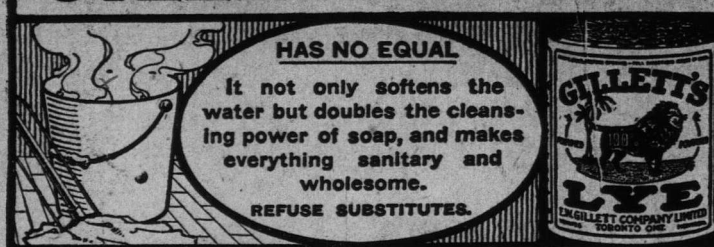


GILLETT'S LYE



Phyllis Dearborn

Countess of Basingwell

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"The wagons are safe, boys! Close around the horses at the wagons! Don't let them be wounded!"

The Englishman waved his sword, and turned his head to encourage his men. They saw he was smiling. A ball struck the turf at his horse's feet, and the gallant animal leaped over the trench. A dozen men fell at that volley.

"Hurrah, boys! out of range at last! Now follow me! Aha! they see us from the walls. France and food!"

He said no more after that. There was no need. The Uhlans had seen them on a direct charge, and had wheeled and put spurs. The waggoners piled the whip, and the terrified animals plunged along at the top of their speed. The escort kept close around the wagons.

The reins lay between the teeth of the riders. A pistol was clutched in one hand, a naked saber in the other. They remembered the order; or they followed the action of their leader.

The plain trembled with the pounding of the hoofs. Two to one—nearly three to one, the Uhlans, with their terrible streaming lances, bore down on them. The Englishman took aim and fired. A Uhlans tumbled from his horse. Crack! crack! crack! the shots flew, and many a horse dashed riderless into the plain.

Then they were together, and it was lance-thrust and saber-stroke. The Englishman fought like a demon, and hacked his gory way into the German ranks, and back among his own soldiers. Cries and moans, yells and curses—German and French—were all mingled in a hideous uproar. The other body of Uhlans was coming down on the flank. The convoy was stopped.

The Englishman looked around for a brief moment. Then he raised his voice in a wild yell that rose above the other cries:

"Death or Paris! Follow me!"

Dashing down two Germans who barred his way, he opened a pathway to one of the wagons, and seized the bride of one of the horses. The driver lay dead and ghastly over the sack of flour that had been his seat.

The terrified horses had been leaping and plunging, but with a strong hand on the rein of the leading horse they bent to their task. With saber waving in one hand, bride rein in mouth, and the other hand grasping

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"I was thanking God, dear. He has been very good to me. That is Lionel. He will forgive me before I die."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Lionel—Sir Lionel!" whispered Phyllis, looking from the white face of Flora, on which a peaceful smile had settled, to the still, death-like face of the soldier.

Then she bent over him, and though the eyes were shut and the blood had gone from his cheeks, she recognized him.

There they lay—husband and wife, brought together by the inscrutable working of Providence.

"Has the surgeon come?" asked Flora, suddenly.

Phyllis looked out of the tent. "He is coming now," she said.

Yes, he was coming in haste. He had just learned that a wounded soldier had been taken into the tent.

"You fools! you brutes!" he had angrily exclaimed. "She is dying for you, and you could not let her do it in peace."

He hurried up to Phyllis, and whispered eagerly:

"It was an outrage! How could you permit it?"

"Hush!" said Phyllis. "He is her husband!"

The surgeon stared and entered without a word. Flora did not stir, but she seemed to know all that was being done. She did not speak until the examination was over.

"What does he say?" she asked Phyllis.

"It is not dangerous, but he has lost a great deal of blood."

"I was sure he would live," said Flora. "Ask the doctor if he will be forbidden to talk when he regains his senses."

"May he talk to her when he recovers, doctor?"

"Certainly," said the surgeon.

If he would have soothed the last hours of the noblest woman he knew, the surgeon would have made the wounded man speak, at the cost of his life.

Phyllis applied the lotion and dressed the wounds with her deft hands, and then gave Lionel the restorative.

"I won't wait for him," said the surgeon. "I can do nothing more anyhow. I will return in a little while, and see that he is doing as he should. You wish him to recover, Sister Flora, and he shall."

It was his way of telling her how he esteemed her. She smiled.

"France and humanity!" muttered Lionel. "Ah," he groaned. "Where am I?"

"Do not let him know I am here until he knows you, Phyllis," whispered Flora.

Lionel looked up at the beautiful sorrowful face bending over him, and tried to puzzle out where he had seen it. He did not recognize it in the nurse's cap.

"Oh, I'm wounded, it seems."

"Yes, and you must lie still, else you will disturb the bandages."

"I've seen you before. Where?" and he stared at her. "Miss Phyllis! By all that's great and good! Little Miss Honesty! This is luck. Where's Carrie?" he turned his head and looked at the other cot.

"Carrie is home," said Phyllis. "This is a tent in the outdoor hospital."

"You're not as glad to see me as I am to see you," he said, abruptly.

"Haven't you gotten over that odd streak yet? What did I do to offend you?"

"Nothing at all. This is a strange place to find you in, Lord Basingwell."

"Sir Lionel, at your service. Basingwell had another heir. A girl named Phyllis, but she didn't strike

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me as a Miss Honesty. How is Carrie?"

"Ever so much better. Thanks to your liberal payment—"

"Strictly business, I assure you, Miss Phyllis. I paid her just what was right. Much better, is she?"

"She can walk a little."

"Can she? Dear little Carrie! I've carried her in my heart ever since you turned me out, you know. I wish she were here. She'd be a little more enthusiastic than you are over a fellow. Am I disturbing anybody by talking?"

"Not at all. One of the nurses was struck by a bullet and badly wounded."

"Brute! I hope they hung the man. Am I much hurt?"

"Not dangerously."

"Astonishing how a man can try and try and never get what he wants."

"Oh, Sir Lionel! you didn't wish to be killed!"

He laughed in a feeble way.

"I wanted to get the provisions in first. After that I thought it might come."

"Are you strong enough to hear something?"

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What now? Not going to turn me out again, are you? I declare I'm not strong enough for that," and he laughed again.

"No; it is something about your wife."

"My wife! Flora! Do you know anything about her? Where is she? I've been looking for her until I was sure she must have been killed when that fellow Gree was. Bad lot, Gree! He was the fellow who insulted you that night, Miss Phyllis. What do you know about my wife? Why should you be interested? I think I'm talking a good deal. Am I light-headed?"

He was talking a great deal, but he was not in a delirium.

"It is the fever from your wounds. I wish you would let me tell you about her. Will you?"

"Certainly. I would like to hear. I wish Carrie were here. She and I would laugh together. You are so melancholy. Go on. Poor Flora!"

"Then you don't hate her any more?"

"Heaven forbid! I suppose you know all about it from the way you talk. Do you, Phyllis?"

"Yes."

"Well, I did hate her—hated her bitterly. But all the time there was something inside of me pleading for her. Men don't pay attention to those things as women do, and I wouldn't listen. She asked me before I went away if I would kiss her. I never have got rid of her look since. I'd walk ten miles this minute if I knew it would kill me, to kiss her. Is she alive, Phyllis? You don't mind if I call you Phyllis, do you? When I'm well I'll put on the miss. Is she alive?"

"Yes, but very ill."

"Is she? I suppose you mean she is dying. That is the way they always tell any one. Is she where I can get to her?"

He started to get up, and Phyllis pressed him down.

"Please don't. You shall see her if you wish. Tell me what you were going to say about forgiving her."

(To be Continued.)

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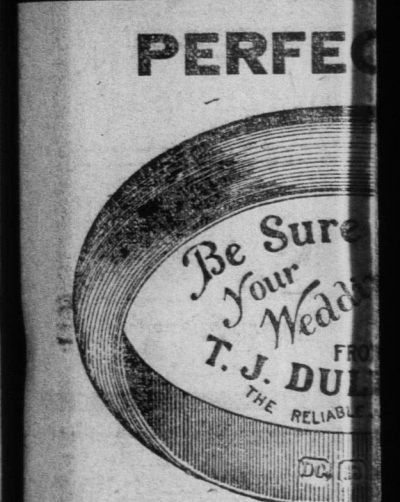
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