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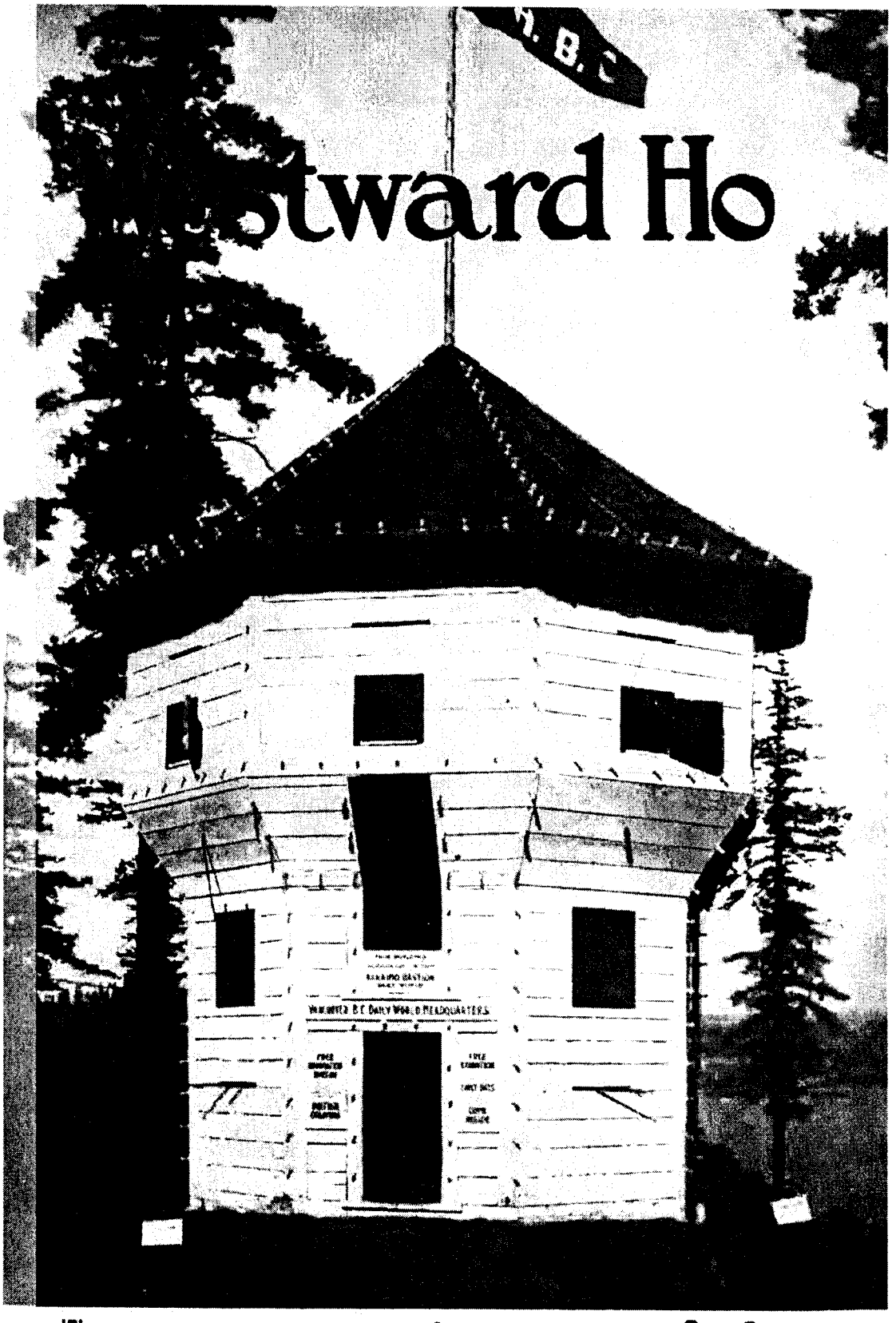

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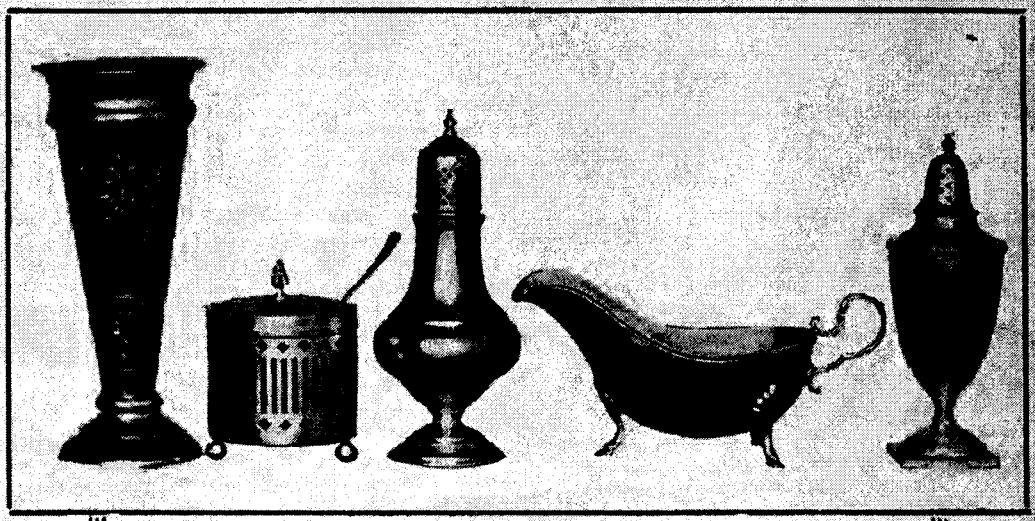

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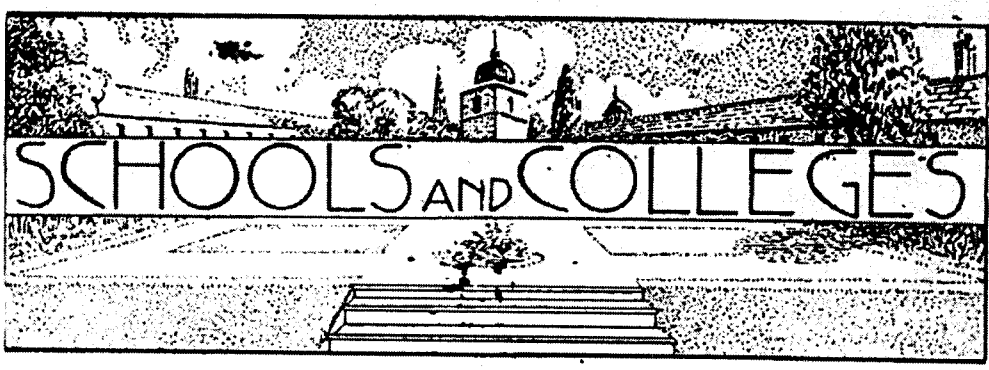

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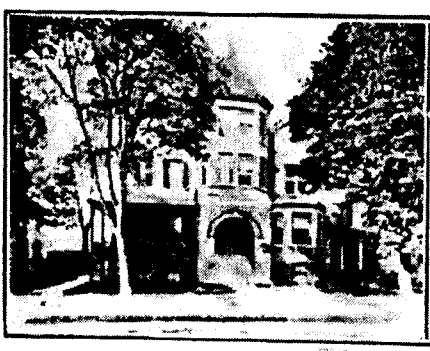

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In Canada and British Possessions, $1.00 per year. Single Copy, 10c.
In United States, $1.50. Single Copy, 15c.

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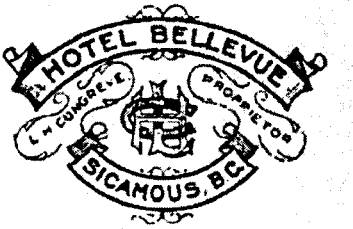

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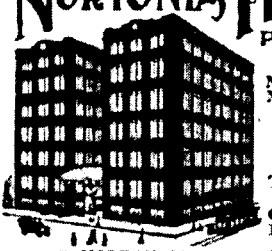

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Marguerite's Hill

By Lilla E. Norman

"THEY call this 'Marguerite's Hill,' a queer name, you say! Well, it is named after an old squaw—you will see the cabin when we get to the top. No, I don't think she is alive now, the last I heard of her she was blind and had been taken away by some of the tribe. Whoa! Prince, we'll rest here awhile, old fellow. My, it's hot, 'aint it"? The freighter mopped his damp brow and sunburned face with a questionable red bandana and looked at his companion seated beside him in the freight wagon.

She was a young woman, plainly but neatly dressed, with little of the pioneer about her save the courage in her large gray eyes, and it was with doubtful interest that she gazed up the steep ascent. To her the old Cariboo road was a dream of past happy days when she travelled up its wooded aisles together with her husband in search of recreation, rest and incidentally—wealth. Now she was leaving him behind, and journeying down again, going back to the States for a few weeks, and had taken passage with the good-natured, big hearted freighter known everywhere along the road as "Bill."

"Get along, now, Prince; ginger up, boys," and the swish of the whip set the six horses in motion, toiling labouriously up the hill.

"Why is the hill named for the old squaw?" asked the woman, seeing that she was expected to take up the thread of conversation. "Tell me all about it."

"Well, you see this is an old, old road; for fifty years the Cariboo gold mines have been worked, and this has been the trail over which supplies were freighted in and the gold was carried out. Many a man has gone in and made his stake but has never reached civilization again. I could point out a dozen places where it is claimed victims have been rudely buried by their captors, and it wasn't always the Indians, either; but being a wild new country and no proof of anything no enquiries except a few from the far interior were ever made. The men were strangers and there was little travel on the road, but you want to know where Marguerite comes in? Well, I'm coming to that. As I told you before, the

old squaw is blind and if alive is now a hundred years old. There's the cabin, now. Whoa, Prince, you can breathe again, old fellows, for a few minutes."

"Why, they look quite dilapidated, no one living here now?"

"No, they are deserted now, but she used to put up strangers and travellers, and her place was quite a tavern in early days. That is how the hill got its name, and there is a story connected with this place that might interest you.

"It is claimed that somewhere in this location there is a big lot of gold hidden. It seems a man coming down from the gold fields with a big stake packed on a mule, was waylaid here. Why the robbers did not take the gold out with them after killing the miner to get it, is not known, but the story is, they buried it in an iron pot and went away, never returning to their treasure. As old Marguerite grew older she whispered parts and bits of this story to travellers, but said she dared not tell where it was buried, always declaring: "White man kili me, tell." No amount of coaxing nor gaudy gifts could get her secret, though many have tried, telling her the white man would never come back and would never know. With the usual superstition of her race, however, she refused always for fear "white man would kill if she told." All that was ever got out of her was that "it was in an iron pot between two trees, not very far"—she would tell no more; many searched, but no pot of gold has been found.

"You'd better come back and look around!" he added, "we stop only a mile away and you might find the gold."

"I believe I will," she answered lightly, as they moved on again; the cabin was slowly receding from sight.

A few minutes more and the freighter drew up at the road-house; after alighting with difficulty from her lofty seat, the woman went indoors, the covered wagons hitched tandem fashion, were drawn to one side and the teams stabled for the night.

The travellers were ravenously hungry, and each laughed slyly at the other as they ate heartily of the steaming viands set before them. "Angels could do no more," said Bill solemnly, as they rose from the table. The tired woman early sought her own room, where without undressing she threw herself wearily on the bed.

The moon was at its full, its white light streaming through the windows filled the room with mystic shadows, the trees rustled their leaves complacently, and the birds twittered a goodnight, a peaceful silence settied over the isolated farmhouse.

Suddenly the woman raised herself on her elbow, a look of resolve on her face. "I'll do it," she muttered, "only a mile, and I'm not afraid. I'll take the shovel out of the freight wagon, and I'm almost sure I saw the very trees. They are not conspicuous, but they looked to me as if they held a secret between them.

Rising softly, she drew her cloak from the chair where it had been tossed, and hatless she stepped quietly through the hall, where she easily slipped the bolt that locked the door. She was outside immediately and in haste possessed herself of the shovel from the rear wagon, then sped away up the road.

It was not late, possibly eleven, and the spring blossoms filled the air with a heavy fragrance. How strange and solemn it all seemed as she walked hurriedly along the quiet moonlit road. Not a sound save now and then a pine needle would thread its way downward through the pine boughs, and its rustle would die away in the grasses and needless which carpeted the ground.

"It seems a very short mile," said she aloud, as the cabins came in view on the top of the hill, "but the clearing is not so large as I thought. I wonder if I can find my trees?" she mused, and unaccountably she shivered. "They were on this side of the road, just after we passed the cabin, and a blackened stump stood just in front of them."

A few minutes investigation located the trees, and truly they did not look as if for many years they had whispered of secret things, leaning lovingly toward each other until the upper branches were intertwined, and the tops were almost touching.

Without hesitation she began to dig, but the earth was filled with stones and roots, making it a difficult task for arms unused to heavy work. "At least there are no large roots so far—and what is this?—as she unearthed something with the last shovelful of stones and soil. She laid the shovel down and examined the object which had given forth a grating sound but was not a stone. An old iron spoon thickly coated with rust, but still entire, came to view.

"I've found it, I'm sure," she cried exultantly, "for this spoon has not grown here."

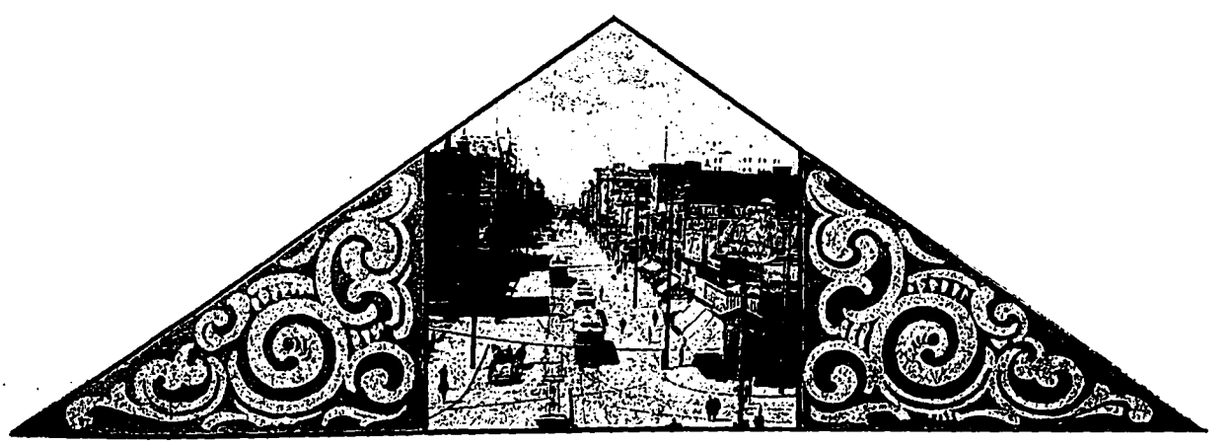
She dug feverishly now, her back and arms ached while the perspiration was oozing out. Her cloak had long ago been cast aside, and she had forgotten her surroundings in her excitement.

"What will John think?" she wondered excitedly; "he can't be very cross at me, especially if there is really a treasure here."

The earth was looser now and the roots seemed to have been removed or to have grown in another direction, so with little by little the excavation was growing fast. "Ha!" the ring of metal." A few more hasty shovelfuls, and then—she literaliy sprang into the hole and began to tear away the earth with her hands. Sure enough, the treasure in the iron pot, and hurriedly brushing away the remaining earth, she lifted the close-fitting lid and inserted her hand. A thrill of disappointment surged over her, for she expected gold coins of course, but only a fine gravel sifted through her fingers. She held a handful up to the moonlight and it glinted in the pale rays. She laughed aloud at her foolish notion, for how could it be other than nuggets.

Her mind filled with visions of her husband's face when she told him the news; the most beautiful home, wonderful trips, clothes, everything that money could buy would be theirs now, and she laughed again in her exuberance of joy. Her laugh was answered by a hoarse chuckle from the roadway, and she turned in affright to see a hideous Indian hag whose sightless eyes stared at her through the moonlight; behind, but towering above her, stood a thin gaunt man, whose wild eyes peered mockingly through shaggy eyebrows. His unkempt hair and beard were matted and half hid the gnarled and knotted throat, from which the leathern hunting shirt was turned back. She started in frightened wonder, still holding firmly to the treasure at her feet, but as she moved slightly, his whole attitude changed with an unearthly look of malice, then to such an expression of unsatisfied longing and greed, the despair of a soul who must forever guard the ill-got gains which he himself could never enjoy.

Slowly he raised his arm, and again came the gutteral cackle from the old hag. In the lights and shadows the woman caught the gleam of a shining barrel; vainly she tried to cry aloud, but her tongue refused to obey; now she felt the eyes burning her through the steely rifle sights, and, grasping frantically at the gold at her feet—Bang! Bill noisily slammed the hall door on his way to bed, and she fell back trembling and perspiring but wide awake now.



The Cajolery of Man

By Marion Ward

IT was very still and sunny and peaceful. The great old chestnut tree cast a cool, refreshing shade, and the liquid notes of its feathered denizens filled the air. Aunt Cynthia sat with a slight smile on her placid old countenance, knitting busily with the interminable grey and pink wool. Barbara let her book lie idly in her lap, and gazed rather wistfully on the sunny landscape.

"I wonder"—she broke the silence suddenly—"I wonder what Tom is doing now?"

Aunt Cynthia stopped smiling. She knitted fast and in silence.

Barbara stole a quick glance at her.

"I may talk about my own brother!" she expostulated rebelliously.

The aunt's lips were compressed.

"My dear, I would rather you did not," she remarked gently.

Barbara pushed up her hair impatiently. "Oh, dear," she sighed audibly.

Aunt Cynthia glanced at the pretty, disconsolate face. "I am sorry, dear," she murmured apologetically, "but you know my views."

"But Tom isn't wicked or horrid!" argued the girl.

The aunt regarded her with reproach. "All men," she reminded her, setting her soft lips grimly, "are snares and delusions."

"Not *all*?" begged Barbara.

"Yes, all," maintained the aunt firmly. "They are snares and delusions, and a bitterness of the spirit. There is not a man living but makes some poor woman, or women, miserable or unhappy."

Barbara sighed. "*I* haven't got a man to make me unhappy," she remarked rather mournfully.

"I hope you are truly grateful for that mercy," said Aunt Cynthia, solemnly.

"Y—yes," assented Barbara rather doubtfully.

"Yes," continued the little spinster proudly, "you are safe here with me from the wicked wiles of man as though you were immersed in the depths of a cloister. That was why, when it was arranged that you should come to me after the completion of your education, I stipulated that even Mr. Tom should not come here to visit you. We want no disturbing element of Man in our snug little retreat."

Barbara sighed again. "But, aunt," she suggested slowly, "how am I to understand and guard against their wicked wiles if I never have any experience of them?"

The aunt compressed her lips again. "I will guard you," she replied firmly. A shadow fell over her faded old face and her eyes grew sad and reminiscent. "Thirty years ago," she mused, "thirty years since I vowed, with God's help, never to see or speak to living man again as long as I had life. And I have kept my vow. From that day to this," triumphantly, "not a male being have I set eyes on."

They returned to their respective knitting and book again, and for a little while silence reigned.

They were seated on a grassy, tree-shaded terrace that sloped steeply down to a stone wall at the bottom, beyond which was a drop of some feet to the high road without. From where they sat that same road was plainly visible for a long distance, a white and winding ribbon now flooded with yellow sunshine, and then retreating into grateful shade, till skirting a dense wood on its right it took a sudden turn and disappeared behind it.

Barbara gazed rather forlornly up the sunny road. She felt lonely, and just a little aggrieved. She was very fond of Aunt Cynthia, and possessed a happy, contented disposition, but sometimes, es-

pecially on a brilliant afternoon such as this, she could not help feeling that it was hard she should be doomed to spend such a solitary, dull and monotonous life just because of the dim and distant love troubles of an eccentric aunt. She thought of all her schoolfellows, and wondered, enviously, what they were doinging—longing with a desperate longing for one of them—any one, it did not matter which—to have a chat with. She pictured them at garden and tennis parties, picnicing up the Thames, on the sea; and here was she doomed to pass the rest of her existence in solitary confinement with not a soul to talk to but her aunt, the village tradespeople, and some one or two frumpish gossips who occasionally paid them visits.

She sighed from the very depths of her heart in self-pity. Of course, if men were so unprincipled and wicked as her aunt portrayed, she would not have anything to do with them; but surely it would only be right to let her know one or two to find out their iniquity for herself so that she might despise them properly?

Her thoughts broke off suddenly. The black speck she had absently been watching crawling along the whiteness of the road was drawing rapidly nearer, and before her astonished eyes resolved itself into——

"Aunt!" she exclaimed suddenly in tragic accents, "here comes a MAN."

The pink ball of wool leapt into the air, and danced rakishly away over the lawn. "Where?" cried Aunt Cynthia with agitation. "Which way?" and she shut her eyes tightly.

"Coming down the High Road—this way," enlarged Barbara excitedly.

"We had better go in," said the aunt hurriedly, gathering together her wools.

Barbara set her pretty lips mutinously. "I shall stay here," she announced firmly.

"Barbara!" the shut lids were turned on her in shocked amazement.

She coloured a little, then laughed. "I want to see what he is like," she protested frankly. "A stranger is such an event here. Do sit down, aunt, and go on knitting; he is sure to go straight by without seieng us; besides, you needn't look at him."

"Barbara, I command you to come into the house," said her aunt sternly. "I am hurt and surprised at your conduct this afternoon. After all my teaching, too——"

Barbara sat absolutely still. "He's getting quite close now," she remarked cheerfully. "He's looking straight up at us——"

The valiant defender of her girlish inexperience turned and fled incontinently. Barbara sat upright and gazed gravely into a pair of honest grey eyes set in a plain tanned face. She could see also a pair of broad shoulders clad in Norfolk tweed. The wall was fairly high, and of most pedestrians showed no more than a hat above it; therefore the stranger was more than commonly tall.

"I beg your pardon," he tendered apologetically, "but—can you tell me if this is a house named 'Seclusion'!"

Barbara wondered why he essayed the impossible in trying to part such rough hair in the middle.

"It is," she replied gravely.

"Oh—thank you," he said, then he looked up the road, and he looked down the road before his glance rested perplexedly upon her face. "I am Garth Melville," he announced tentatively.

She elevated her pretty brows.

"Miss Silverton's nephew," he explained. He waved a comprehensive hand up and down the blank length of wall.

"Is there no entrance to 'Seclusion'?" he inquired.

"Not for men," replied Barbara soberly.

A sudden smile irradiated the sunburned face. "That isn't all true?" he protested incredulously.

She nodded solemnly. "Perfectly true."

"But my aunt—— If you told her—" he paused, plainly at a loss.

"I did tell her," she murmured. She waved one hand in the direction of the house at the top of the green slope. "There she is," she finished apologetically. He was just in time to see the last of a grey skirt disappearing round the door-lintel. Then his eyes came back to

the girl's grave eyes. He struggled to subdue his amusement.

"May I come up where you are?" he asked, boyishly.

But he did not wait for her uncertain permission. Placing both hands on the rough top of the wall, he vaulted lightly up, swinging his legs over so that his feet rested on the sacred sward of "Seclusion."

Barbara noted with satisfaction that the man was clad in faultless fashion. It did not enter her head to be self-conscious or ill at ease. She was young, and her manners were those of a self-possessed child. There was something direct and child-like in her gaze, too, that the man evidently found interesting.

"I don't bite," he said suddenly.

Barbara flushed scarlet, becoming conscious of her age and rudeness. "I beg your pardon," she said with the air of a small queen. She rose hastily. "I will see if aunt——"

"She must," he maintained unconvinced.

Barbara shook her head. "I am afraid not—I am *sure* not."

The corners of his mouth went down. "Is she—is my aunt *mad*?" he suggested, with bated breath.

Barbara drew herself up. "Certainly not," she replied stiffly. "Aunt Cynthia had a very dreadful trouble years ago all through a cruel, wicked man, so, naturally, she is prejudiced——"

"But her own nephew——?" he deprecated.

"She cannot break her vow," argued the girl loyally.

"If you put it to her——"

Barbara still shook her head, but she turned and moved swiftly up the green slope to the house.

The man watched the slender figure with interested eyes, noticing the red glint of the hair, the small, regal head, and the graceful, easy motion of her walk.

She was back again almost immediately, flushed and discomfited.

"You are to go at once, please," she reported shamedly.

A gleam came into his eyes. "And if I refuse?" he suggested.

The blue eyes regarded him with scared awe. "You couldn't; oh, you couldn't?" she pleaded.

"I don't see why I should," he grumbled argumentatively. "I am her own nephew; it is only respectful as I am in this part of the earth to come and pay my respects to my mother's sister."

Barbara had recovered her self-possession. "She refuses to see you," she replied firmly. "She is very much upset. I am to go in at once."

His eyebrows went up and almost met his rough hair. "What have I done?" he expostulated.

A demon of mischief lurked in the blue eyes. "You are a man," she proclaimed tragically.

"But I can't help that," he objected.

She shook her head wisely. "The fact remains," she said. "And I am in dire disgrace for my impropriety in speaking to you."

"But you couldn't help it. I spoke first. And in common politeness one must reply to a poor lost wayfarer, even though he be an abominable man."

"Besides, you said you were her nephew," she added accusingly.

"So I am. It's all nonsense," he declared strenuously. "Why, I'm your own cousin!"

Barbara opened her eyes very wide at this. "Why, so you are!" she cried in unaffected delight. "How nice."

He coloured slightly, "Thanks awfully," he said boyishly. He held out his hand. "I introduced myself. Will you do the same?"

She shook hands frankly. "I'm Barbara Singleton," she complied. She looked at him regretfully. "And now, I must say good-bye."

"Oh, I say——"

"Aunt Cynthia is very cross already, and I daren't stay a moment longer."

"But," he said, "you don't think I'm going to find a cousin and lose her all in a moment? Mayn't I call properly at the front entrance?"

She gasped at his lack of realisation of the facts. "Oh, you mustn't think of it," she cried dismayed.

"Oh, but—you know——" his whole face protested the inadequacy of words.

"It cannot be helped," she said regretfully.

"It must be helped," he said, and set his square jaw doggedly. "You go out sometimes?"

She looked dubious. "Aunt Cynthia wouldn't hear of my meeting you," she demurred.

"But——" Then he looked at the frank, child-like eyes and stopped in perplexity.

She half read the pause. "Of course, I should be obliged to tell aunt," she remarked a little stiffly.

"Can't you—cant you *coax* her?" he suggested brilliantly. "I am sure you could."

She laughed, and flushed a little. "I can sometimes," she confessed, quite unembarrassed. "But I am afraid in this case——"

"Try," he besought.

"Very well, I'll try. But—you are my own cousin," she argued.

"Of course I am. And you are not tied by any absurd vow. You couldn't be so rude as to disown me," he urged craftily.

"No—o," she argued doubtfully. Then she awoke to her delinquency in tarrying there talking. "Oh!" she cried, "what will Aunt Cynthia say! I must go this instant. Good-bye," and she turned hurriedly away.

"I say!" he called urgently.

She came back impatiently.

"You haven't shaken hands," he said.

She laughed and held out her hand. He held it fast. "You won't cast me off?" he asked anxiously. "Promise to do your best to persuade her?"

"I'll do my best," she promised frankly.

He let her go reluctantly. "I'll come tonight at seven to learn the result."

"Oh——' She paused in doubt, but he had grown suddenly deaf, and before she had made up her mind to forbid him he was striding rapidly away without glancing back.

"Oh, well," she reflected, soothing her conscience, "he's my cousin."

CHAPTER II.

Evil times had fallen upon the erstwhile peaceful house of seclusion. Aunt Cynthia was nervous, ruffled, and shocked. Barbara was perplexed, disturbed in mind and a trifle injured. Even old Martha, who had dandled Miss Cynthia on her knee, showed her sympathy with her mistress's perturbation by a display of grumpiness and ill-humour unparalleled. The only one of the four inmates who truly appreciated and even revelled in the state of circumstances was Polly, the kitchen-maid. Her small mind was in a chaos of excitement, mingled with delight, at the prospect of a real "love affair," and envy of Miss Barbara's tall, handsome young man.

And all the disturbance was caused by the advent of a MAN. Barbara half began to believe all her aunt's tales of their depravity. If the mere appearance of one caused such an upheaval, what might not be the result of any real intercourse?

Still, he seemed quite harmless, and she was so lonely, and, after all, he was her cousin. She sighed at the cares and complexity of life.

Her aunt refused to alter her views. Neither would she discuss the matter. She set her lips in that obstinate way so often peculiar to very gentle people.

"I am grieved and disappointed more than I can say," she said movedly. "I had thought by my tender care and surveillance to guard you from the slightest contact with the opposite sex. And now, at the very first word from one of their only too persuasive tongues, you are ready to fling all my teachings to the winds. Child, child, I thought better of you."

"But, aunt," sighed poor Barbara, torn in two, "surely there can be no harm in just speaking to one's own cousin? How could I be so ill-bred as to refuse to acknowledge him?"

"We will leave personalities alone, if you please," returned Aunt Cynthia firmly. "I was talking in the abstract."

"I call tongues purely personal," replied Barbara, stung to retort.

The aunt said nothing.

"And how can I help meeting him?" went on the girl distressedly. "Wherever I go he seems to appear. Of course it is pure accident, but you don't know how hard I try to find fresh places for my walks, yet whichever way I turn, sooner or later I am sure to meet him."

Aunt Cynthia knitted fast. "There is no measure to gauge the depth and height and breadth of man's artfulness," she observed, with deep solemnity.

"It can't be art——unless he watches the gate with field-glasses," objected Barbara mischievously.

"I dare say that is precisely what he does do," said Aunt Cynthia grimly.

Barbara laughed in spite of herself at the very thought of taking such an idea *au serieux,* but, as a matter of fact, for once the aunt was right. It was precisely what he did. Such is the duplicity of man.

"But what *am* I to do?" insisted the girl, returning to the attack, "I acknowledge that I like him very much, and although I try hard not to meet him, I can never quite succeed in being sorry when I fail. Still, because of what you say, I do try, truly, so what more can I do?"

"You can stay at home," pronounced the other uncompromisingly.

"Aunt Cynthia!"

"You could get quite sufficient exercise in the grounds," she went on firmly. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you emulating my example and displaying a proper spirit."

Barbara's face was a study.

"I couldn't!" she decided at length with a deep breath. "I should die." She looked appealingly at the aunt's unyielding face. "Aunt Cynthia, you know how I love to ramble in the woods," she pleaded. "I should be wretched cooped up from day's end to day's end just in the grounds."

"I suffer no discomfort therefrom," replied Aunt Cynthia primly. Then she looked up at the pretty, girlish, disturbed face and softened suddenly. "My dear, my dear, it is for your own good I speak," she said earnestly. "I love you, child, more than I ever thought to love anyone again, and it tears my heart in pieces to see your feet set upon that same path of destruction wherein I trod and suffered. Pause in time, dear, and spare yourself a life of misery and regret," and rising in genuine agitation, she hurriedly left the room.

Barbara was awed, and touched supremely.

That afternoon she decided to go down to a certain overgrown little lane that she was convinced no chance passer could possibly discover. Even as she entered it, however, happening to glance behind her, she perceived the disturbing Man following her.

"How it is we *always* meet wherever I go?" she demanded perplexedly.

"Kind intervention of Fate," he responded lightly.

But the impression of the morning's scene still lay heavy on the young girl's soul. "Garth," she said impulsively, "I wish——"

He sighed. "So do I," he agreed.

She glanced at him quickly. "Then why don't you?"

"Why don't I what?"

"Go away."

He turned on her startled and indignant. "You don't wish that?"

She sighed perturbedly. "I do. At least"—with a twinge of conscience—"I think I do. Oh, dear! why are things so vexing?"

"Sit down and tell me all about it," he suggested quietly.

So they sat down, in a green nook looking on to a corn-field, doubly golden with sunlight and its own blaze of colour. The larks sang high in the cloudless blue.

She sighed again. "Aunt Cynthia is such a dear," she murmured.

"I don't think so," he disagreed.

"She is. But——"

"Can't you convince her of my respectability?"

She shook her head. There was a little silence. The sunshine was dispelling the mists of her woe.

"I hate respectable people," she uttered inconsequently. "It is so middle-class. The very word breathes Sunday clothes and soap-shining faces——"

He rubbed his cheek thoughtfully. "Have I left any on?" he queried meekly.

She laughed. "Oh, dear, why did she ever make that vow?" she sighed.

"But I don't see why a crotchety old woman's vow should affect you," he disputed.

"How can I help it? She is so good and sweet in other ways—it is only on that one point she is violent. She *hates* the very mention of a man." She regarded him with thoughtful, searching eyes. "I wonder if you *are* secretly wicked?" she murmured.

He flung back his head, and roared aloud. "Oh! Oh!" he cried; "Your *naivete* is delicious, you bewitching little cousin!"

She joined in the laugh, but coloured sensitively. "Well," she argued, "how am I to tell? Aunt says you are."

He stopped laughing and looked at her with sudden gravity. "But you don't believe her?" he said.

She met his eyes frankly. "No," she confessed.

He smiled relief. "Thank you," he said softly.

"But, to return to our starting-point," she began again; "although I like you very much, and shall miss you dreadfully, I think—I think I should be glad if you went. When is your furlough up?"

"Not for another six months," he replied cheerfully. "They thought I was done for, you know, so my people stipulated for twelve months full to recoup thoroughly. And in less than three I was as right as a trivet. That was English air, you know," quoth young Lieutenant Melville proudly.

"But you are not going to spend the whole six months here?" she exclaimed in dismay.

He looked crestfallen. "Not if you don't want me," he replied humbly.

Her cheeks went faintly pink. "I don't see what that has to do with it," she returned with a shade of stiffness.

"Well, you see," he explained, mendaciously, "Mater told me particularly to cultivate Aunt Cynthia, but, of course, if you give me up——"

"What can I do?" she asked helplessly.

"Couldn't you possibly persuade her to see me just once? I'll do the rest."

"Impossible. Why, her greatest boast is, that in strict accordance with her vow, she has never, from that day to this, set eyes on a masculine being."

He sighed profoundly. Suddenly a gleam came into his eyes. "Suppose ——!"

"Suppose?" she questioned expectantly.

He changed his mind. "Nothing."

"Oh! Oh!" she cried out indignantly. "*Tell* me."

He laughed teasingly. "I'll tell you two things," he conceded, with mock gravity: "'Patience is a virtue,' and 'Where there's a will there's a way.'" And not another word could commands, beseechings, or blandishments win from him.

CHAPTER III.

Nevertheless, the shadow on the house of seclusion deepened, and grew more apparent day by day.

Barbara made no secret of the fact that she met the author of the discord daily, and in despair had even given up the attempt to evade him. And except in the intervals when her aunt's severe silence smote her tender heart, she was happier than she had ever been in her life before.

But the cousin was growing restless. He was determined to end the farce or tragedy, he added grimly. And once Garth Melville made up his mind he was not the sort of man to weigh the pros and cons of the thing he had undertaken to do.

He told Barbara of his determination one brilliant summer's afternoon, when a blue haze lay in the wood's deep shadows, and the air was like incense. Barbara's hands were full of fragile harebells, which were less blue than the wide eyes she turned on him in expostulation. "What can you do?" she demanded for the fiftieth time.

He squared his jaw. "Don't ask too many questions," he said only.

She pouted. "I want to know."

He turned from the spell of her eyes "Wait and see," he temporised.

She shook her ruddy head. "Nothing would alter her opinion. I really think,' speculatively, "she hates you worse every day."

"Oh," he observed. His eyes were dangerous.

"But of course that is only because she doesn't know you," she went on hurriedly, reading the danger signals. "Look at my flowers; aren't they delicate, beautiful little angels?"

He stared straight at her, ignoring her question absolutely. "What will she say," he questioned slowly, "when I take you away altogether?"

She sprang up hastily. "Don't talk nonsense. It's awfully late. I must fly."

He got up too, and planted himself straight in front of her, his mouth set and his eyes compelling. "What," he repeated distinctly, "will she say when I take you away altogether?"

The blue eyes gazed up at him fascinated, almost frightened, and the pink colour forsook her cheeks drop by drop. She shook herself together suddenly, and the colour came back in a scorching flood. The blue eyes flashed mischievous defiance. With a swift little movement she was round him.

"How can I tell till you try?" she cried daringly over her shoulder, and sped fleetly away through the wood.

It was two hours later. Miss Silverton and her niece had just concluded a solitary and rather silent tea. The aunt was sitting with her back to the French window, the interminable knitting on her lap.

Barbara sat a little way inside the room facing the long green sward. Suddenly, abruptly, she sat bolt upright, her dilating eyes fixed on that same slope.

"G—arth!" she gasped beneath her breath.

"Did you speak, my dear?" questioned the aunt quietly, without looking up.

Barbara stared in fascinated silence at the calmly advancing figure.

Aunt Cynthia looked up at her.

"My dear," she exclaimed nervously, "at what are you looking so strangely?"

"Garth," replied Barbara desperately, truthful even in her horror.

"Garth?" echoed the little lady faintly. She sat rigid, not daring to glance on either side, and not quite certain even now of what she was terrified.

"Yes, aunt, it is I," came a quiet, manly voice at the open window.

Aunt Cynthia screamed, absolutely and loudly screamed, for the first time in her gentle, quiet life.

"Go away—go *away!*" she gasped, clasping her hands frantically over her eyes.

Garth calmiy and deliberately stepped into the room. "Not till I have confessed and obtained absolution," he announced firmly.

"I—I command you to go!" said the faint voice desperately.

Garth stooped down, put both hands gently on the thin, quivering shoulders, and deliberately kissed the bit of faded cheek left exposed by the inadequate hands.

Barbara basely got up and fled out of the room.

* * *

How he prevailed is a mystery to this day. Barbara shakes her pretty head and murmurs dark sayings anent the powerful and dangerous cajolery of Man.

Aunt Cynthia herself at first was overcome with grief and shame at the breaking of her vow. But Garth comforted her gravely by insisting that it was not she who had broken it at all, but he who had forced her to destroy it. And when once she had grown accustomed to the strange newness of circumstances, she allowed herself to be radiantly and openly delighted—subjugated completely by the wiliness of her nephew.

Steve

By Frank Gassaway

THE Yosemite stage, still glistening with its early morning washing, stood beside the half-platform, half-veranda of the Carmelito road house awaiting the issuance from the lunch room of its passengers, who lingered over their fruit and coffee, exchanging condolences anent the limb-cramping, dust-stifling, sixty miles already accomplished, and rejoicing at the assurance that another half-hour of alkali would bring them to the edge of the tall timber. From there to their all-night stop at Wawona, and even beyond that to the wonderful valley itself, their path would be through the longed-for shade of the great woods.

The fresh team—six wiry, gaunt, steel-muscled horses—stood almost motionless in their harness. The recurrent twitching of their ears back toward their equally impassive driver showed that silent, bow-strung eagerness peculiar to the half-broncho, half-American breed.

The driver, a great, loose-jointed round-shouldered six-footer, with the aquiline nose and the strong high-boned face of the typical New Englander, sat with his right heel hooked into the crotch of the hard-jammed brake. One huge hand filled with reins rested on his knee, while with the other he meditatively finger-combed his curly beard, bronze, where shaded by the turned-down hat brim, but bleached by sun and dust below the line of protection.

Now and then he gave a diffident but naively admiring side glance at the most prompt of his passengers, a young lady whose expeditious meal enabled her to secure the coveted front seat beside him, the possession of which usually causes its occupant to become singularly unpopular with the neck-craning insiders.

This forehanded young woman was well worth looking at. She was incontestibly handsome in face and figure, from both the masculine and feminine viewpoint; self-poised, yet blithesome and enthusiastic. From the top of her expensively-simple Alpine hat to the tip of the little, buff walking-boot that peeped from the hem of her grey silk dust-coat, she made a picture that Gibson himself would have regarded as a direct personal compliment.

"Do hurry, auntie," she pleaded, as her maid set about the arduous task of assisting a rather portly and deliberate chaperon into the interior of the vehicle; and

she darted a glance of petulent impatience at the English tourist, who, as usual at each station, had forgotten his binoculars, and had to go back for them.

But at last the stage door gave a final slam, and the bronchos, responsive to the jar of the released brake—to which the pistol-like crack of the twenty-foot lash was a purely ornamental accessory—sprang forward to the sharp lope that the traditions of the "high grade" require when approaching or leaving a stopping-place.

Half-a-dozen miles, and they fronted what seemed a great green cliff of foliage, and which, even as they drew near, seemed to change the dry, thin, unsatisfying air to the cooler, moister, balm-laden atmosphere of giant yellow pines and Douglas spruce that towered on either side of the tunnel-like opening into which they plunged. As if unconsciously checked by the sudden hush and shadow of the forest, the horses slackened their pace to a slow walk. It would have seemed as if a noonday twilight had fallen, were it not that here and there a stray beam from the barred-out sun filtered through and lay upon the road ahead like a streak of spilled gold dust.

Craning her neck, the front-seat passenger gazed straight up to where, a hundred and fifty feet above her head, she could see the brilliant blue line of sky, sometimes narrowing to a shining thread, and again shut out altogether by the intermingling branches.

Finally, dropping her awe-filled eyes to the strong patient face of the driver, she said, with something of the brooding hush of the forest in her voice:

"It must be delightful to drive through this country every day. Don't you think you are lucky, Mr. —— Mr. Copper," giving him the name by which she had heard him addressed by his acquaintances along the road.

"I guess it's all right fur them kodaker parties," he replied gravely, answering her questions in due order, and in the semi-self-communing manner peculiar to pilots plying either on land or sea. "I dunno' 'bout the lucky side of it, though, lady. Can't do much saving on forty per. 'Copper?' That's only a josh name, miss. My born signatoor is Hiram Eaton."

"But why 'Copper,' then?"

"You kin search me, lady. Some says it's because I was on the Copperopolis run afore I kem onto the high grade. Then agin," he added with amused bashfulness, "some o' the wimmin folks—them waiter girls over ter the valley—says it's along o' my hair."

"Your hair—and a very beautiful shade it is—quite Titian," promptly added the fair passenger, who, when at home in Boston, was, in both a material and a mental sense, a zealous member of the "Lend-a-Hand" Society. "La Pompadour had Titian hair, you know."

"Don't place the party," said the driver, after a moment's earnest retrospection. "O' course, all us road men gits some kind 'er nick-name. There's —well, there's Cat Eye Rogers: lets on he kin see better arter sundown; Sage-Brush Dick: used ter stage down Arizony way; an' Manzanita Jim."

"What a quaint name."

"Oh! It's a shorely greaser-like. But I wish I'd won mine drawin' er royal flush ter a deuce high, like he did, lady."

"Won his name at cards; how odd!"

"That's only a perlite sayin' miss," said the big whip, gravely. "It's all on account o' them manzanita bushes there"; and wrapping the long lash around his whip stock with an easy twist of his wrist, he pointed to where one of the occasional spaces between the trees was filled with the dense low growth of a creeper-bush, its barkless, dull-red branches laced and tangled into a network of distorted crookedness.

"Tell me about it, please."

"It was like this, miss. But fustly, I must let on as how this here Jim—Jim Munroe is his born name—is 'er nigger, er full black one, too. An' mebbe," with a suspicious glance at his fair listener, "mebbe you draws the colour line same as them prize-fighters down to Frisco does, eh?"

"Not at all," exclaimed the young lady, with a demure twitch at the corners of her mouth. "My cousin—he was a colonel in the Philippines—told us that his command always felt quite comfortable

when there was a coloured regiment in front of them on the firing line. Then they could turn in and take a good night's rest. Now, about Manzanita."

"Well, miss, Jim was on the pitch one mornin'——"

"The what?"

"The pitch. You see, we are on the high grade now. Arter we leaves the Point—In-spi-ration they calls it—the road pitches down hill to the valley floor. We drop about a mile in four, so yer kin see the grade, even in the easy spots, takes fine reinin' an' sharp brake-work. This time Jim had a squeezetight load——sixteen passengers an' er half ton o' baggage. Well, jest at one er the wust pints—nuthin' on the off side but a two thousand foot drop—the brake busted."

"And was that dangerous?"

"Dang'rous? It wus—well, you see, the leaders are away down hill, underneath you. The wheelers—well, their backs are jest on a level with the fore axle. The minute the grip of the brakes is off, the coach jumps right for-ard on top o' the wheelers. Them two rears together, and the stage—well, the hull outfit goes over the edge, pullin' the front four horses arter them. The hull thing gits to the valley ahead o' time—but by the air line. See?"

"And what did your friend do?" gasped the beauty, her little hand unconscious- gripping the big man's muscle-corded arm. For a moment the driver gazed down upon the parted lips and great startled eyes of his companion. Then, with a sudden abashed realisation of the masculine admiration of his look, he hastily continued:

"The very second the crack kem—he must a done it quicker nor an eye-wink—Jim let out the 'fast lope' yell, and nips a piece outer the off-leader's ear with his lash. They was a spry team, an' they just flew down that grade twenty foot to the jump. Them race horses down at Frisco was snails to 'em. You see, Jim's only chanst was to keep the critters clear o' the stage, to run 'em faster nor it did. Or course, it were only puttin' off the grand drop fur a few minutes, fur a thousand foot further along ther was a sharp bend. Even if the hosses managed to hug round the turn the 'swedge-off' o' the stage 'ud jerk the nigh wheels outer the inside rut—and then——"

"Go on! Go on!" cried the girl, half rising from her seat, her whole figure quivering with excitement.

"Jest afore the turn kem ther wus a sort o' hollow, or washed-out place, 'bout fifty foot beside the road, and on the inside. There was a thick growth of manzanita there. Jim says he must a had it in his mind all the time, somehow, though he ain't dead shore. Well, he seed this patch a flyin' up tor'd him, an' he knowed that right there were the last turn outen the box. He squats over onto the footboard, shortens up his grip easy, but yellin' like er Piute all the time. Then, jest at the right jump, he straightens up, gathers them leaders right into the air and twirls the hull outfit plumb offen the road an' atop o' that manzanita patch."

"And they were saved?"

"They shorely was. Them bushes is like springy steel rods. Course the stage upset, but the tough branches let her over easy. It took a couple o' hours to chop away the brush an' get the hosses out onto the road, an' to up-end the stage an' rope it out. But arter that Jim lashed the hind wheels to the fore, hitched up, an' they skidded down to the valley as slick as you please. Not a scratch on a tourist; not even a skinned fetlock on any o' the cattle."

"It was superb! Something worth living—yes, worth dying for!" she exclaimed.

"I'm shorely glad you don't bar colour none," continued the driver, meditatively. "I figgered it all out since, that if there's a real man inside—all wool an' a yard wide—the colour o' the hide don't signify none. I kin drive jest a little myself," he went on diffidently, "but I takes off my hat ter Manzy. I shore wish I'd knowed 'bout them nigger regiments the time I hed an argumint with Sage Brush, because I allowed that Jim suttenly was 'high whip' on this here grade, nigger or no nigger."

"I trust you convinced him," said the listener, demurely.

"Well, lady," and a faintly humourous twinkle came into the grave eyes, "I b'leeve he laid off a couple o' runs 'bout then. An' I don't hear tell he's statin' contrary views since. But you musn't run away with the idee that I' ma trouble hunter, miss," continued the driver, as an after-thought. "I ain't settin' up fur no scrapper. That gin'rally comes o' drink an' I got too big a load to carry fur that kind o' foolishness."

She studied his set care-lined face, with side-long sympathy.

"Will you do me a real favour?" she said at length, with sudden resoluteness.

He turned towards her with a good-naturedly deprecative expression.

"I s'pose you want to drive a spell. Most uv the towerist ladies as sits up in the front does. Well them middle pair pulls kinder strong, but—mebbe when the road gits wider——"

"Oh! I don't mean that" she smiled. Only I want you to promise, for I feel, somehow, that you never break your word, Mr. Copper."

His face flushed under its weather tan, and then, having for a moment's grave deliberation chewed a leaf plucked from a passing bough, he said:

"Ef there's any way I kin favour you, lady, let 'er roll. I'm bankin' that yer allers deals from the top o' the pack, anyway."

"Mind, that's a promise"; and then very gravely and gently: "I want you to tell me what the load is that you are carrying, and why it troubles you so."

"You—you like yarns don't you, miss?" he stammered, with a palpably lame attempt to speak jestingly.

"Well, I always try to keep my ears as well as my eyes open when traveiling. I want you to tell me for another, a better reason. Come now, I live far east but even if I did not I would never repeat a word that you told me. I promise you that." And then, as he hesitated, "Let us see if I can help you out. You wish to get married, and you are not—not quite rich enough yet. Honestly now, isn't that it?"

"You're wrong, pard—I mean, miss," he replied slowly, "leastways, there's a lot—a hull lot—to be done 'fore I calk'lates on that sort o' thing."

"Then," and the passenger raised her small forefinger with judicial authority, "you've got to tell me what it is you wish so much to do. You can't help yourself now, you see. You know you promised."

"I s'pose it's up to me, an' I'll have to make good," said the driver at last with a submissive shrug of his great shoulders, "though it's not a yarn to amuse a high stepper like you. Well, it's like this, miss.

"Him an' me was raised over in New England, jest back o' Cape Cod. I mean Steve, miss, my younger brother. There was jest four of us; the old man, mother, me, an' Steve. We lived on one o' them small stony, sour-land farms they has up that way, an' it was 'bout all we three men could do ter keep the flour bar'l full, with the old lady doing all the dairy an' house work, too. What made it wuss wus the old man a-bein' so stern and hard-like.

"Him and Steve couldn't get on nohow, an' the worry of it almost broke mother's heart, fur she loved Steve mor'n anybody; an' nat'ral enough, too. He were ten year younger nor me—a well set-up lad. He were well-favoured an' smart besides. Steve was always lettin' on he'd run away, an' mother was always worryin' fur fear he would. One day Steve an' the old man had it hotter 'n ever down in the hay-field, and if it hadn't been fur me—well, there'd been a mix-up, shure. That night, arter Steve had saddled old Whiteface to go fur the cows, he kissed the old lady an' shaked hands with me. The old hoss an' the cows didn't come home that night, an' Steve never did.

"Well, we couldn't find no trace o' where he went, try as we might, an' when in 'bout two years the old man died, mother was jest wore down to a shadder. Every day she'd watch fru the post-man's hoss comin' over the hill, hopin' to git a letter from Steve, but she never did. And then regular, she'd start down to the village to talk to Ellen Ann—she were an orphan, an' worked in the big store—'bout Steve. She'd tell Ellen Ann

as how Steve would shurely write soon, an' Ellen Ann would let on the same thing to her. Then mother would come home agin an' cry, an' I calk'late Ellen Ann would be adoin' the same herself."

"Why, of course. Steve's sweetheart," said the young lady, decisively.

"You're a keen guesser," said the driver, admiringly. "They were a keepin' cump'ny mor'n a year afore he went away."

"Go on, Mr. Copper," said the listener, impatiently.

"Well, afore long mother sold the farm; she wanted me to take the money an' hunt fer Steve, while she went to live with Ellen Ann. 'Course I couldn't do that. I made her put her little pile into the bank, and then I started out on Steve's trail. It was pretty hard mostly, for I couldn't work steady, stayin' no time in one place; I had to keep movin', you see. I didn't git news o' Steve, but, though it made my heart sore, I wrote home wunst a week jest ter keep them two's sperrits up. I went most over the hull east, an' arter while I remembered that Steve wus allers talkin' 'bout Californy, gold diggin', cowboyin', an' that sort o' thing, an' I 'spicioned he might a headed this-away. So I fin'ly worked out to this coast myself. An' shore nuff, I cut his trail down at Frisco three years ago."

"But you didn't find him," she said, as one who states an evident fact.

"No, miss," assented the elder brother with renewed wonder at her understanding. "A man down there recognized havin' seed him by a picture I carried. So I put a 'vertissmint in the papers down there, an' shure 'nuff I got a letter from Steven. It said he didn't calk'late ter show up never no more. He'd bin wanderin' 'bout tryin' ter git suthin' steady, but he'd plum failed, an he wus clean wore out an' discouraged. He said he had lived a hard tramp life, an' kep' bad comp'ny, an' he were desprit, an' were shure bound to do suthin' recklis, he'd changed his name. He wus no good, an' 'shamed ter have we folks ever see him again."

"But you——"

"I kep' on huntin' him jest the same. I wrote back home that I had seen him, an' that he'd gone up Klondike way. That he wus doin' good an' would come back in a year. S'pose you think I'm a liar, miss," he added, with pathetic humility.

"Not at all. You did perfectly right," was the vehement response.

"It shure is good to hear you say that," said the big fellow, gratefully. "Well, I had ter git a job stagin' up here. There was some gov'mint land along the road then, so I filled a homestead between Wawona, where we lays up ternight, an' the Yo. There's no grazin' to speak of in the valley, an' my idee wus that ef I could git the ground cleared on my hundred an' sixty acres, and make a start with a few head o' cattle, I might arter-whiles work up a good business a-sellin' milk an' butter to the hotels an' stations. An' in course o' time mebbe I might have a job fur Steve if I got my grip on him. He could boss the herd while t'other two ran the dairy, don't yer see?"

"Exactly. A splendid idea!"

"Well, the old lady's pile had 'bout petered out, an' in course it set me back a hull lot ter bring her an' Ellen Ann out here. They're livin' in er little shack I built on my place durin' my lay-offs. But we only got two cows, so fur. You can't grub stake three an' git ahead very spry on forty a month. Not even when yuo cuts out terbacca an' booze, too."

"And I've got two millions," muttered the girl, her little hands clenched, her eyes shining like moist stars into the gathering dusk of the approaching twilight.

"I told you the yarn wasn't worth a-tellin', lady," said the driver, as if in apology. "However, it's done me good to shift the load. Specially," and here his voice grew softer and more wistful, "as I ben kind o' strung up along o' suthin' I hear a piece back on the road. There's a timber cutter, as lives 'bout two miles ahead o' here, as let on he seed a young feller yesterday as favoured me s'prisin' strong. He met him on the road somewhere, but didn't state nuthin' 'bout which way the stranger wus headin'.

This here wood-chopper won't likely have got home when we pass his cabin, so I wrote a card to stick inter his door latch as we go by. I'll give it to you, miss," he continued, pulling his team to a standstill, and wrapping the reins about the brake, "an' while I git down an' light them lamps would yer kindly read what I wrote, an' see if it's all clar an' plain."

Even in the semi-darkness the girl could easily make out the large, laboriously-formed, half-printed letters.

"deer fren

please cum over ter Wawona toonite I lays over thare it would be a kine faver. Hiram Eaton the wun they calls copper"

"Is it all O.K.?" said the driver anxiously, as he regained his seat. "Them timber choppers ain't eddicated much. Hold it till we git thar, please."

"It's just right," said the girl gravely, as the stage moved on again, the darkness in which they sat accentuated by the twin lights that illuminated each wheel rut for fifty feet ahead of the leaders.

"And now, Mr. Copper, I want to have a few words with you," said the Boston beauty, resolutely. "Please listen to me for a——"

"What's that!" And as she started and stared the brake sharply gripped, and the horses, that were walking up a slight rise in the road, suddenly halted. She saw that the driver, rigid and motionless, was peering intently down at something on the road directly beneath him and out of her own line of vision. Bending sideways across his knees she became conscious of two silvery rings within a foot of her face. Following down a dull-blue rod that seemed to support these, her gaze rested upon the upturned face of a slouch-hatted figure whose forehead and nose were covered by a black cloth. Through two holes in this she caught the resolute glimmer of a pair of ambushed eyes.

It was a long breath before the meaning of this tableau became clear to her. They were "held up."

Transfixed, every nerve quivering with the dramatic tensity of the situation, and its thrill in no wise lessened by the inward assurance—she stared, fascinated, at the composed highwayman.

"Throw down that box; that's all I want," came from the man below, in tones as distinct as the click of a gun-lock, and yet inaudible to the drowsy inside passengers, to whom the occasional halt of the stage on rising ground was an accustomed detail.

The driver nodded, as one who wastes no words quarrelling with destiny backed by two loads of buckshot. Shifting his reins to his left hand, with his right he reached down and grasped the handle of the battered, blue, iron-strapped Wells-Fargo treasure box that lay beneath the seat.

As he did this, the "road-agent" moved closer to the lamp, so as to make room for the box to drop beside the wheel. This caused the light to shine more clearly into the eye-holes of the robber's mask, and the girl became conscious that the driver had suddenly paused in his task and was peering into the black slits with even more eager scrutiny than herself.

For a dozen heart-beats the three seemed petrified—a weird canvas from the brush of Van Dyke. Then, with a curious duplication of the robber's steady, low-pitched voice, the leaning man said:

"Better hurry home with them cows, Steve. Mother's a-waitin' fur the milk."

Another tense pause, and, as one who watches in a trance, she saw the lifted gun slowly sink out of the light radius; the highwayman's chin dropped to his breast, and then in a husky whisper came:

"Drive on, Hiram."

The brake loosened with the stealthiest of clicks, and the stage moved forward.

As the girl sank back into her seat, her brain dazed by the terrific climax of the elder brother's long search, her eyes fell upon the card she still held in her hand. Springing to her feet, and facing backward to where the dark figure of the highwayman was vaguely outlined against the trees, she held aloft the little square, and then skimmed it rearwards over the stage. Still watching as they rounded the turn she descried a dim

figure kneel and raise the glimmering speck of white.

For a space they creeked on in silence, both driver and passenger alert to catch any sound that might come from those below. At length, a long breath of relief from both certified that the incident had escaped the notice of the other passengers.

And then, with lips that trembled with a divine pity, she turned and met the haggard face that leaned towards her with such pitious eagerness.

"I say, miss—yer won't never—you've got a mother, mebbe—I kin trust you—can't I?"

"Listen to me," she said, in choking instalments, as the words struggled past a great lump in her throat. "Now, attend strictly to what I say. In the first place he got the card."

"The card, miss?"

"Yes, the card you gave me to hold; I threw it back on the stage, and he picked it up. So it's quite possible he may come over to——"

"Great Scot!" gasped the driver, with shining eyes.

"Exactly. Now you want me to—well—not to say a word about—things? Very good, I will do so, but on one condition only, mind you. It's merely a small money matter."

"Money, miss," he replied simply, and with a patient misery in his voice that went to her heart like a knife, "I'm 'most down to the last now, I only got a few ——"

"Oh, hush, hush!" said the girl, brokenly. "It's my money I'm speaking about. You see I'm one of those silly things—an heiress. I've two millions, and more, all my own. But, listen, please. I'm a shrewd business woman, too," and the white forehead wrinkled with imposing gravity, "and I've decided to make a small investment in—in butter, milk, and—things. Now at the next stop I will write you a cheque on my Boston bankers for five thousand dollars, and—don't speak, please—and you can have it collected by the bank at the other end of the road. With that I want you to buy ever so many cows. Those mouse-coloured ones with the tiny horns are the nicest, I'm sure. And you must build a barn, and an addition to that little house that you spoke of. Then you will have room for a partner to look after the stock. Perhaps the young man back there might be looking for a job. Then, when Steve does turn up, what with his mother, his sweetheart, and you—and with plenty for all to do—why, don't you see——"

"I've fell asleep while drivin' afore this," said the driver, in an awe-hushed voice, "an' I s'pose I'm jest a-dreamin' now."

"Well, I'm not," replied the young lady financier, firmly. "This is a plain business proposition. You can pay the money back, you know. I'm going abroad next month, and when I return—that will be in three or four years—I'll let you know and you can begin paying back, say, ten dollars a month, if your business is good, then. Now, no trifling, Mr. Copper. Will you do just as I say?"

"No," muttered the driver, half to himself, as if he had wrestled with and overthrown a heart-breaking suspicion. "No, it ain't no hot-air josh! Well, miss, seein' as you've got the drop on me, I'll stand in, pervidin' I don't wake up when we strike the station."

A solemnly binding hand-shake finished the subject until the hotel lights twinkled ahead. Then the driver, with a sort of defiant bashfulness, said:

"I been tryin' ter frame up how to ask you fur suthin', miss. It ain't no cheeky play—it ain't, honest. But kin yer send us your photygraf when you git t'other side? One 'bout eight by ten inches, miss?"

"Are you particular about the size?" she replied, with a smile.

"Well, yer see, miss, over our fireplace there's a picter mother brought out from the east; Steve give it her. It's an angel a-givin' manna, miss, to some Isrelite parties as wus up agin it. It's shurely a real han'some frame, and—and I'm calk'latin' it's 'bout time for that other angel to step down."

"What a wonderfully beautiful world it is," murmured the Boston beauty, as that night she sat at her window watching the vivid moonlight flooding the open

space in front of the station, and slowly making still more gigantic the shadow of the great round-shouldered figure seated upon the horse-block, and fixedly watching the point where the road plunged into the inky forest.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, when at last the rigid watcher below suddenly rose and answered a long inquiring whistle that came from the black beyond. Five minutes passed, and then two stalwart men, their arms about each other's shoulders, appeared before the house. Where the moonlight shone the brightest they halted and bent their heads together over a slim strip of paper that the larger of the two drew reverently from his breast. The girl turned away, for the moonlight became blurred, somehow.

When she looked again the larger man was alone, his shadow making a gigantic finger post as he still stood with outstretched arm pointing the way his companion had taken.

There must be an occasional exception to the ancient beauty-sleep formula, to account for the radiant beauty of our Gibson prototype as she climbed to her acustomed perch the next morning, and which point of vantage was also occupied by the English tourist, greatly to the internal, if unexpressed, irritation of the driver.

And so the two men, one sleepily, the other mutely, listened to the young lady's inconsequent chatter as the stage rattled sharply along, until it at length spun round a turn and passed in front of a fenced-in clearing.

In the middle of this, facing the road, was a small house, and before its open door a group of three stood watching the coming vehicle. The centre of this trio was a tall, rugged, bronze-haired young man, his arm about the shoulders of an old and a young woman who stood on either side. The eyes of all three were riveted upon the great, long-lashed ones that smiled at them from the driver's seat. Not a word was spoken; none could have added a feather's weight of meaning to that wireless message of the soul.

"Them's um," said the driver behind his hand, and in what he imagined to be a stealthy and conspirator-like aside.

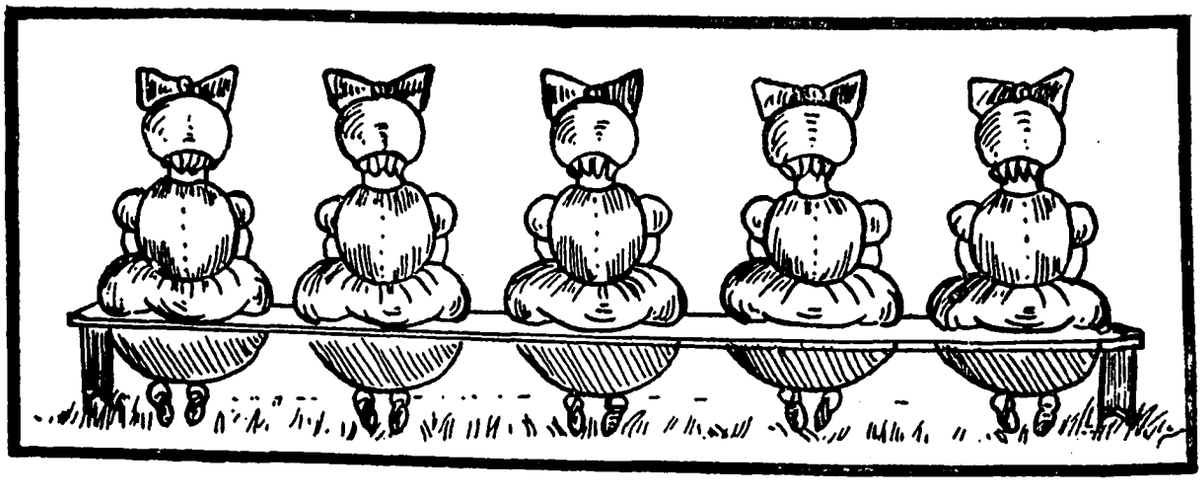
"Eh?" said the English tourist, yawning, "what did the driver say?"

"Something about its being a nice morning," said the Boston belle, staring straight ahead, her face alight with the exultant joy that only the angels are supposed to know, "wasn't that it, Mr. Copper?"

"Nice?" growled the driver, contemptuously. "I'm rising forty year, and ef this ain't the finest mornin' I ever see, I'm damned! 'Scuse me, lady."

But, to the horror of the tourist, Beauty-on-the-Box not only smiled unreprovingly, but actually added in the strange American vernacular:

"Same here."



The Ruse of Countess Friede

By Muriel C. Lindsay

TO Count Sholto von Adlersburg, heedlessly galloping through the clear autumn air in pursuit of the heron flushed from its haunt by the lonely pool, there came no warning voice to bid him turn and retrace his steps with all commendable speed if he would escape what fate had in store for him. Instead, destiny, and his own lusty, headstrong spirits urged him forward until the good bay, his foot in an unseen hole, stumbled and fell, throwing his rider with considerable force to the ground.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the startled count, then, stricken into sudden silence by his fall, he lay senseless, oblivious of the passing hours and increasing dangers of his position.

Voices and the rough touch of alien hands roused him into consciousness once more, and raising himself with some difficulty, he gazed dazedly at the ring of fierce, unfriendly faces surrounding him.

"It would seem I have fallen, as did another, among thieves;" he observed, with a hand to his aching pate, recognising the hostile livery of a well-known robber, the Baron von Kratzenfelz; "who amongst you will play the good Samaritan and bind up this broken crown of mine?"

"Why, as to that," remarked a stalwart rascal, seemingly the leader, in the Baron's absence, of the marauding band, "'twould be clearly a waste of time to mend what my lord will most certainly destroy. To horse, sir, the day draws down and we must be within the castle walls by sunset."

Count Sholto, with a smothered curse for the chase which had led him so far from home, and into the dangerous lands of that arch-fiend the Baron von Kratzenfelz, followed the line of least resistance, and clambered stiffly into the saddle. He cast an anxious glance to the heavens, but the peregrine, whose flight he had so heedlessly followed, was out of sight, and with a sigh of resignation to his freedom, he rode to the castle between his captors.

The building was in a state of some confusion; varlets and maids, rushing to and fro amongst the noisy crew, half pushed, half led Sholto, still closely guarded, until he was brought to the great hall.

The place was in darkness, save for the light cast by the leaping flames from the piled-up logs in the wide fire-place. The sudden glare confused the prisoner, and he stumbled towards a group clustered round a seated figure in the act of raising a mighty tankard to his lips.

At the bustle of entry, the giant turned, and in a hoarse bass voice, roared out a succession of sonorous oaths, rating the men for noisy, clamorous fools, and making more to-do than the whole muster together. Then, his eyes falling on the unfamiliar figure, he stopped suddenly and peered curiously in his face.

"Hey!" said he curtly. "Whom have we here? This is no merchant, fellows. What piece of carrion have you picked up?"

"May it please you, my lord," replied the spokesman hurriedly, "you bade us bring whatever we found on your lands, and seeing this——"

"Peace," growled the Baron, "and bring hither more light."

A couple of torches thrust into rough scones seemed but to accentuate the flickering shadows, and were of little aid in distinguishing the prisoner's features. Bidding the men bring him nearer, the baron surveyed the stalwart form before him with no friendly air.

"H'm," he grunted, "your name, fair sir, and state?"

Sholto hesitated. And yet of what avail would be denial? There must be those in the castle who knew him, and of them the baron would learn his rank.

"I have the honour to be Sholto von Adlersburg," said he politely. "We have some knowledge of each other—at a distance," he added.

At his answer a gleam of vindictive satisfaction stole across the other's rugged features.

"Send for Father Aloysius," he commanded, "and you, young sir, prepare your soul for a—h'm—possibly warmer clime."

If he thought to see Count Sholto blench he was deprived of such entertainment.

"You would suggest——?" queried the young man, unmoved.

"A mere trifle," chuckled the other blandly, "a little walk in the air at the end of a rope."

"Surely a hasty decision?" commented the Count, with uplifted brows of mild surprise.

"Hasty? Not so, my young cockerel! I swore, the last time you and your men delivered the fat burgesses from my just levies, to hang the first who came into my hands."

"And how grateful you must be for this opportunity," returned the Count, "and far be it from me to dissuade you, but life is sweet to most of us, and if some other arrangement could be made—?" he paused suggestively.

"Let me counsel you to make your last arrangements," advised the baron with grim significance. "Delays are dangerous; so come, shrive your penitent, Father," turning to the meek, pale-faced priest at his side.

"Nay, my son, take not this terrible crime upon your soul," the priest burst forth in agitated pleading. "Bethink you of the result if this noble youth dies at your hands? 'Twill raise such a hornet's nest about your ears as can never be settled. This is no simple merchant, my lord, but one of far-reaching influence."

"The castle walls are thick enough to defy such influence!" growled the baron angrily. "Shrive him, Father, as I bid you, and cease from meddling in matters which concern you not."

Father Aloysius drew his thin form to its full height, his mild eyes glowing as he squarely faced the angry man.

"Nay, my son," he said firmly, "Holy Church cannot sanction so drastic an act. Pause ere it be too late, and you imperil your immortal soul; else, by the Rood! you shall become utterly accurst."

There was silence in the hall at these bold words. The serving men held their breath and waited for the wrath which must surely follow. But the baron, taken aback at such unlooked-for resistance on the part of one he regarded as too crushed to rebel, was at heart afraid of what the priest might do, so he glared furiously, and pondered awhile, uneasily aware that Father Aloysius spoke the truth. He looked doubtfully upon the prisoner, who returned his glance with frank unconcern, and in spite of himself, was impressed with the young man's easy, careless bearing.

"You are un-wed?" he burst out at length.

"The saints be praised," said Count Sholto, piously, "I am un-wed."

"Then there is opportunity for you to amend your state," grinned the baron sardonically. "I have a daughter. Marry her and you are a free man."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the young man dismayed. "I'd liever hang. I have heard of your daughter, baron, who has not? A curst red-haired, squint-eyed shrew."

As the scornful, unflattering description of his daughter rang through the hall, a stifled cry, followed by a sudden movement, stirred a little group standing in the darkness behind the baron's chair; and as she hurried to her own chamber, from whence curiosity to see her father's latest victim had lured her, the baron's daughter sobbed wildly, "He shall pay for this—he shall hang. I care not—a squint-eyed shrew—I hate him!"

"Better a shrew than a shroud," snarled the baron, on whom the commotion passed unnoticed, "you have your

choice. A quiet cell with bread and water will doubtless change your mind. On the fourth morning from now, you shall either hang or wed. Begone!"

"On the fourth morning from now, I shall neither hang nor wed," cried Sholto defiantly, as they dragged him away.

The cold, ill-lighted cell, and unappetising fare set before him served but to fan the flame of Sholto's wrath, and he again cursed the heedlessness that had brought him into this trap. Raging, he paced to and fro like an angry lion, until the aching of his broken head subdued him, when, spent and dizzy he collapsed upon his rude pallet.

For some time, stupefied with pain, he lay motionless, until the harsh rattle of grinding bolts and clamour of loosening chains roused him, and languidly raising his head he peered into the gloom.

There was a subdued murmur of voices, then a serving-man, torch in hand, silently advanced and thrust it into a bracket on the wall, while another laid a trencher on the rough table, then retreated without word or backword glance to the safe shelter of the heavy door.

Sholto rose uncertainly and moved slowly forward. The mouldy bread and brackish water placed for him by the baron's orders had been removed, and in their place was half a meat pasty and a flagon of wine. He paused doubtfully, fearing some new trick on the baron's part, but curiosity and thirst combined overpowered him, and seizing the flagon he drank deeply.

With a satisfied sigh he replaced it, and was about to fall on the pasty, when a tiny breath, the ghost it would almost seem of his own gusty exhaltation, caught his quick ear, and he turned sharply to the corner from whence it came.

In the shadowy recesses of this cell, he saw a dark substance lurk.

"Who hides here?" he demanded sternly, "come forward an' you are honest."

The shadow moved slowly, resolving itself into a slim masculine shape.

"'Tis I, my lord," said a soft clear voice, "Fridolin, the page."

"Your pleasure?" asked the Count curtly, "Art come to gloat over a fool whose foolishness has brought him into the power of the rascal you call master?"

"Nay, lord, it was my mistress sent me," replied the boy. "Heaven knows she has little cause to love you—a red-headed squint-eyed shrew, you said?—Still, she would have you meet your end lustily, as a man should, not cringing upon an empty belly, and so—"

"My end!" interrupted Sholto, scornfully, "you speak too confidently, page. What prevents me squeezing that reedy guilet of yours, and escaping ere they come for you again?"

Laying his sinewy fingers about the slender throat, with a little cruel smile on his lips, he pressed firmly, and looked to see the boy whiten and blench. But there was no fear in the small pert face, nor in the insolent half-closed eyes gazing mockingly into his; no quiver of the mobile mouth so freshly red.

"My lady Friede," the page said composedly, "shrewdly foresaw your thought and placed two guards without. They are very big men, my lord."

Sholto dropped his hands with a laugh and turned again to the table.

"Your lady's hatred takes a curious form," he observed when his hunger was satisfied, "and now I mind me, I have wronged the noble maid."

"You wronged her, my lord?" Fridolin leaned forward eagerly, his face aglow, his eyes wide and shining.

"Ay, for now I remember, 'tis not only that she squints, but her eyes are not fellow to each other."

The page's lids drooped suddenly, perhaps to hide the anger flaming within, and his voice was cold as he replied.

"True it is that her eyes vary somewhat in hue, but that she squints, 'tis a lie, a most foul lie."

"Now, by the Rood!" Count Sholto sprang to his feet and advanced threateningly upon the boy, "he who calls me liar must prove his words. I—oh! my cursed head," he broke off, groaning, as a thrill like a red-hot needle crossed his brow; "Good Fridolin, can'st ease me of this torment?"

"My lady heard you had taken some hurt, sir, and bade me bring this healing salve; she is skilled in the preparation of soothing balms despite her eyes," he added daringly.

With slim deft fingers he cut away the matted hair about the wound, washing it clear of blood and dirt, and with the touch of the sweet-scented ointment the pain and fever slowly withdrew from Sholto's head, and a pleasant drowsiness stole upon him.

Fridolin lingered over his task, seemingly in no hurry to be gone, his thin, impish face strangely soft and wistful in the dim light. Once his chest heaved with a sigh almost too heavy for its frail sheath, and in his dulled hearing Sholto caught the laboured breath, and murmured sleepily:—

"You seem in trouble, page. Art in love that you sigh so deep?"

"I sigh to think so gallant a lord must hang before the week is out," replied the page in silken tones, the softness flown from voice and face, his eyes dancing mischievously.

Count Sholto frowned, ill-pleased, and drew his head from beneath the ministering fingers.

"You take too much for granted," he said, proceeding to administer a snub.

"Why, as to that," said the page drily, "who can tell what may happen?"

"You go too fast in your conclusions, good Fridolin. We have four days—three is it?—before us, so why this despair? I do not wed, friend page, neither do I hang. So much I know. Now get you gone, I am a-weary, and would sleep. My humble thanks to the shrew you call mistress for her bounty. Heaven send it may continue," he ended piously.

The page's eyes flashed again, and his hands clenched at the careless, contemptuous words; then, with a laugh and shrug for his folly, he unloosed the cloak he wore, to throw it over the tired man, and passed silently from the cell.

Nightly came Fridolin the page to the cell, bearing a generous measure of wine and meat, presented, he was careful to impart to the captive, by the Countess Friede so he might make a fitting end when his time came.

At first it was difficult to tell whether it was the page or his pasties Sholto welcomed most, but presently he grew to look for the impish face, and shrewd though biting comments, and determined to carry the lad with him when he should make his escape.

And now the eve of the fourth day arrived, to find the Count's defiant attitude still unchanged, and escape seemingly no nearer than before.

His last interview with the baron had but served to increase the anger against him, which no offer of ransom or honourable treaty, from the Count could now appease, and the next morning he would hang from the battlements.

Opposite him, chin in hand, sat Fridolin the page, his grey-green eyes so curiously at variance with his dusky curls, intently watching the captive's careless, smiling face, his own grave and worried.

"You are monstrous gay tonight, friend page," quoth Sholto gaily, "there is a positive draught from your sighs. Methinks hanging will not be my death, an' you sit there much longer."

Fridolin sprang to his feet with a petulant gesture, his thin face flushing angrily.

"Will you never be serious?" he cried peevishly. "Can you not realise that it is no jesting matter with the baron? Your imprudent refusal to see the Lady Friede today may cost you dearer than you wot."

"Bah!" said Sholto scornfully, "does he think the sight of his red-headed shrew will lure me from the rope?"

"And well may she be a shrew," burst in Fridolin, his eyes ablaze with anger, "and her heart like to break under the insults she has to endure; with longing for the freedom which can never be hers. Mewed in a prison all her days, bullied and cursed, her sole fault in being the daughter of her father, who gave her the red hair which you despise."

"And his temper also, it would seem from all accounts," laughed Sholto irrepressibly.

"But for that same temper she had been dead by now, or wedded, maybe in desperation, to the first likely offer, and her last state worse than her first. Oh, you may laugh, it is all vastly amusing to you, who are but a man, and cannot see the shame and pity of it. But I—I attend her and I know—and would pray you pardon my heat in this matter."

Stricken into amazed silence by this passionate outbreak, Sholto eyed him for some minutes, his lips pursed in an inaudible whistle; then, laying a hand upon the boy's heaving shoulders, he said kindly enough:—

"Nay, lad, I spoke idly, and crave your lady's pardon. She may be the most buxom wench in Christendom, but I wed no woman on compulsion, be she fair as the morn, or gentle as the dove. Neither, good Fridolin, do I hang, an' you can help me, as I believe you can."

Fridolin's slender shoulders slipped from under the friendly grasp, and he moved a few paces before replying. The sparkle and heat had passed from his face leaving it wistful and a little pale.

"Perhaps I can," he said slowly, and rather breathless, "the risk is great, but ——" Unlacing his doublet, he displayed a length of strong fine rope wound round and round his middle. "See, I stole this tonight, 'tis the rope to hang you at daybreak.

The irony of the deed made Sholto smile, but his eyes glistened.

"What of the guards?" he hazarded, "that your lady so thoughtfully provides for your safety?"

For answer the page stole softly to the door, and listened intently, then slowly and cautiously opening it, he peered out; presently, with finger on lip, he beckoned the Count to advance, and showed him the two inaminate forms whose heavy breathing filled the echoing passage.

"We planned it for tonight," he said eagerly, "it was easy enough to drug their liquor; and now, my lord——"

"We?" interrupted Sholto, with an inquiring cock of his bushy brows, "and who is your fellow conspirator, boy? Canst trust him?"

Fridolin coloured and bit his lip, visibly disturbed at this slip.

"My lady has too tender a heart, and would not that any man suffered for her sake," he said, striving to seem indifferent, "though it matters but little to her whether you go, or hang."

"I have yet to learn that a woman's interest in a man is gone because he flouts her,' 'replied Sholto grinning, "such is not my experience, and I flatter myself it is fairly extensive."

An angry retort rose to the boy's lips, but checking his scornful words he curtly bade the Count help him to lay the guards' snoring figures within the cell. Then locking it they sped silently through the empty passages, and up the stairs until the great hall, dimly lighted by the dying fire, was reached. Still following his nimble guide, Sholto passed into a fair-sized room furnished with certain touches of feminity, fitfully revealed by the flickering beams from a lantern hanging on the wall.

From his girdle Fridolin took a key, and pulling aside the arras, revealed a small door set deep in the masonry.

"This," said he, "is my lady's private stair to the gardens below. From thence 'tis but a small matter to gain the moat, and once on the other side, half way through the woods you will find a hut where a man awaits you, with a horse. Now, farewell, get you gone quickly; here is the rope, wind it about you, so. I will keep the door lest any should come."

Sholto made no movement to go, but eyed him in some amusement.

"Why, does the little cock-sparrow," quoth he, "think to beard the lion's jackals. Nay, boy, I do not leave you behind to suffer their fury. Little comrade, we go together, or not at all."

"Together?" stammered Fridolin, his cheeks whitening, his eyes round with terror. "No—oh no—I—I cannot come —'tis impossible—you must go alone."

"Together, I say, or I stay here," said Sholto firmly, watching with a whimsical smile and genial light in his blue eyes, the small trembling figure, seemingly distressed out of all measure at his decision.

"Lord, lord," cried the page wringing his hands in a frenzy, "will you not go? You do not understand—I *must* stay—Go, time passes, and we may be heard!"

Distracted, he exerted his puny strength to move Sholto's stalwart figure, but he might as well have tried to upheave the castle, and at last, finding his efforts of no avail, he had his face, his shoulders heaving with ill-repressed sobs.

Sholto leaned forward and drew the shrinking form to his side.

"You think I will leave you to scourging, nay, perhaps to suffer in my place?" he said gently. "Little comrade, I thought you had known me better. You will come?"

"You leave me no choice," replied the boy sobbing, with averted face, "if I would not be your death. You—you will suffer me to go whither I please when we are outside?" he said eagerly and hopefully.

"Not I," came the damping retort. "I need you, good Fridolin, and I like you too well to part thus lightly. Now lead on, boy."

With a resigned sigh, Fridolin opened the door, revealing a narrow stair leading downwards, to end in the Countess Friede's gardens overhanging the moat. There was a ring in the low wall, to which Sholto attached the rope, then bidding the boy clasp him firmly about the neck, he began the descent.

Hand over hand, without undue haste, Sholto drew gradually to the water's edge, then, just as he inwardly congratulated himself upon a successful escape, the rope, strong enough for one, but scarcely equal to the strain imposed upon it, gave suddenly, precipitating them with considerable force into the turgid, slimy moat.

Sholto came to the surface, breathing hard, and somewhat dazed: the water was deeper than he supposed. Wiping the slime from his eyes, he gazed about for the page, who as they fell uttered a faint cry and unclasped his hands. But nothing disturbed the placid surface save the ripples caused by his constant movements, and divining that the boy must be lying senseless at the bottom, he fetched a deep breath, and dived. For some moments he groped in vain, then, as, almost spent, he was about to rise, his hand touched the page's head. Gripping him firmly by the curls, Sholto struck out for the surface, to shoot up more swiftly than he expected, his hand full of short, dark hair, nothing else. With an exclamation of horror, he dived again, and this time seized the unhappy Fridolin by the collar, and exerting his remaining strength, with a few vigorous strokes reached the opposite shore. There, flinging himself with his senseless burden on the ground he lay panting and exhausted for a while; then he attempted, with ill success, to wring his sodden garments, and rid them of the scum with which they were encrusted.

Desisting at last, he turned to his companion who showed little signs of recovering consciousness, and in whom he noticed a wonderful and astounding change.

A late moon, rising ruddy and full, shone brightly on the deathlike and strangely altered face; for where he had last seen a mass of short dark curls, hung ,tangled and dark, a thick cable of long hair about the slender shoulders.

Sholto, confounded, sat back on his heels, then peering again more closely, lifted a strand of hair, examining it carefully. Even in that illusive light he could see its colour was of a vivid, uncompromising red, and with this discovery the truth dawned upon his bewildered mind. As he gazed, a smile of wonderful pity softened his bold features, and lifting one of the cold inert hands, he kissed it gently; then, reflecting that the increasing light would betray their whereabouts to any inquisitive eyes, he raised the slight figure and strode forward into the safer shelter of the wood.

The sudden movement brought Fridolin to himself, and with a gasp and sigh he awoke to feel his head spinning from concussion with the water, and to wonder vaguely what had happened.

"What is it?" he began, confusedly. "Ah, yes, I remember—the rope broke —the cold, evil-smelling moat—Nay, I am well now, put me down again I pray you."

"Bide where you are," commanded Sholto curtly, "my arms are strong enough, I trow."

"Nay, lord," said the boy, struggling, panic-stricken, "it is not meet—indeed I am recovered—indeed——"

"Will you not keep still, or must I make you—Countess?" came the unexpected reply; and as the words left his lips, Sholto felt her gasp, her form stiffen, then quiver and collapse upon his shoulder. He marched on in grim, uncomfortable silence, until a sudden sob gave him pause. He hesitated, stopped, then finally lowered the trembling girl, who slid through his arms to sink in a weeping heap at his feet.

"Lady—Countess—I pray you—nay, I would not have you weep so, all danger is past," he stammered, distracted by the turn affairs had taken.

"Oh, what shall I do?" moaned the Countess Friede, "you would have me come, and now am I utterly shamed. I never meant that you should know—in the wood I thought to escape and return, and now——"

"But," said Sholto, a sudden happy inspiration coming to his aid, "*I knew you all the time,*" and if he blushed for this stupendous lie, the kindly, sheltering trees hid it in their dim protecting light.

The sobs ceased as by magic, and lifting a tear-drenched face, the Countess gazed at him with wondering, incredulous eyes.

"What?" she breathed, "you knew me all the time? Oh! Impossible!"

Sholto nodded gaily.

"Ay, from the very first night," he lied again, with what would seem practised ease, rejoicing to have found a way out of the difficulty, yet with a wary eye for possible traps.

"But—but," faltered the girl, "you had never seen me, and my disguise was such that my own waiting-woman did not know me."

"You cannot change your eyes," Sholto said gravely, inwardly blessing heaven for the timely thought.

And now he dropped on his knees beside her. But she turned away and rose swiftly to her feet.

"There is no reason now why you should not go forward alone."

"Why, yes there is," cried Sholto eagerly, "the reason that I want you, and what I want I take," he added masterfully.

The hot blood flooded cheeks and brow, then died down.

"I thank you sir," she said, her voice trembling with the effort to repress her anger, for it was not for nothing she had been named shrew, "but the women of my house, be they gentle or curst, are not so lightly won; they prefer death to dishonour. Rather will I return and brave my father's anger even though he kill me."

Sholto's voice was serious and very winning, as he said,

"You do me an injustice. 'Tis as my honoured wife I would bid you welcome to Adlersburg."

He had moved nearer to her, but she slipped aside into a broad band of light, which fell upon the impish face and parti-coloured eyes, showing them a-gleam with unbelief.

Then came a delicious ripple of laughter, whose silvery mockery caused Sholto to tingle from head to foot.

"Nay, but 'I wed no woman on compulsion,'" she gibed. "'I will rather hang than wed a red-haired, squinting shrew.'"

"Lady—lady—I beseech you," cried poor Sholto, writhing under the merciless laughter, "nay, cruel, to cast my hasty words in my teeth. I had not known you then. But now——"

"And yet you knew me from the first," she said with sudden suspicion, "how now, my lord?"

"Of a surety," said Sholto stoutly, "but that I might not frighten you away, I pretended."

"But now you swear you love me well?" she mocked, "oh, fie, my lord."

"Ay, and 'tis true: as true as it is that you love me," he answered boldly, "else why did you ease my prison, and deliver me from the hangman?"

"It was pity," she flashed, "nothing more," but she turned her face from his eager gaze.

"Nothing more?" he queried softly, "nothing more, sweetheart?" He had caught her waist now, and was drawing her resisting figure to him with gentle yet compelling force.

"If you must return, why then, so must I, and hang willingly, an' you do not love me," he whispered.

There was a short silence while he waited, anxious a little, but confident of the answer. Then low and clear, with half averted face, she said: "As I would not that any man should hang for my sake, it seems I must consent," yielding her lips in happy surrender to his.

Then, hand in hand, like happy children, they journeyed forward into the peaceful night.

Smiles

A TERRIBLE LOSS.

As is the case with all occurences where tragedy is uppermost, the collision between the Republic and the Florida brought out some amusing incidents. Here is one:

When the Republic passengers were taken on board the Baltic many of them had saved practically none of their belongings. One lady, arrayed in a nightgown and fur coat, all she had brought with her from the sinking ship, climbed over the side of the Baltic and spied a sort of bulletin board on which notices of interest to the passengers were posted. The following caught that lady's eye:

"Lost—One gold button. Finder please return to"—

The possessor of one nightgown and one fur coat looked long and solemnly at that notice.

"Lost, one gold button," she murmured dreamily. "Think of it—one button lost!"

Then she went into hysterics.

DON'T NEED TO!

"Does the baby talk yet?" asked a friend of the family. "No," replied the baby's disgusted little brother, "the baby doesn't need to talk." "Doesn't need to talk." "No. All the baby has to do is to yell, and it gets anything there is in the house that's worth having."

HIS INVESTMENT.

Old Lady (who had given the tramp a nickel)—"Now, what will you do with it?"

Hungry Hobo—"Waal, ye see, mum, ef I buy an auto, there ain't enough left to hire a shofer. So I guess I'll git a schooner. I kin handle that meself."

The Traveller Who Returned

By John Haslette

SENOR Jose Zapato, riding sullenly beneath the hot sun that brooded over the pampas, cursing impartially the heat and his own foolishness in coming to such a barbarous country, suddenly put spurs to his jaded beast as his wandering eye fell upon a solitary estancia that stood on the verge of the sun-baked plain.

A coffee-planter of Santos—as he said—he was making a journey southward, partly on business bent, partly for the pleasure and profit to be derived from such desultory dealing in horse-flesh as might come his way.

A cigar between his white teeth sent back fragrant wreaths of smoke as he rode, and one sinewy hand, resting lightly upon his hip, displayed upon the index finger a diamond ring of surpassing size and worth. To carry such in these wilds must be accounted a foolhardy proceeding, but Senor Zapato was a strong man and a brave one, and felt quite capable of taking care of his property.

"Bueno dia, Senor," he said, showing his teeth in a flashing smile.

Senor Jose Zapato bowed gravely in return, and looking down at him, said: "The Senor will permit me to dismount and rest awhile?"

Chico Llanos bowed even more deeply: "You are very welcome, Senor, you may dismount and take your siesta in the shade. Consider pray, that everything of mine is your own. In the meanwhile the peon shall take your horse to the corral. Pedro!"

A peon appeared at the call, and taking the horse's rein led it off, while Chico and his guest strolled on to the verandah.

As they walked Chico covertly studied the diamond ring upon his companion's finger: his quick eyes had caught sight of it the moment the latter dismounted and it was all he could do to suppress the cry of delight which rose to his lips as the magnificent single stone, catching the vivid sun-rays, sparkled in a myriad points of light. Here was indeed a fish worth the netting, a fool who might be considered a lawful and easy prey.

"Sit here in the shade, Senor; be welcome and at ease," he said, indicating a cane chair on the verandah with a polite gesture. "Pedro will presently bring you a cup of mate."

Senor Jose replied with exaggerated courtesy that Chico surpassed the good Samaritan in kindness, took the seat indicated, threw away his half-smoked cigar, and accepting a cigarillo, lighted it at Chico's, touching little fingers, as is the custom.

"The Senor has travelled far today?" asked Chico.

"Ten leagues, perhaps."

"Ah, such a distance fatigues in the morning sun," Chico said again, "assuredly the Senor will remain overnight."

"If it is permitted, I will gladly accept of your hospitality," Zapato rejoined.

Pedro appeared with mate as they talked, and Zapato, taking a cup, drank thirstily.

"You travel for pleasure?" Chico asked when Pedro had retired. His tone expressed merely ephemeral curiosity.

"Si, Senor; and it is now three months since I left Santos."

"You are interested in horses?" Chico ventured.

Zapato looked at him eagerly. "You guess aright. But how?"

"A chance shot, Senor. I remarked that your horse was of uncommon strength and breeding. Here, I say to myself, is one who knows horseflesh as a bird the air."

"It is so," Zapato replied, flattered, for he prided himself upon his knowledge of the subject, and not without cause.

"If the Senor wishes he may see two horses which a king might envy. Imported from England by me. Of speed matching the eagle—of the best blood," Chico said.

The horses of which he spoke had indeed been imported at great expense, but by a distant ranchero who had wasted a fruitless month in search of them, and still wondered how his valuable property had disappeared so suddenly.

"You have them here," Zapato asked eagerly.

"In the corral near by. If the Senor will follow me he may see them now."

"Bueno! Come then!"

They rose and made their way to the corral, where they found Zapato's horse tethered, and also two other horses, at sight of which the Zrazillian's eyes lit up with delighted interest. Pedro, who had come out to them, brought forward one for closer inspection.

"It is a horse of matchless worth, Senor," Chico cried enthusiastically, "such an animal as one rarely sees. Mark the muscle here and here," running his hand over the beast's quarters, "see the hocks, the pasterns, slim and yet strong. When one has mounted it one becomes not a man but a bird—an eagle, Senor."

"Not so bad," Zapato commented carelessly, "though one could wish for more signs of breeding."

"Breeding?" Chico almost shrieked. "It cost me a small fortune, and has the greatest pedigree."

"One is sometimes deceived in these matters. I myself have known it," Zapato replied airily.

"As the Senor is now," returned Chico; "one has but to look at this horse to know that its qualities are the most excellent. Pedro, bring nearer the other horse."

"As I say, it is not so bad," said Zapato, as the other was led up. He looked at it for a moment with the keen eye of a connoisseur, turned away again, shrugged his shoulders, and damned it with faint praise to Chico, while his unspoken comment was: "Two magnificent animals which I shall buy."

After this preliminary fencing they returned to the verandah, and Zapato seated himself on a chair, resting one hand ostentatiously on his knee that the other might see the diamond ring in the best light. An unwise act, one might think, but Zapato thought otherwise.

"The horses are worth three hundred gold pieces," said Chico presently, lounging in his hammock, and commencing to roll a fresh cigarillo.

Zapato laughed softly, "You sell to millionaires. But why speak of it? I travel alone, and if I would buy the horses—at a reasonable price, it is understood—yet I could not take them with me." Chico smiled calmly. He knew that the price he quoted had been that paid by their unfortunate importer; but with the diamond ring in his mind, and also a half formed plan for its acquisition, kept silence on that point. Under the circumstances, it was as well to set his guest's mind at ease by playing the part of an honest, if somewhat dull-witted ranchero.

"My partner, Senor Heller, will accompany you a little on your way," he said.

"Not so, Senor," Zapato replied, "I would not trespass upon his kindness."

"Is it not a pleasure, Senor, to assist the traveller who passes?" asked Chico.

"Truly; nevertheless, I cannot buy the horses."

"They are cheap at two hundred and fifty pieces, Senor."

"At two hundred, perhaps, though as I say they lack breeding."

"The Senor is in error, they are of the purest blood, and I rob myself by selling them at two hundred and fifty.'

Zapato smiled tolerantly: "I offer two hundred for the horses."

At this moment Ludwig Heller appeared on the verandah, and bowed in return.

"You speak of horses, Senor?" he questioned, after an exchange of compliments.

"It is so," replied Chico. "For the two the Senor has offered two hundred and twenty pieces."

"Two hundred," Zapato corrected mildly.

"Ah, pardon."

Ludwig threw out his hands in a horrified gesture "Cuidado, Chico, take care!" he cried. "The price is beyond all expression low."

He was going to enlarge on this theme when Chico touched his foot so he turned it off with: "Truly, Senor, you have a bargain, but since it is to your gain it would be impolite to protest."

Zapato looked carelessly from one to the other, but did not reply. To himself he commented: "Excellently done, if not a little overdone, *amigo*."

"These superb horses are yours then, Senor," Chico added. "Be assured that they would not have been sold at such a price had I other means of disposing of them." Which was true as far as it went.

"Is it so? Well, I shall pay you now for them."

"Not so," replied Chico, anxious to put his guest at ease. "The Senor shall sleep on his bargain, and if in the morning he does not rue it—well——!" He finished with a careless shrug.

"You exceed the Cid in magnanimity," said Zapato.

That night he retired early to the room prepared for him, and Ludwig Heller, joining Chico, who sat smoking on the verandah, laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"Verdammte Eselkopf! you have sold the horses foolishly."

"Not so," said Chico, with imperturbable good humour, "I had a purpose."

"A purpose?" sneered Ludwig. "Tell it me then."

"*Ciertaimente*, I wished to let him think me a man of little wit."

"That is not so hard," Ludwig chuckled coarsely.

Chico's brow darkened, but he went on equably: "He has a diamond ring worth perhaps three hundred pieces. If I take it we have value for a large sum, together with the price of the horses which, although sold below their value, yet cost us nothing."

"Ach, the ring, I hav' seen it not," said Ludwig suspiciously.

"One can understand that since the Senor slipped it into his belt before you came out. But it is worth much, and as for the horses we should not find them easy to sell."

"True, but why make their price so little?"

"Because it will render the stranger less suspicious. He will be anxious in the morning to ride off quickly with his bargain. If he discovers the loss of the ring we will charge the peon with the theft; I shall see that he leaves the estancia early as if in flight."

"Very good, I see your plan now. Ah, listen!"

Ludwig broke off shortly as the sound of a snore came from within.

"He sleeps!" whispered Chico.

"We shall make sure—if it is a ruse he suspects something," Ludwig said, and knocked over a chair which fell with a crash. "Good, he does sleep; a man who pretended to snore would pause at the sound," he added, as the regular snoring still proceeded. "Go now, Chico!"

But even as he spoke Chico was on his way to Zapato's room, gliding like a serpent, treading without noise, breath hard held, and one sinewy hand upon his knife haft.

Ludwig sat down to wait. Five long minutes passed, then Chico reappeared, holding out in the palm of his hand the ring which sparkled even in the thin moon-rays.

"Die lieber Himmel!" Ludwig whispered. "Let me see it."

Chico protested.

"No, Ludwig, tomorrow. If we stay here longer we make a noise, perhaps disturb the Senor—manana."

"To bed then," Ludwig assented, and led the way indoors.

On the following morning, as they were enjoying their morning cigarillo, Zapato came out to them, a wildly gesticulating figure, with staring eyes and hands that grasped at nothing.

"Oh! Senores, my ring is gone! Some *ladrones* (thieves) have been here. A diamond worth a king's ransom, Senores!" Both men started to their feet with cries of anger.

"Ladrones, Senor? Impossible!"

"It is so, ojala! that I had not come here."

"You have made a thorough search, Senor?" asked Chico.

"Yes, and the ring is gone without doubt."

Ludwig clapped his palms suddenly together: "The peon, where is he?"

Zapato looked at Ludwig, Chico in turns at both his companions. Three more consummate actors never graced the stage—doubt, surprise, anger, flitted in shades over their expressive features.

"Caramba! It is an everlasting disgrace—a guest robbed beneath our roof," cried Chico, hands in the air.

"Ach! the rascal peon!" ejaculated Ludwig.

They ran simultaneously to the back of the estancia; no trace of Pedro; called aloud, but heard no answering voice; finally they looked in the corral and discovered that Chico's horse was gone. The situation was serious; the peon had fled by night, the stranger's ring had been stolen, who could fail to connect the two events in concluding that the wretch Pedro had committed this black act of ingratitude and inhospitality. Chico called Heaven to witness that his heart's core bled; Ludwig vowed summary vengeance on the culprit when he should catch him, while Zapato listened sullenly at their self-reproaches and protested his unwillingness to remain longer in a place where he had suffered such a serious loss.

"Here is the price of the horses," he said at last, holding out to Chico a leather bag of gold pieces. "Give me the animals, and let me set out."

Chico grasped the bag greedily. "It is as you please, Senor," he said slowly. "It will be to me an everlasting grief that a stranger was robbed by my servant. The horses I shall bring now, and Senor Heller will ride with you a few leagues."

"Bueno," Zapato said, and turned away sulkily, while Chico made his way to the corral.

He reappeared soon after, riding Zapato's horse, and leading the others, dismounted quickly, and, giving the reins to the latter, turned smiling.

"I have saddled your horse, Ludwig, and left it in the corral."

"So. Then I will fetch it."

Zapata was already mounted when Ludwig rode round to the front of the estancia. "I am ready now," he said quickly. "Vamos, senor, let us go."

Chico swept off his sombrero.

"Adios, senor. A good journey to you," he cried, and Zapato bowing constrainedly in reply, returned to the verandah to watch the horsemen, as they set out at a quick gallop across the pampas.

Their figures disappeared slowly into the golden morning haze, the thud of hoofs died down and went out of hearing, and Chico, flinging himself with a self-satisfied smile on a hammock, jingled the bag of gold, and watched the thin wreaths of smoke curl up from his cigarilio, well content with his morning's work.

"Such fools come but seldom to the pampas," he was thinking; "were there many such I should be a rich man."

He felt in his waistbelt in a secret pocket and pulled out the ring, admired the play of light on its admirably cut facets, turned it this way and that, examined the setting, and finally returned it to his belt with a triumphant chuckle.

"I should have shown it to Ludwig this morning," he mused. "He is no mean judge and could have attested its true worth, where I can only guess nearly by its size."

The morning wore away, the sun, ever mounting higher in the vivid blue sky, glared down upon the plain, and the shadows drew in as the rays pierced more perpendicularly down. Two long hours had passed before Ludwig returned, and spring from his horse, left it standing and crossed over to the verandah. "The ring, show it me!" he cried at once, and Chico, taking it out, placed it in his outstretched palm.

Ludwig looked at it, admiringly at first, then with some uneasiness looked up at Chico suspiciously, and dashed with it into the estancia.

"Come back," Chico screamed, imagining that his partner meditated instant flight.

And presently Ludwig came.

His face worked convulsively and stepping to the front of the verandah, he screamed a bitter curse across the pampas.

"He has gone, and it is too late to pursue. Your diamond—Verfluchte Spitzbube!—is *paste!*"

His Dreadful Errand

By E. R. Punshon

"ALMOST pestilent and avowed Whig," cried old Sir Maurice de Bracy, his ruddy cheeks pale at then news, "I know not how he dare venture his vile carcase about here, where all of us be honest."

Indeed, the news that young Roger Rodet, a major in the Foot Guards, and weil known as an active supporter of the Hanoverian Government, had suddenly appeared and taken up his quarters in this quiet and remote village had sent a flutter of apprehension and dismay through all the neighbourhood, where, as old Sir Maurice had just said, everyone was "honest" in the sense of being an adherent of the dethroned Stuarts. Even at this time, when their cause seemed finally lost, and adherents were falling away on every side, this one little district remained fervently devoted to the exiled royal family. And as none was more ardently Jacobite than old Sir Maurice, so none was more disturbed at the news of young Major Rodet's arrival.

"If report speak true," observed Mistress Dorothy, Sir Maurice's fair young daughter, looking up from her needlework, "this Major Rodet is not one to care over much where he goes."

"Pray, young mistress, what dost thou know of Roger Rodet?" demanded Sir Maurice angrily, glad of a chance to give some vent to his fear and disturbance of mind. "My father would have soundly chastised any maid that even knew such a fellow's name."

"That would have shown small justice on my grandsire's part," retorted the young lady, undismayed, "had he himself presented the said fellow to the said maid of his, as my father presented Major Rodet to me."

"Eh, what do you say?" exclaimed Sir Maurice. "When did I that?"

"At Bath, no longer gone than last summer, when we went thither to take the waters," returned Dorothy composedly.

"But then I knew not he was a Whig," retorted Sir Maurice, "and so soon as I heard how high in Court favour he was, I gave thee very different orders, madame."

"Yes," agreed the maid, rising, "and made me show discourtesy to one who had shown none to me"; and so, having secured the last word, she left the room.

But, in truth, the news of Major Rodet's appearance in the village had disturbed fair Dorothy scarcely less than her father, though for very different reasons, and she suddenly remembered that old Grammer Dickon was ill of an ague, and had been promised a visit. If old Grammer Dickon lived in the village and knew all that was going on there—well, after all, that was merely coincidence, and none of Dorothy's making. Although she had certain tender memories of the handsome, blue-eyed young officer she had met at Bath, Dorothy was also well enough informed of how deeply her father was involved in the ceaseless and futile intrigues of the Jacobites to share, to some extent, his fears at the open appearance, so near them, of one so high in the confidence of the Government as Major Rodet was reported to be.

The girl's thoughts went back to the gay assembly rooms at Bath; how kind he had been, how eagerly courteous. She had even found it hard to believe he

was a Whig at all, for she had been taught to believe that all Whigs were rogues. Besides, he had not been in the least like the country squires she was accustomed to meet. He could, for example, discuss with her the merits of Mr. Pope's translation of Homer, then recently published, and he had even been at the little house in Twickenham, where the crippled poet reigned as king. Mistress Dorothy awoke from her meditation with a violent start as she saw standing before her, bowing profoundly, Major Rodet himself, blue-eyed, and smiling, and yet with a touch of agitation in his manner that the girl at once discerned.

"Lord!" she exclaimed, in genuine surprise, "Major Rodet!"

"Madame, your most humble servant," he protested, with a yet deeper bow.

"How vastly you startled me," she said. "Who would have thought to see you, Major Rodet, in this quiet spot, so far from the great world?"

"Perhaps it is the better for being so far removed from the great world," he answered. "But, indeed, I will not deny I have a special reason for having ridden here."

She gave him a quick glance, as she remembered her father's expressed fear that this particular Whig might have some hidden and sinister purpose of his own for coming hither. It crossed her mind that possibly he meant to convey to her some hint of a hidden danger he did not wish to warn her of too openly.

"Pray, sir, what reason?" she asked bluntly.

"Nay," he answered, "you shall know in time—but not yet. Only this I will confess, that I, who have served in the Low Countries, and seen some hot work there, have headed a forlorn hope with more confidence and a lighter heart than I started on this enterprise—which, yet, I must needs attempt or become a lost man."

Dorothy went pale. What else could he mean save that he had been sent to arrest her father? Surely only such an enterprise could weigh on him more heavily than the heading of a forlorn hope; yet, of course, he would have to undertake it if so ordered, or become a ruined man.

In her distress, Dorothy turned quickly, meaning to hurry back to the Hall to alarm her father. Asking a permission Dorothy dared not refuse, Major Rodet walked with her, passing the somewhat affected and high-flown compliments of the period, to which poor Dorothy was too agitated to reply. Even when they reached a small side gate admitting into the grounds, the Major still lingered, and Dorothy understood that he was hoping to accompany her to the Hall itself. But that she had no mind for, and yet was fearful of offending one in whose hands such power lay. At last, as if despairing of so great a favour as permission to accompany her further ,he bade her farewell, and in doing so, asked for a flower from those growing in profusion near this little side entrance.

His manner, during these last few minutes, had somewhat reassured Dorothy, and this request further composed her; for she could not think a man with a warrant in his pocket for the arrest of the father would pay so many compliments to the daughter. And yet the young man's manner was certainly strange.

"Why surely, sir," she said, in answer to his request, and then an idea flashed into her mind, and moving a step or two, she plucked a white rose—emblem of the Jacobite cause—that grew on a bush near by, and handed it to him.

To her this was a kind of test. If he accepted it and wore it, she would take it as proof that he was here on no Government business; if he rejected it, she would understand that her father's fears were only too well founded.

He held out his hand, and took the flower with a low bow.

"I shall wear it next my heart," he said, and slipped it within his embroidered waistcoat.

"You have a pretty wit, sir," she said, flushing with embarrassment and vexation, "yet I should esteem the compliment more highly if you wore my flower more openly."

"An' that I would," he answered, "meant it no more than allegiance to my lady; as it is, I wear it where my heart knows the favour it is. Yet, if I dare crave the honour, and the bliss of a flower of another hue—?"

"Nay, sir," she answered, dropping him a low curtsey, "I give no double gifts."

She returned to the Hall, somewhat relieved by her encounter and interview, but on reporting it to her father she was dismayed to learn that he took a gloomy view of the situation.

"An errand that you shall know in time, say you?" he stammered, pale as death; "what should that mean but my arrest? An errand he must accomplish with reluctance, yet must attempt or become a ruined man? I know that smooth, fair talk. Not a tipstaff but is full of such phrases. I fear me I am lost—that letter I subscribed has surely reached the knowledge of the Government."

He had but recently signed some letter whose terms might easily be construed as treason, and seeing her father's fear, Dorothy began again to share his alarms.

"He said it was his purpose to wait on you today," she explained. "I see not how there can be instant peril, else he would not come alone, staying thus openly at the inn. Should he come tomorrow we must discover what this secret errand of his may be, for it is possible it hath no concern with us."

"I dare not so hope," replied Sir Maurice. "I am a lost man," he groaned.

But Dorothy heartened her father as best she could, and when Major Rodet appeared at the Hall on the following day, he received a courteous though constrained welcome that highly delighted him, for the young man had feared he might gain no admittance there at all.

And of the opening thus offered Major Rodet took advantage to the full, till hardly a day passed without his presence at the Hall. He made no further reference to the mysterious errand of which he had spoken to Dorothy, and gave no sign of making the move they dreaded, but expected. Indeed, he made himself so agreeable to the girl as well as to her father that in spite of the fears they entertained of his ultimate purpose, they grew to welcome his appearance as a relief to the monotony of their uneventful country life.

"And, indeed," Sir Maurice confessed to Dorothy, "he is a most civil, well-instructed young man; nor is he so lacking in respect and reverence for his elders as most young folk are in these modern days. Moreover, he playeth an excellent game of backgammon, though it is perchance more by fortune than skill I generally come off the victor."

Things seemed going so smoothly that Dorothy almost lost her fears, and she became shyly sub-conscious of another possible explanation of Major Rodet's presence and protracted stay, which explanation she would sooner have died than admitted the possibility of—even to herself.

And then came the climax. One afternoon, coming in to her father, Dorothy found him almost palsied with fear.

"It is over!" he said dismally. "He hath told me as plainly as possible that to-morrow he must arrest me, unless I escape. Child, we must fly, we must fly!"

"Oh, father!" Dorothy gasped, growing white, "what is it he hath said? Sure, he can mean no harm to us; it must be some other he alludes to."

"Hold thy tongue, Doll!" Sir Maurice bade her roughly, "and set to work, unless thou hast a mind to see me on Tower Hill. Some other, indeed! Where else hath he been save here? Who else hath he watched save me? No, 'tis plain he hath been sent to watch and guard me till they gathered sufficient evidence to proceed. Yes, Doll, ride tonight. Perchance we may find a packet sailing for France—only there shall we be safe. I protest the young man hath an affection for me, and spoke but to warn me. 'To-morrow, Sir Maurice,' quoth'a, 'thou shalt know my errand here—more dreadful to me than heading a forlorn hope on a beleaguered town.' Once let me be safe out of this, and I'll meddle no

more with Whig and Tory. They shall be one to me."

That night they slept at an inn twenty miles from the sea, and Dorothy lay awake in her strange bed-chamber and listened to the clatter of some belated arrival, and wept nearly all the night through—and told herself her tears were for her father's peril. Yet, when now and then she dozed, it was not of him or of the danger threatening him she dreamed, but of a tall, blue-eyed young officer with a kind smile and strong, protecting arms.

Late as it was when they retired, she rose early and descended to the inn's great parlour, which the better class guests shared in common, the poorer eating, and sometimes sleeping, in the kitchen.

She had but entered the room when her eyes fell on a figure familiar to her, a figure that sprang up at her entrance.

"Major Rodet," she cried in terror; "have you followed us already?"

"Fair Mistress Dorothy," he said, "I could no longer endure the uncertainty of my fate, and have come hither to learn it from your——"

"Your fate!" she stammered.

"My fate," he answered, "I was never coward before, but these last days, I swear, have been dreadful to me, swinging between hope and fear Dorothy, I have little hope—for I know how great a thing I ask—but I do love thee well."

She made no answer, but a delicious warmth stole into her heart. Then a kind of dizziness seized her, and she put out a hand to support herself, resting it on the fine old carved oak dresser. Encouraged by her silence, the Major took her other hand; then the door opened and Sir Maurice stood on the threshold, amazed, indeed, and questioning, and yet no longer afraid, since his daughter's downcast, blushing face, and Major Rodet's half-defiant, half-nervous attitude, told plainly as words there was no danger such as he had feared.

"Sir, I crave your pardon," the Major said quickly, "I am aware I have shown ill-manners in thus following you, but I could endure no further delay, and the news of your unexpected departure plunged me into such despair that I was forced to follow and learn my fate."

"You told me," interrupted Sir Maurice, "about an errand, rather than perform which you would have headed a forlorn hope."

"And so in truth I would," returned the young man, "for then I risk only my life, but in this—how much more;" he said, and he bent and kissed Dorothy's hand. "I know," he continued, "I have the ill-fortune to differ from you in politics——"

"Nay," said Sir Maurice in a great hurry, "I care not a rush for that. Whig or Tory, 'tis all one with me."

Major Rodet looked surprised, but intensely relieved.

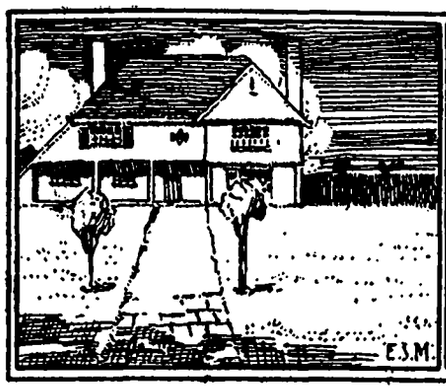
"Then may I hope——?" he asked, almost trembling with eagerness; "may I dare——?"

"Let's get home at once," said Sir Maurice, "where we may discuss other things. As for hoping, thou must e'en ask Dorothy about that."

"But your journey?" asked the Major, hesitating, and still doubtful of this sudden transition from despair to the heights of hope; for never had he dared to suppose his suit would receive such friendly reception from so staunch a Tory as Sir Maurice was reputed to be.

"Oh, the journey!" muttered Sir Maurice, for a moment looking embarrassed, "I think, perchance, we may abandon the journey—eh, Doll; what sayest thou?"

And Dorothy thought so too. And thus it came about that one more step was taken in the long path that brought together Whig and Jacobite in enthusiastic devotion to the established throne of Britain.



COUNTRY and SUBURBAN HOMES

by E. Stanley Mitton m.i.c.a.

A Sensible, Low-Cost Modern Home

"TO own yourself," says a modern philosopher, "You must own your home."

Such a doctrine will be scorned and ridiculed, doubtless, by the shallow minded and unobservant, unable to see below the surface of things; who mistake effects for causes, and fail to recognize the influence of material things on character and mental and moral growth.

The man who owns his home is independent and self-reliant, and to be independent and self-reliant is to be well on the high road to health, wealth and happiness.

Flats, tenements, and apartments have their conveniences. It is very soothing and pleasant to feel, on a cold winter's morning, that you do not need to worry about the furnace, nor split wood, nor carry in coal. It is nice to know that you can ride up and down stairs on the elevator whenever you wish, and have the halls swept out and kept clean by a trusty Hibernian janitor. But few people will admit that these minor joys furnish adequate compensation for the lack of privacy and breathing space inevitable in buildings of this kind, erected usually for the profit of selfish and grasping corporations and individuals.

Ownership of a home makes it possible to have a garden or lawn and enjoy sensible and worth while pleasures, and recreate after the labours of the day. Just think of the delight of smoking your pipe neath the shelter of the home peristyle, while your children are playing on the lawn, bathed in the last golden rays of the setting sun. Can the enjoyments of an apartment house, or a flat, compensate in any degree for that?

It will not be necessary for me to say anything about the pleasure of having a garden. If you are a home loving man you will delight in pottering around among the flowers and plants, and take great pleasure in watching the wondrous transformations which nature works under our very eyes.

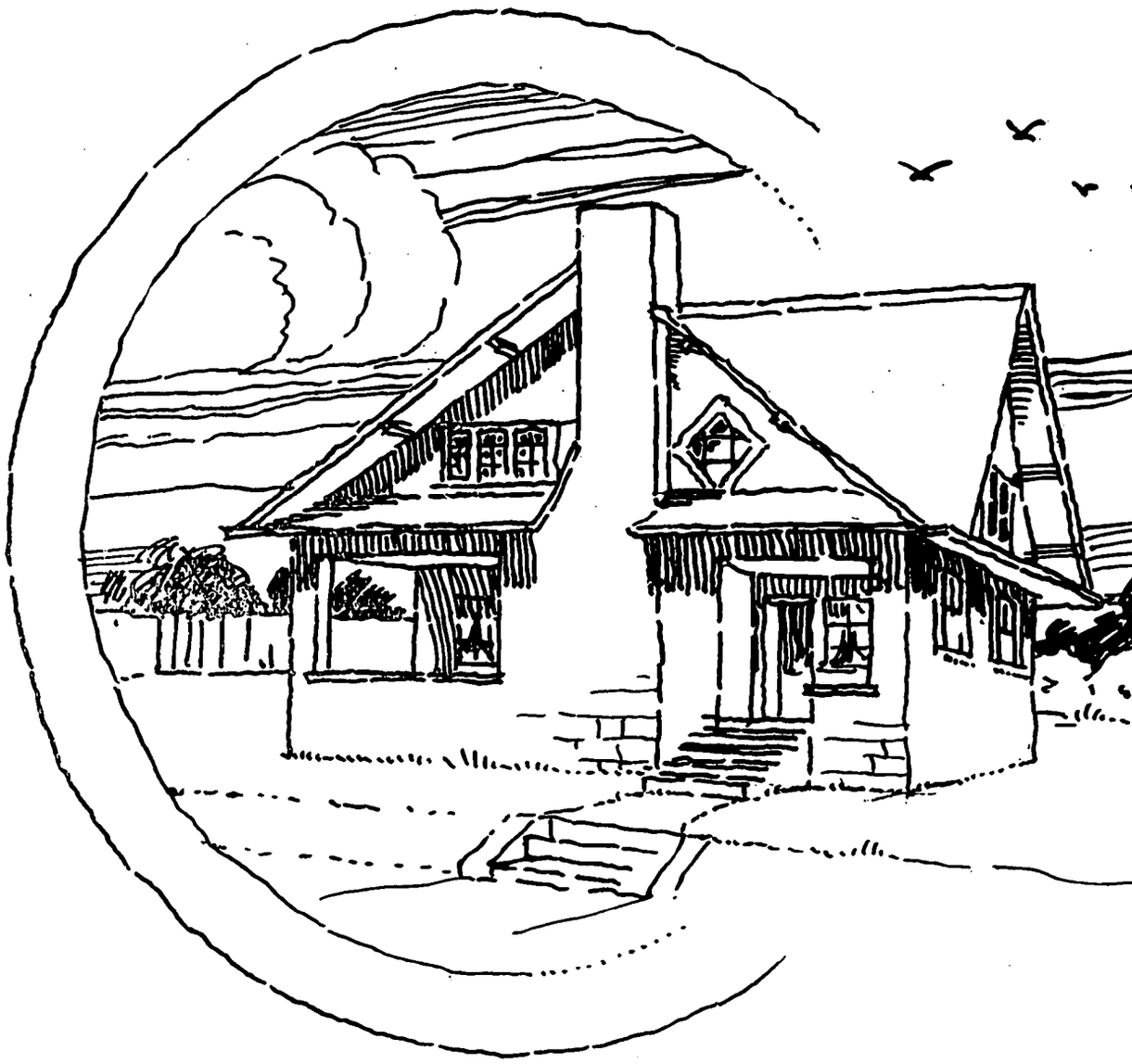
Is not that nostalgia, to which we all succumb at intervals, due to the fact that we are herded together in office buildings, public places, boarding houses, and tenements like cattle? Are not those feelings and moods of profound depression which seize us at times, due to a weariness of the society of others, and a longing for solitary communion with nature, reflection and meditation? Man was not meant to live alone, the Scriptures tell us, and that is true, but a certain amount of solitude, and isolation from the busy, sordid, huckstering world

is essential to true happiness. The man who owns his home, and a little garden and lawn, enjoys a certain amount of privacy and can withdraw, for a season, from the dusty and strenuous battle of life.

Not so many years ago, little thought was given by artists and architects to the building of moderate price houses, with the result that the idea gained ground that it was impossible to secure an attractive and conveniently arranged home at a low cost. It is time that idea was obliterated from the minds of every person. It is possible. It is being done. You have only to look around you, on any of our suburban streets to see that many builders have realized this desirable combination in the Canadian West.

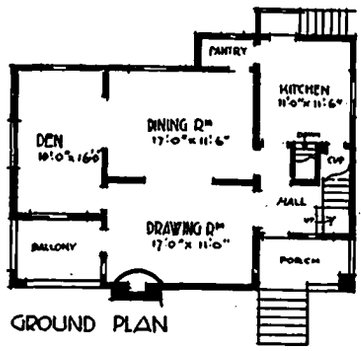
The once popular fallacy that it was necessary to have a big house in order to be comfortable and happy, has also been at last exploded. The old notion that one was obliged to have a number of superfluous rooms, including a "sitting-room," or parlour, has been relegated to oblivion, together with the antimacassars and horsehair furniture which once decorated it.

Wise people now build to meet their needs, and no more. They have no time to spend in dusting unnecessary furniture, and caring for rooms that are not required.



All life is an evolution. The houses of today evolved from the vast caverns of the past, and the enormous halls in which the Egyptians held their revels. Our existing architecture offers few points for comparison with those vast edifices whose very ruins resemble the crumbling of mountains rather than the remains of buildings. It needed all the exaggeration of that antique life to ani-

mate and fill those prodigious palaces, whose halls were too lofty and vast to allow of any ceiling save the sky itself—a magnificent ceiling ,and well worthy of such mighty architecture.



GROUND PLAN

But modern life is simpler. We have cut loose from the galling chains of the superfluous and unnecessary.

The two principal requirements of every home, no matter how reasonable the cost, are (1) A beautiful and attractive exterior, (2) A convenient and logical arrangement of the interior.

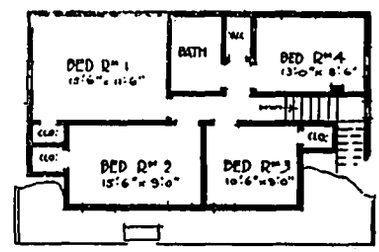
Some houses seem to have been designed for the express purpose of making trouble and labour for their occupants. In many we see the dining-room separated from the kitchen by an awkward hall, or another room. Everywhere we see narrow halls, waste space. This doubles the labours of the housekeeper without adding to the pleasure of living therein.

Before building study your plan carefully, and see that the location of the rooms, their size, shape and methods of access commend themselves to your best judgment. Don't do this in a superficial and careless manner, but carefully and thoroughly.

At the request of a number of Westward Ho! readers, I furnish a design for a moderate priced home which has met with considerable laudatory comment from those who have seen it.

The exterior is a distinct departure from that of the average cottage of this size, and while unique and charming has nothing of the freakish or bizarre to grate upon the senses of the most conservative. The quaint gabled roof, and leaded windows give an old world effect to the dwelling which is fetching and charming. The chimney is on the outside of the house, and there is a snug little verandah.

The convenience and economy of the interior arrangement will commend itself to all who study the plans which accompany this article. On the ground floor is the dining-room, and the drawing-room, a large den, a good sized kitchen, with pantry, and a small hall. All these rooms are well ventilated, airy and sunny. Fresh air and sunlight are



CHAMBER PLAN

important factors in conserving the health of the household.

The chamber plan shows three bedrooms of exceptional size, all of them provided with good closets. There is also a large bathroom.

The cost to build this beautiful home as illustrated, will be in the neighbourhood of $3,500 complete.

The Pacific War of 1910

By Chas H. Stuart Wade

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

The advance made by the Japanese nation in the paths of civilization, as well as the prowess shewn by her armies during the wars with China and Russia, inspired the Mikado's advisors with a just pride, but also an unworthy ambition for conquest. The ever-increasing growth of population, and the comparatively limited area of cultivateable land in the Island Kingdom served as pretext for a policy of expansion. Korea did not offer sufficient inducements to the newly-enlightened minds of the more educated classes, and eyes of longing were cast southward, and eastward to the American Continent. The keen-sighted Japanese statesmen, fully realizing the great mineral, agricultural, and timber wealth of Canada —particularly that portion of it known as the Province of British Columbia—sanctioned the emigration of scores of thousands to that Land of Desire! No longer could white men obtain employment and the Anti-Asiatic League, in 1907, publicly agitated for the total exclusion of the Oriental interlopers: a serious riot followed and much bitter feeling resulted.

The story opens with a succession of disasters which followed one another on the 17th and 18th December, 1910, along the entire route of the Trans-Continental Railway lines in Western Canada; telegraphic communication was destroyed on every hand, and the sudden cessation of "wireless" messages with vessels of the Empress line apparently aroused suspicion on the part of the Provincial Government. Shortly after midnight on the 17th December it became evident that fully equipped fleets had secretly left Japanese ports, and defensive preparations were immediately ordered. The Mayor of Vancouver in making the announcement to the citizens was cheered to the echo when he said: "The Boys of British Columbia will win such a name in history as will make the city of Vancouver a synonym for all that is manly, noble and heroic." It was subsequently learned that the Empress of India had been fired upon on the 16th by two Japanese cruisers who chased her during a running fight until noon of the 19th, when, crippled by the fire of the Kurama, she would have been captured but for the timely arrival of the Liverpool steamship Titan; which had herself narrowly escaped capture in the harbour of Nagasaki Japan. By skilful gunnery the Japanese vessel was herself captured, and a number of officers and lady tourists who had been taken prisoners by the Japanese were found on board: from two of the latter information was derived which proved that a far-reaching conspiracy had long been organizing by which Japanese soldiers had been introduced into the Dominion in order to co-operate with an invading force which had already started upon its piratical enterprize; its object being to obtain commercial control and maritime supremacy of the Pacific Ocean, as well as the establishment of a naval base on the Coast of North America.

CHAPTER V.

BRITISH EMPIRE IN PERIL.

Sing us a song of Empire!
First, let us praise the home
Stirred by the northern breezes,
Ringed by the tossing foam:
Here is the joy of living,
Here are the mine and mart,
Here, forest and furrow, giving
Strength to a Nation's heart:
With sons and daughters waiting
The call to play their part!
—(*Countess of Jersey*)

THE Civic Authorities of Victoria, no longer simply City Fathers charged with mere local affairs, are now convened in the City Hall preparing for the defence of the Empire by command of the Emperor-King's representative. Black Sunday, December 18th, will live long in the memory of each of them, for the Premier has just telephoned an official message intimating that two British steamers of the "Empress" line have been captured by a force of Japanese war vessels in the Pacific Ocean,—evidently a "flying-squadron" detached from an invading force,—and commanding them to notify the citizens, and to take all necessary steps for the protection of life and property.

With all the energy that inspired the early pioneers they rose to the occasion; for, as one alderman said,—quoting the words of Addison: "It were better to die ten thousand deaths than slavishly submit to wounded honour," and so keenly did they appreciate the need of an energetic policy that the following manifesto was printed and issued shortly after 4 p.m.:

PROCLAMATION.

The Government having learned through reliable sources that a large fleet, recently leaving the Japanese coast, has treacherously attacked and captured vessels carrying the Canadian flag, has ordered every precautionary measure to be taken in view of a possible invasion of this country.

No Declaration of War has been promulgated, but the circumstances leave little doubt that hostilities against the British Empire have been commenced by Japan. The Government therefore, calls upon every male capable of bearing arms, to attend at the Armoury upon receipt of this Order without delay, to assist in preparing the lines of defence.

Arrangements have been already made for the transportation of non-combatants by rail, (together with portable valuables), to points whence they may be readily transferred to the mainland where temporary accommodation will be provided.

Timely warning will be given should it become necessary to proceed to such an extreme measure, and the Committee of Defence rely upon the patriotism of every individual resident, both male and female, to guard against any undue excitement which would delay the arduous work of the officers specially selected to supervise the evacuation of the city, and the transportation of its many thousands of citizens to Vancouver and New Westminster.

Military law will be enforced, and every person will be conveyed to a place of safety in a very short time, provided they are amenable to reason, and obedient to the instructions given them by those appointed to arrange for their departure from the city. Be calm, patient, and courageous! It is your country that calls, and may the God who protects the weak against the strong guard, guide, and support us all in the approaching hour of trial. All miiitary officers will attend at the Council Chamber at 6 p.m.

By Government Command,
THE MAYOR,
(President, Committee of Defence)

Copies of the foregoing were delivered by messengers at every house, and immediately allayed the suspense by openly stating the broad facts; also proving that the authorities were boldly facing the situation, and prepared for the removal and protection of the citizens. Shortly after five o'clock, the United Wireless Company furnished information which conclusively proved that war was an actual fact: the official in charge of the "wireless" reporting arrival of a message as follows:

S.S. "Empress of India,"
18th December.

Two cruisers flying Japanese flag fired on us Friday last. Seven killed, many injured. Wireless only just repaired; large fleet were sighted. Warn Canadian Government, evidently hostile. We are under full steam returning. Enemy's cruisers close in chase. Has war been declared?

The United Wireless also reported that ali attempts to reply had failed, and probably the "Empress" was captured. Immediately on receiving this definite information the Provincial records and other important documents were removed on board the magnificent private yacht the Dolphin, (a seagoing palace which had cost its owner some $200,000, and won for itself an enviable reputation when visiting Europe some years previously), for transportation to New Westminster as soon as the Japanese fleet should be sighted.

Captains Corbould, Preece, Mahon, and Hunter, the military officers who had been specially selected for the work assumed control of all the means of transportation, and at 6.10 p.m., the first train conveying the military commandants appointed for service at Vancouver, as also a number of invalids from the hospitals with medical officers and nurses in attendance left for Nanaimo: from which place a large supply of powder, dynamite, fuses, etc., was to be furnished—being forwarded to Victoria on the return trip of the train.

Shortly after 6 p.m. a fast moving steamer emitting great volumes of smoke

and flame was noticed approaching from the south; evidently under forced-draught, she attracted the immediate attention of those on the Outer Wharf, but the United States flag prevented any alarm being felt; she headed straight for the wharf and three gentlemen jumped ashore almost before the vessel had made fast to the pier. They were evidently expected, for, as they landed the Lieutenant-Governor's auto car dashed to the pier-head and they were greeted by his private secretary, with whom they immediately departed; not, however, unrecognized, for the single word uttered by an old soldier employed upon the wharf, "McDonald," told that a very famous general and strategist had arrived to assist us; whilst personal baggage shewed his friends to be Colonel Chas. Williams of the Hon. Artillery Company of London, and Capt. F. Keary, a very famous Mexican scout, guide, and hero of the Spanish-American war.

Within the hour it was known that General Lord McDonald had been entrusted with the supreme command, with Major-Gen. Williams as his chief, and Colonel Keary and Major Hunt as headquarter staff officers.

By seven o'clock military discipline is ordered and the volunteer forces patrol the streets; officers have been appointed to gather food, supplies, ammunition, and arms; every vehicle has been requisitioned and trains loaded with women and children are leaving under the supervision of the civic and military authorities. Not a hitch occurs, nor is a murmur heard, as rich and poor alike throng railway cars, trucks, and even horse-boxes fitted up with seats obtained from the churches and schools around. In the course of the evening the steamships "Princess Royal," "Victoria," "May," "Beatrice," "Charmer," "Manuka," "Marama," "Amur," "Joan," "Queen City," "Tees," "Camosun," "Vadso," "Venture," "Babine," "Belcarra," "Britannia," "Defiance," and a number of others arrive in the harbour, having been placed at the disposal of the Government by the C. P. R., the Union S. S. Co., the Boscovitz, the Sechelt, the Terminal, and other lines; whilst later on the "Skeena" from Prince Rupert, and several more of Foley, Welch & Stewart's river fleet, under Commodore Standon with Captains Gardiner and Mahar, arrive from the North, together with the "Iroquois," "Chippewa," and a number of United States steamers sent for the purpose of transporting any refugees to American territory.

The tugs Shamrock, Erin, Boyden and Sea-Lion, have been sent along the western coast of the island with a warning message, whilst all the larger vessels have been ordered to Esquimalt where every artificer and artilleryman is also being transported as rapidly as the B. C. Electric cars can convey them. The outer wharf is one blaze of light, for hundreds of men are unloading war stores, electrical apparatus, and wire obtained from the south, most of which is being trans-shipped to steam and motor launches, upon each of which is an expert electrician. This little flotilla is under the command of several uniformed military engineer officers, whose duty is to lay submarine mines in the Juan de Fuca Strait; for which purpose powerful tugboats have been ordered to take them as far as Providence Cove, whence, if time permits, it is intended to lay a network for a distance of thirty or forty miles.

The tugs "Edith," "Bermuda," and "Sydney" have been placed at the disposal of General McDonald, and the R. M. S. "Manuka," Commander Geo. Ronsby, is commissioned to go southward as rapidly as possible and warn all vessels flying the British flag; whilst the blue funnel liner "Oanfa" has sailed with orders to remove all buoys, and other marks, or lights placed in British waters for the guidance of shipping, she is also to scout for the enemy—having been rapidly armed for that purpose.

In the absence of a War Declaration, there has been no difficulty, in procuring weapons from the United States, and it is understood that a number of 6-inch guns have been also secured, which will materially aid in the defence; whilst the Grand Trunk Pacific has placed at the disposal of the authorities their immense store of dynamite, black powder, and

other varieties of explosives. Later arrivals are the Argyle, Lonsdale, Flamingo, Thyro, and Hecate.

At the Armoury the citizens are being rapidly enrolled and armed with the New Mark 2 Ross rifle, but it is doubtful whether there will be sufficient notwithstanding that the New Westminster Civilian Rifle Association are sending down a quantity which were issued to them.

The men who have uniforms are being appointed to act as drill instructors, and non-commissioned officers temporarily, also being entrusted with the power of assuming control over civilians in cases of emergency; those enrolled for the first time are being placed in charge of the best available instructors for a brief training in discipline and organized action; together with a modified system that will enable them to learn and understand, necessary orders regarding simple evolutions.

"The scheme makes uniformed men act as a skeleton force for the guidance of the uninstructed, and is working so smoothly that the volunteers are themselves surprised, and are shewing a confidence in their own ability that has infused a military spirit into this undrilled force both astonishing and gratifying."—(Extract from report of James Jones, Adjutant).

Throughout Sunday night the work of organization proceeded, and by daybreak of the 19th every apparent contingency had been provided for. No further communication had been received from the "Empress of India" and all hope of her escape had been given up. Wireless messages had been sent northward to Dawson, and Nome, and southward to Kuhuku, one of the Hawaiian islands, stating how British Columbia had been cut off from Canadian help and a message had been returned from Fort Gibbon (Alaska) that the operator there had succeeded in communicating the news to Ottawa; whilst the U. S. battleship "West Virginia," in mid-Pacific, reported having transmitted a message to Hong Kong. By evening military lines were formed, earth-works were being prepared, and a net-work of mines was established in the strait of Juan de Fuca, whilst the buoys and floating lights had been removed from the channel.

The extraordinary interruption of communication with British Columbia was not generally known in the city of Ottawa and Atlantic provinces, previous to the arrival of the wireless message from the interior Alaskan station of Fort Gibbon; and the consternation caused by the news can only be appreciated by reference to the newspapers bearing dates December 19 and 20. The details were immediately transmitted to Great Britain; and at last it was realized there how greatly the people of the Pacific sea-board had been misunderstood whilst opposing the Asiatic incursions into Canada.

The English populace was at boiling point; the streets impassable in London; and warlike demonstrations threatened the very existence of the British Government, which had so wantonly left the Western Gateway of the Empire at the mercy of a foe provided with every weapon of attack known to modern science; helpless and defenceless, its people faced a fleet capable of conquering the Dominion of Canada (the brightest star of the British Crown) without even the long talked of protection of a Pacific Cruiser fleet. The King presided at a Cabinet Council; Parliament was summoned, and ere twenty-four hours had elapsed the British Lion had arisen from his slumber, and all the power of the Empire was put forth to avenge the insult to the British Flag.

Shortly after daybreak of the 20th December a rumour spread that the Empress of India had escaped the foe, and when, soon after 9 a.m., the fog lifted and she was discovered approaching the Outer Wharf every man who was able to do so hurried thither; and when it was seen that one of the vessels accompanying her bore the Canadian flag floating above the Mikado's emblem, such a shout arose as had never been heard in the city previously. No longer the magnificent vessel of a week earlier, but a war-scarred cruiser, she was welcomed as the victor in Canada's first sea fight! Speeding onward she reached the pier, whence a staff officer, already awaiting

her arrival, immediately conveyed the captains of the "Empress," the "Titan," and the captured "Kurama," to Parliament Buildings in the Lieutenant-Governor's auto car. Within the hour it returned to the steamer, and two English ladies entering it they also were driven to the Premier's office; for, having been captured by the Japanese fleet they were in possession of valuable information. Another gentleman who had just arrived from Bellingham accompanied this party, and the news soon spread that Rear Admiral Geo. Kingston, C.B., had arrived to organize and conduct the naval defence.

The effect of the information given by these two ladies, was the immediate departure of the Chief of Staff to Vancouver; it being found necessary to forestall a conspiracy which threatened the destruction of that city by the treacherous subjects of the Mikado, who for years previously had been maturing plans with that object in view.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE AND WAR!,

Two shall be born the whole wide world apart;
Shall speak in different tongues, and have no thought
Each of the other's being, and no heed!
Yet these, o'er unknown seas to unknown lands
Shall cross; escaping wreck, defying death,
And all unconscious, shape every act,
And guide each wandering step unto such end;
That one day, out of darkness they shall meet,
And read life's meaning in each other's eyes!

In the opening chapter two lady tourists were introduced to our readers at a time when the Anti-Asiatic riot of September, 1907, was at its height, and these same ladies were amongst those rescued from the Kurama when captured by the Empress of India. From their lips the Lieut.-Governor and his Government learned the only information obtainable regarding the plans and objects of the Japanese Government; a story so fraught with interest, that no apology is needed for its introduction at this point.

The Hon. Ernestine Hilliard said:—"My father was an attache at the Chinese court; as a girl I learned a smattering of that language and took a keen interest in Oriental life—particularly its religious side. At his death I determined on a lengthy tour with a view to studying the Buddhist religion in China and Japan, and prevailed upon my Girton chum here to accompany me; we accordingly provided ourselves with letters of credit and started, having previously spent a year in learning the Japanese language so that we could understand and speak it fairly well. We travelled by way of Suez Canal and Bombay to Australia. We next visited Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Pekin, where we were granted audience by the Empress Mother; inspected the Temple "Heaven," the ancient Observatory, Confucian Temple, and National University; we even ventured to travel the forty-five dangerous miles between Pekin and the Great Wall of China which stretches 1,500 miles across the country," said Miss Hilliard, "and have spent the last year principally in Japan studying the native religion at Kamakura with its bronze statue of Buddha (Dai Butsu), so renowned for its adornments of precious stones and eyes of gold; next, we followed the footsteps of that famous poet Sir Edwin Arnold, to Nikko, satisfying ourselves of the truth of the Japanese proverb. 'The man who has not seen Nikko knows not the beautiful'!

Even 'Fuji Yama' had not daunted them, for leaving the rail at Gotemba they had started afoot, with only one guide, as early as three in the morning to ascend the 'Maidens Pass.' Sunrise, in splendour inconceivable to ordinary minds, had found them well up on the mountain slope; whilst at sunset the summit (12,365 ft.) was reached, and their camp was made far above the clouds, and near the centre of the old volcano.

Their guide, proved to be a man of superior class and friendly-disposed to the English race; of the ancient Samauri lineage, (and a former student of Mc-

Gill University) he was both scholar and soldier, proudly informing them that he belonged to the Shizoku or military class; of which every member professed the religion of Confucius, although he himself was a Protestant. Weary though the girls were from their arduous climb it was almost midnight ere they sought repose; their guide entertaining them with weird legends, keen wit, and a knowledge of the world which kept them spellbound. The following day they descended, but finding him (Harnichi Kosaki) well acquainted with Tokio, Beatrice Everitt suggested that they engage him as courier—an offer which he readily accepted.

No longer dependent on themselves, day after day passed in a study of life and customs which the guide interestingly explained in every detail. The Imperial Library, Fine Arts Museum and Zoological Gardens were visited; the Buddhist Temples of Shiba Park:—Sojaji, recently destroyed by fire, and Sengakuji with its wonderfully delicate and artistic carving were explored; the tombs of the Shoguns at Wyeno Park were inspected, and a prolonged stay was proposed. Miss Everitt noticed, and remarked on several occasions to her friend that their courier, whilst doing everything possible for their comfort, had recently seemed anxious and preoccupied; eventually he very urgently pressed them to leave Tokio and visit Yokohama; returning if they wished, for the great spring festival of the "Cherry Blossom" and the "Misaki Boat Festival," which they were most anxious to see. Accordingly they travelled the eighteen miles of rail separating the capital from the great commercial and social city of Yokohama, which they reached in the first week of December. The following day, Harnichi begged an interview with the two ladies; and, after warning them that he was about to place his life at their disposal should they, by word or sign, disclose what he was about to impart, he informed them that war was to be declared: he intimated that the Japanese fleet was fully equipped, even if sections of it had not already left the various ports, to attack the Canadian shores; he further told them, that it was imperative for them to leave the country the same night, and in secret, for which purpose he had engaged their passage on a vessel leaving immediately for Honolulu.

Instead of visiting the theatre as they expressly announced their intention of doing, they joined the courier who escorted them on board; where, greatly to their surprise, they found their travelling impedimenta awaiting them. Before midnight they had left the shores of Japan behind, after a grateful farewell which partook rather of the nature of a parting between friends of long standing. After Harnichi had left the vessel a letter was handed to Miss Beatrice Everitt which was found to contain the entire amount of remuneration paid to him; as also two valuable rings, curiously engraved, which he begged them to "wear continuously"! The young ladies in giving this sketch of their travels, added that the vessel upon which they found themselves was the "Ning Chow," a blue funnel liner bound for Victoria, and all went well for two days, when they suddenly found the steamer in the midst of a fleet of Japanese cruisers. In obedience to a signal the vessel was stopped, and a launch from the nearest of the fleet put off; a Japanese officer from the cruiser then came on board and stated that Japan was at war with Canada, and he therefore seized the vessel. The officers and passengers were then transferred—five of the ladies being sent on board the "Kurama"—to various vessels of the Japanese squadron.

Entirely unaware that her friend and herself thoroughly understood their language, the plans of the Japanese were freely spoken of in their presence; and they learned, that, with the plea of a series of naval manoeuvres a number of small fleets had been fitted out under the supreme command of Admirals Ito and Togo. Vice-Admiral Ijuin commanded the squadron to which the "Kurama" was attached, consisting of ten battleships, nineteen cruisers, two submarines, seven despatch boats, and twenty-two destroyers; some four or five other squadrons were also being mobilized they learned with the object of destroying

British power on the Pacific, and controlling the commerce between the Orient and America. Fearing also the growing naval power of the United States, the Mikado's Government sought specially to obtain possession of the island of Vancouver; whither it would be able to transport its surplus of population and so maintain possession of a naval seaport in the district of Prince Rupert, it also desired the arsenal and dockyard at Esquimalt to the south, which it was proposed to render impregnable without delay.

The Japanese officers were fully alive also to the great timber resources and mineral wealth of the province; these they considered as already secured; inasmuch as the trained warriors who had fought against both China and Russia had been settling in the country for years past; and, following the subtle advice of a Japanese daily (published in Vancouver), which said: "We earnestly hope that our able young men will push out beyond the Rockies, into the prairies and towns, and so lay the foundation of a success which will enable them to do noble service to our Mother Country in the future."

At a time already appointed the railways, telegraphs, and electric works were to be destroyed by the pseudo-merchants whilst selected Japanese immigrants concentrated their forces (thoroughly equipped) to prevent any assistance being rendered from the south or east. Although the ladies were uncertain as to the specific date, they were satisfied that one had been fixed, and that skilled officers were scattered throughout the country; the impression on board being that an army of some 100,000 men would be found already concentrated.

Their narrative being ended, the Lieutenant-Governor requested our heroines to become his guests on board his steam yacht "The Dolphin," to which they were accordingly conveyed, whilst the Council considered the extraordinary duplicity and machinations which had so successfully ostracized the Province, and brought it to the brink of subjugation to the foe.

Practically alone on the beautiful yacht, the two girls, for the eldest was only twenty-three, naturally fell into discussion of the stirring scenes through which they had so recently passed; as also of the reason for their guide Harnichi so befriending them, also the meaning of his earnest injunction that they should "never allow the ancient rings which he enclosed to leave their fingers." "I wonder what became of his letter," said Ernestine, looking with some surprise at her friend as, blushing scarlet, she produced it from the bosom of her dress! Glancing over its contents, she said: "Had I not known it were impossible, for Harnichi never visited Europe, and we have never been to the States,—I should have said that we had met on some occasion previous to our engaging him as our guide in Japan. The blush again rose to the very roots of her dark hair, as Beatrice said: "You are right! we *have* met him before, though I did not recognize him for certain; and yet, like yourself, I felt assured that he was not a complete stranger. You have many times remarked that his manners were those of a perfect gentleman, although acting the part of a guide to perfection; I say acting! for, on receiving this letter and the ring marked with my name, I immediately recalled the peculiar ring worn by the Japanese gentleman who so opportunely rescued us from the midst of the mob at Vancouver." "True!" said Ernestine with conviction, as, for the first time, she carefully studied the ring worn by Beatrice, and smiling archly: "I rather fancy, that my dear chum is fully aware of the significance of this present, inasmuch as she is wearing it on the third finger of her left hand."

"Indeed, no!" was the hasty reply, "for he has never breathed a word of affection for me." "That may be," said Beatrice, "but this is a 'Satsuma' betrothal ring, and bespeaks the giver to belong to one of the two great clans which were instrumental in developing the Japanese character, and in raising the nation to its present rank as a world power. There is no doubt in my mind, from his being the possessor of two such valuable and ancient rings, that he is of noble birth

and assumed the humble position of our servant, in order that he might serve and protect the one to whom his heart was given!"

Long into the night the two girls talked, and ere her eyes closed in slumber the Hon. Ernestine had satisfied herself that the fateful time had dawned upon her friend, and that enshrined within her heart was the image of one now ranked amongst her country's foes.

CHAPTER VII.

A GREAT VICTORY.

A NATIONAL HYMN.

From our Dominion, never
Take thy protecting hand.
United, Lord, forever,
Keep thou our fathers' land!
From where Atlantic terrors,
Our hardy seamen train,
To where the salt sea, mirrors
The vast Pacific chain.

Our sires, when times were sorest,
Asked none but aid divine;
They cleared the tangled forest,
And wrought the buried mine;
The pioneers of nations,
They showed the world the way;
'Tis ours to keep their stations,
And lead the van today!
—(*Marquis of Lorne*),
Ex-Gov.-General Canada.

Immediately the Government was informed of the peculiar and critical conditions, a "wireless apparatus" had been established within the central dome of the Parliament Buildings at Victoria, and here was received the first intimation of the enemy's approach: Pachena and Estavan, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, reporting almost simultaneously, whilst the station at Prince Rupert also notified having picked up a message in German, which had been locally translated and showed a blockading fleet advancing on that point; later, the "Oanfa" and the Pacific mail steamer "China" signalled the submarine cable station on Barclay Sound, to report the enemy in sight, whilst the tug "Shamrock," which had been despatched to warn isolated settlements narrowly escaped capture; her consorts only succeeding in returning to Vancouver, via Queen Charlotte Sound, some days later.

Military preparations in Victoria had meanwhile been rapidly pressed forward, and the coast line was protected by rifle-pits and earth-works which were held in force. Lieut.-Col. McMillan was given command of the lines from Otter Point to Pedder Bay; as also of the submarine mines established between those points. Lieut.-Col. Shields commanded between Victoria and Esquimalt Harbour; Lieut.-Col. Todd as far as Albert Head; Major Brock to Pedder Bay, and Lieut.-Col.

Brownlow from Gonzales Point to Gordon Head. Major Farrell was in charge of the Intelligence (local) corps, to which was attached the Cadet Corps; whilst Major Carmichael was in command from the Outer Wharf to Gonzales Point. Captains Munro and Swinford were in control of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway; Captains Corbould and Griffiths being in similar position on the Victoria and Sidney line; whilst Captains Markham, Shannon, and Massey were in charge respectively of the commissariat, ordnance, and ambulance corps, to which were attached the automobile corps.

A specially important duty was entrusted to the "Boys' Brigades," and they were eventually found to do very valuable work in connection with a "motor car transportation," by conveying provisions, hospital necessaries, and ammunition from headquarters to the advance posts; whilst a number of the lads were specially selected to lay electric wires, under expert supervision, thus connecting the various points inaccessible by motor and bringing every detachment into communication with the headquarters staff. These wires were also later on used in operating a new description of electric lamp for signalling purposes; this was made of filaments enclosed in a straight tube about nine inches long behind which was a reflector marked with angle lines, representing a newly devised code impossible of interpretation by a foreign spy. In case of failure of electricity a further new device was prepared and issued to each company and all section commanders, it included a small double-cylinder of oxygen gas and acetyline which produced a signal light visible in daylight for five miles, and fifteen at night,—a recent redetermination of light velocity having enabled this brilliant beam to be so reflected by mirrors, that, under satisfactory conditions its message may be read at a distance of even fifty miles.

Major-General Frewin, who was formerly engineer in command at Esqui-

malt, again assumed control at that point where he erected the first important fortifications by mounting batteries at Brothers' Island, Finlayson, Macaulay, and Clover Points at a period when war between England and Russia was imminent; his second in command at that critical period—Major Higginbotham—being again associated with him.

The captured Kurama immediately after her arrival was sent to Esquimalt for repair and became the flagship of Admiral Kingston; the "Titan" (Capt. Nicholls) and "Empress of India" (Capt. Bertram), also going there to report Over eight hundred men were employed in rapidly arming, and protecting them with wire torpedo nets; also transferring warlike stores found in large quantities on the captured cruiser which was renamed "The Dominion." The short time at the disposal of the authorities previously had been employed in transforming the most powerful of the mercantile fleet, viz.:—"Empress of China," "Marama" and "Aorangi," into armed cruisers.

A number of ocean and Fraser river shippers having offered their services to Admiral Kingston, he was enabled to appoint two qualified sailing masters to each of his little flotilla, leaving the fighting command to the regular captain, whilst the best rifle shots obtainable were placed on board each vessel under military command, respectively, of Captains Perry, Hamilton, Irving, Chapman, McCulley, Lyon, Laurie and Matthews. The day was far advanced when information was wired:

"Japanese fleet of seven cruisers approaching Juan de Fuca Strait under full steam."

Later messages reported them to be the Ikumo, Akito, Yamada, Tenyo, Nagoya, Nikko, and Chiyo, whilst a fleet of three others visible on the distant horizon proved to be the 23-knot cruiser Suvo, the Hong Kong Maru, and Nippon Maru; the two latter were up to date and built at Nagasaki, having a speed of 20 knots and 14,000 tons' displacement, their length being 570 ft. The majority of the Japanese cruisers were built in the shipyards of Great Britain and none of these developed a less speed than 18 knots an hour, derived from triple screw turbines—most of them using only oil fuel though adapted also for coal.

Immediately on receipt of this news, the little British squadron started on its apparently hopeless enterprise; but the picked men on board were determined to offer battle to the enemy in defence of their native land, and night found the Canadian fleet off Sherringham Point ready, and eager, to meet the invader. The line of battle was in crescent formation, for well knowing that his vessels were unable to follow modern tactics in the face of the powerful armaments and speed of his antagonists, the Admiral's order to his sailing masters was the traditional one of Britain's hero—Nelson, "You will lay us alongside of the enemy Quartermaster, and we'll soon capture her!"

Darkness was on the face of the waters as the Yamada, steaming boldly ahead of her consorts, fired the first shot in the campaign which was to devastate British Columbia.

The British vessels had been so placed across the channel that the main batteries of each could be concentrated on the enemy, and the "Yamada" was permitted to advance unopposed and within close range before the Marama and Dominion poured on her the full weight of their metal; scarcely had she recovered from the shock than she received the batteries of the Empress of India and Titan, whilst the Empress of China and Aorangi reserving their fire, pressed forward under full steam, and ranging to port and starboard succeeded in throwing hundreds of sailors and volunteers on her decks; who, after a sanguinary conflict effected her capture, and trained her four 10-inch and eight 7.5 guns upon the Akita (14,000 tons) in her wake.

The Titan advanced upon the Nagoya (9,600) on the north wing, whilst the Empress of India attacked Nikko (9,600) on the south, leaving Admiral Kingston to engage the Ikumo—armed with ten 7.5 and six 9.2 guns.

The battle now raged on every hand, the "Marama" and "Tenyo" being engaged in a bitter duel on our right which

ended in an explosion, evidently caused by a shot entering her magazine and blowing her to pieces, leaving the Marama free to join in the Titan's attack on the Nagoya which was eventually captured by boarding.

The Empress of China, having transferred a large body of men to the Yamada after her capture, steamed to the assistance of the Empress of India which was considerably overmatched by the Nikko. A prize crew being placed on the Nagoya her guns were then turned on the Akito, and the victorious Titan's hastened to the assistance of the Aorangi which still battled with the Chiyo, although flying a signal for help. Admiral Kingston's Dominion had, however, been unable to come to close quarters, but by his strategical tactics he had inveigled the Ikumo so close to American waters, that she was hampered in her gun fire by the danger she was in of involving Japan with the fleet of American war vessels (under Admirals Sperry and Marsh), who were watching the battle with jealous care.

The captured Yamada and Nagoya had already taken possession of the Akito when signals were noticed from the shore reporting three more cruisers approaching; and Captain Nicholls of the Titan, pouring in a broadside between wind and water, which sank the Chiyo, obeyed a command from the flagship and steamed west with the captured Jappanese cruisers (under Captains Young, Pearce, and McDougal), to oppose the reinforcements.

The fight stiil raged between the two "Empress" cruisers and the "Nikko," when the Marama steamed ahead of the Aorangi to join in the Admiral's attack on the Ikuma; so skilfully was the Marama handled that she was able, in passing the Nikko, to rake her fore and aft, thereby enabling the Empress vessels to come to close quarters and effect her capture, after which the combined guns hauled down her flag, and was taken possession of by the Admiral almost at the instant that heavy firing proclaimed the approach of the Japanese reinforcements. Transferring his flag to the newly captured cruiser, the Admiral steamed to the west with the Ikumo, Nikko, India, and China, to support the fleet which had been sent under command of Captain Nicholls,—the prisoners having been rapidly transferred to the Dominion and Aorangi for transport to Victoria, (they having been severely handled during the battle), under the guns of the Marama.

Captain Nicholls meanwhile had been forced to retreat by the cruisers Nippon Maru and Hong Kong Maru, but the arrival of the Admiral turned the tide of battle, and the swift steaming "Suvo" was captured by Captain McDougall of the Akito, whilst the Nippon Maru—unaware of danger—traversed the field of a submarine installation and afforded an opportunity to Colonel Chas. McMillan, who controlled the mines from the shore, to complete a circuit sinking her with the loss of all hands; after which her consort, the Hong Kong Maru (14,000 tons) surrendered, and Canada had won her first naval battle at a cost of nearly a thousand men killed and wounded!

Meanwhile at Victoria the excitement was intense, for the wires laid by the Boys' Brigade had enabled the progress of the fight to be telephoned in detail; thus on the arrival of the fleet and prizes, several thousand mechanics and experts were in readiness at Esquimalt to repair damages, and refil the magazines without delay; enabling the entire squadron of thirteen vessels—heavily manned—to again assume the defensive shortly after daybreak on the 22nd December.

The captured cruisers were renamed as follows: Revenge, Dauntless, Earl Grey, Dunsmuir, Defence, Resistance, and Sea Wolf. The orders now issued by Admiral Kingston, who had appointed Captain Bertram as Commodore, and second in command, being similar to those of the previous day:—

"Attack to capture; concentrate fire to disable. Rush, and come to close quarters. Canada needs vessels."

The line of battle was again in crescent formation when, off Otter Point, signals being received that three battleships and ten cruisers were advancing, positions were taken up: Commander Bertram on the 'Dauntless," taking the north horn of the crescent, astern of him being Empress of China (Capt. Burns), Defence (Capt. Newcombe), Titan (Capt,

Pearce), Dunsmuir (Capt. Nicholls); the southern division was led by Admiral Kingston, C.B., in the Revenge (Capt. Stuart), followed by the Empress of India (Capt. McDougall), Resistance (Capt. Roberts), Dominion (Capt. Young), Aorangi (Capt. Marsden), Earl Grey (Capt. Carmichael), Sea Wolf (Capt. Wright), Marama (Capt. Phillips).

The sailing masters were Capts. McInnis, Welford, Richardson, Martin, Anderson, Morrison, Fletcher, Mackenzie, Gray, Fox, Carr, Chapman, and Tait. The Admiral being signalled from the shore that the Japanese fleet was advancing in three divisions, with the evident intention of driving a wedge through the Brtish fleet, ordered a slow retreat in the direction of Beechey Head; and a reversing movement was commenced by which the crescent was changed, and two divisions formed. This effected, with celerity and wonderful skill, Admiral Kingston advanced to the attack without allowing the enemy time to change his plans.

In three divisions the Japanese fleet steamed eastward in battle formation, which was, however, suddenly broken and the southern line thrown into confusion; for the electricians on shore who were anxiously watching their field, noted the position of the Tanaka Maru, and, with the pressure of an electric button destroyed the leading vessel of the southern division. The panic recurred a few seconds later as the Sakata of the northern division, met with a similar fate at the touch of Lieut.-Col. MacMillan and his electrical apparatus on shore. The psychological moment had arrived, and the advance being ordered, the Revenge, Resistance, India, Dominion, and Aorangi, belching shot and shell to port and starboard boldly steamed between the southern and central divisions; whilst the Dauntless, Defence, Titan and Empress of China, headed fearlessly between the central and northern divisions; the Earl Grey and Sea Wolf being signalled "to capture the Osama (20,000 tons), leading the centre division"; whilst the Dunsmuir and Marama ranged on the southern side of the Oiwake, which was in the van of the northern line, thus rendering her northern broadside useless. Acting on a pre-arranged plan, the sailing masters of each vessel steered their course for the Japanese main division, the command being that—"the central division must be boarded at all hazards in the first attack." The Dauntless and Revenge, after receiving a heavy fire each, threw their boarders on the Soya —leaving them to effect a capture, whilst the Defence and Resistance treated the Osak in a similar manner; the China and Aorangi laying themselves alongside the Nanao, all of which were eventually captured. Captain Carr was the first to succeed, and immediately turned the guns of the Nanao on the battleship Oiwake; Capt. Chapman (Osak), steaming between the Otaru and Shimoo, delivered a raking broadside to each, enabling the Titan and China to carry the Otaru by the board under the leadership

of Captain Fox; Capt. Chapman next joined the "Defence" in attacking and coming to a hand conflict with the Shimoo which failed, for she sank before either vessel couid board her.

The southern division, howevr, had not been so successful; both the Aorangi and India were damaged in their steering gear, and the flagship was far outmatched by the guns of the Otsu; Commodore Bertram accordingly ordered the Osak, Otaru, and Soya, to hasten to their assistance whilst the Titan and China, joined him in subjugating the Kobe which, being placed in command of Captain McKenzie, subsequently assisted in the Admiral's attack on the battleship Otsu, whose strenuous defence won the highest praise of the British admiral.

The Earl Grey and Sea Wolf had likewise failed in their attack on the Osama, although the contest had raged without intermission for nearly six hours; the fleets had now arrived off Parry Bay, and the decisive moment was approaching, for the Otsu, having been manned by the Revenge and Dauntless, steamed ahead and brought her 12-inch guns to bear on her sister-ship the Osama, leaving the two British captains free to assist their less fortunate comrades by training their guns on the Nugata and Kushiro, which had held at bay the Resistance, India, Dominion and Aorangi, but hauled down their flags upon the arrival of further assistance.

So fierce and continuous was the fire poured upon the Osama that even the bravery of the Japanese commanded by Rear Admiral Kabyuma failed, and her flag was lowered in token of surrender to the British Admiral.

The last survivor of the enemy's fleet —Oiwake—neither surrendered nor was captured, for, refusing to receive a flag of truce, she was sunk by torpedoes fired from her late consort the Otsu; thus Admiral Kingston's last signal, previous to starting the conflict, had been obeyed to the letter—"No Japanese vessel must escape."

(To be continued)

FORESTRY TOPICS.

Tree planting and growing on the prairies will be one of the chief topics for discussion at the special meeting of the Canadian Forestry Association in Regina, Sask., on September 3rd and 4th next. Other topics which will have a prominent place on the programme which is being prepared will be the management of the forest reserves and the question of their use as game preserves.

This will be the first time that a meeting of the Canadian Forestry Association has been held in the prairie provinces. It will be conducted under the auspices of the City Council and the Board of Trade of the city, in response to whose invitation the Association decided to hold its meeting in Saskatchewan's capital.

The railways have promised a single fare rate to delegates for the round trip, and on the second day of the meeting an excursion will be held to Indian Head to inspect the Dominion Government's forest nursery and plantations there.

The Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior has recently issued the first sheets of a new "forest atlas," which will include plans of the Dominion Forest Reserves, of which the surveys are now being carried on. The "legend" is now being sent out; this designates the marks used to denote natural features, the different species of trees and the amounts of timber that can be obtained per acre from timbered areas, entries of various kinds (such as homesteads, mineral lands, etc.), burns or brules, cuttings and sales, roads, trails, railways, canals, flumes, telegraph and telephone lines, buildings, etc.

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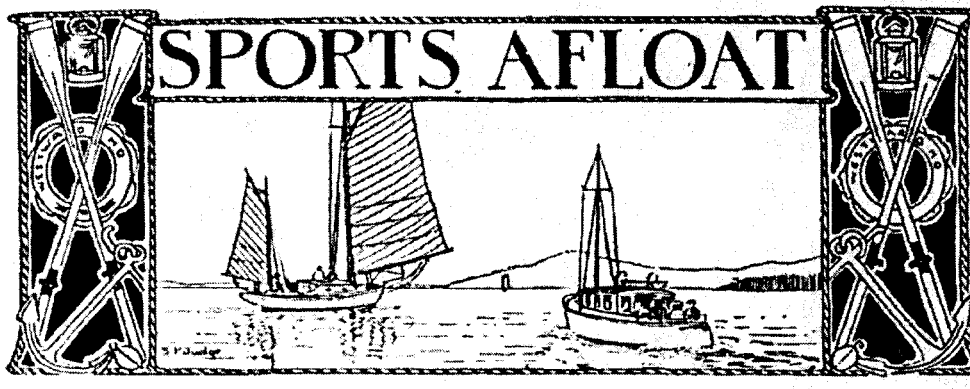

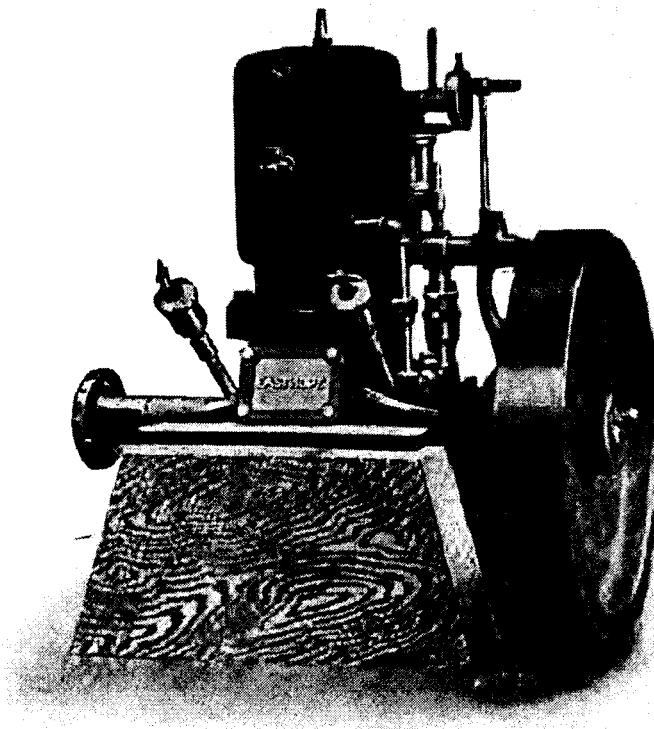

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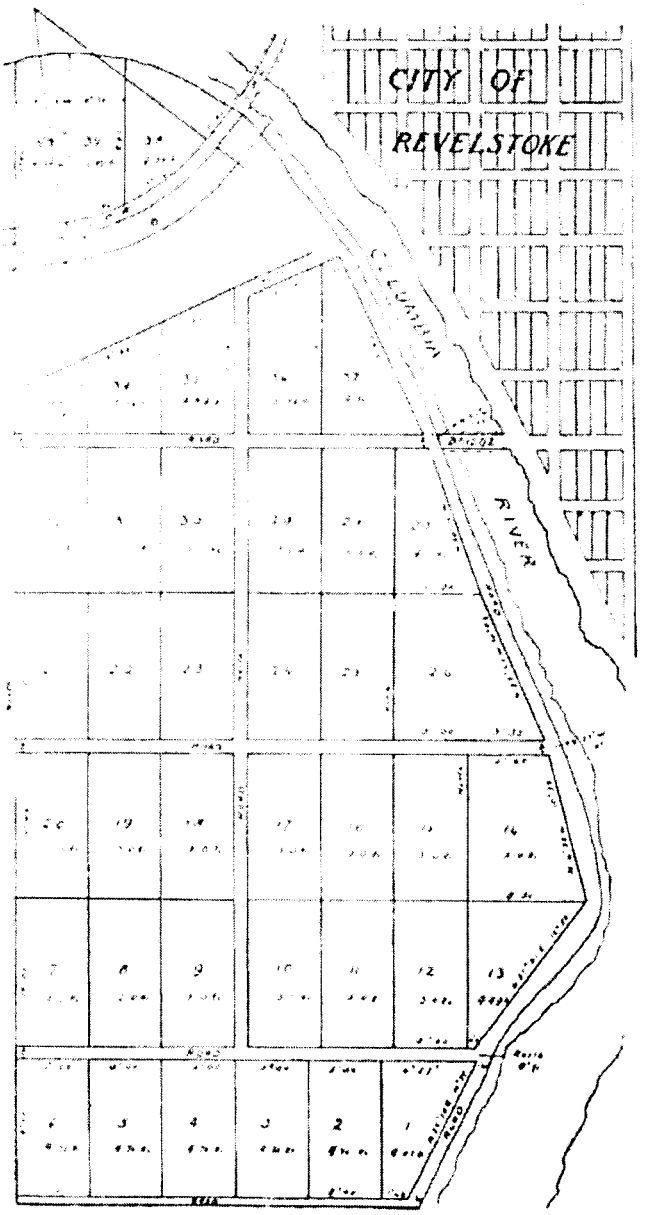

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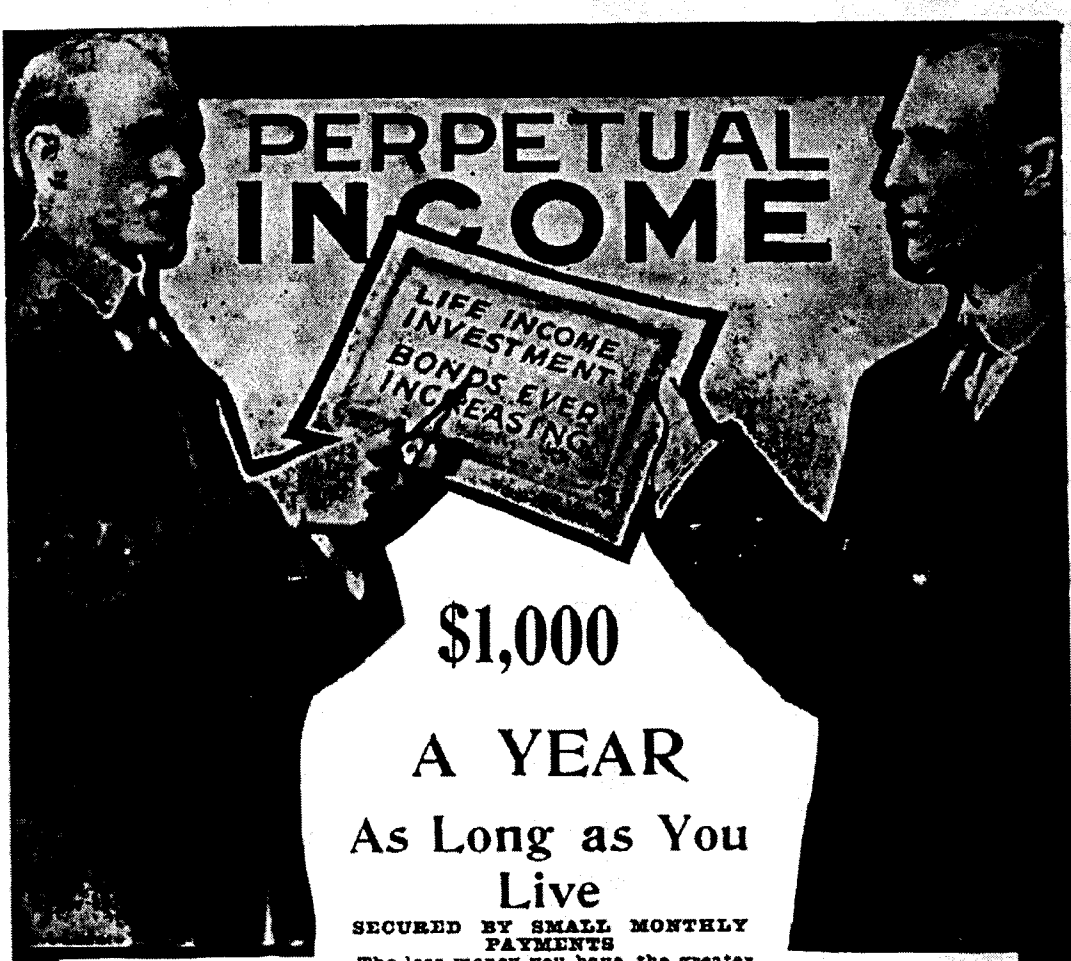

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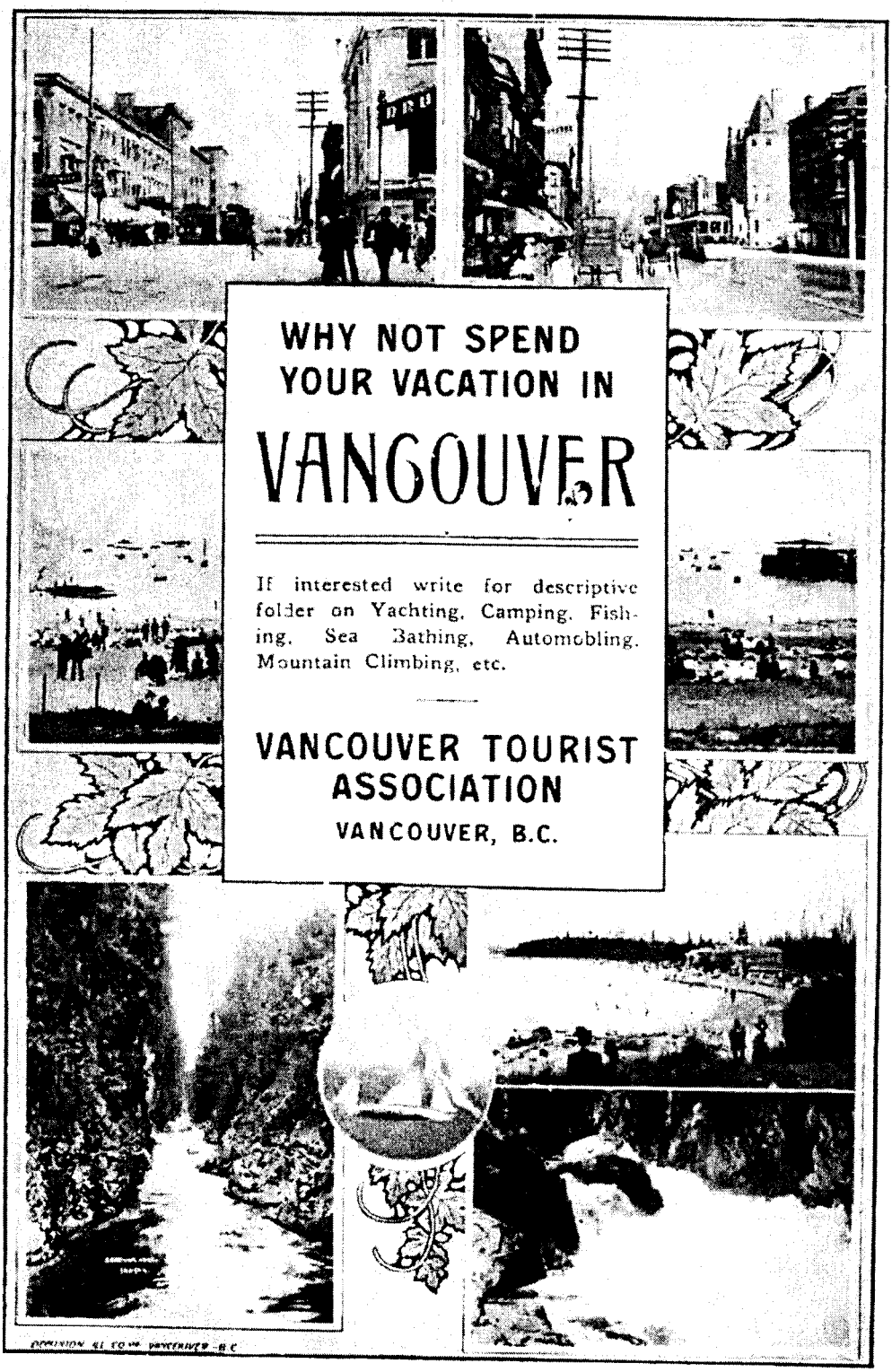
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