

K

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

Dr. Max Wilson pays a heavy penalty for his faithlessness to Sidney. Carlotta Harrison's influence once again shows its character. Sidney is deeply involved—and the whole hard truth about K. LeMoine comes out.

CHAPTER XX.—Continued.

When Joe suddenly announced his inclination to go out into the country after all, LeMoine suspected a ruse to get rid of him, and insisted on going along. Joe consented grudgingly.

“Car’s at Bailey’s garage,” he said suddenly. “I don’t know when I’ll get back.”

“That won’t matter,” K’s tone was cheerful. “I’m not sleeping, anyhow.” That passed unnoticed until they were on the highroad, with the car running smoothly between yellowing fields of wheat.

“So you’ve got it too!” he said. “We’re a fine pair of fops. We’d both be better off if I sent the car over a bank.”

He gave the wheel a reckless twist, and LeMoine called him to time sternly. They had supper at the White Springs hotel—not on the terrace, but in the little room where Carlotta and Wilson had taken their first meal together.

“Perhaps I can talk your mother over. I’ve been there.” Joe was all interest. His dilated pupils became more normal, his restless hands grew quiet.

“I’m feeling a lot better,” he said. “I haven’t got the band around my head. You talk to mother.”

“That was the last K. saw of Joe Drummond until the next day.”

She did not want the situation to get out of hand. Moreover, what was so real for her was only too plainly a lark for him. She began to doubt her power.

The hopelessness of her situation was dawning on her. Even when the touch of her beside him and the softness of the country roads got to her blood, and he bent toward her, she found no encouragement in his words.

“I am mad about you tonight,” she took her courage in her hands; “Then why give me up for someone else?”

“That’s different.” “Why is it different? I am a woman. I—I love you, Max. No one else will ever care as I do.”

“You are in love with the Lamb?” “That was a trick. I am sorry, Max. I don’t care for anyone else in the world. If you let me go I’ll want to die.”

Then, as he was silent: “If you’ll marry me, I’ll be true to you all my life. I swear it. There will be nobody else, ever.”

The sense, if not the words, of what he had sworn to Sidney that Sunday afternoon under the trees, on this very road! Swift shame overtook him, that he should be here, that he had allowed Carlotta to remain in ignorance of how things really stood between them.

“I’m sorry, Carlotta. It’s impossible. I’m engaged to marry someone else.” “Sidney Page?”—almost a whisper.

“Yes.” “He was ashamed at the way she took the news. If she had stormed or wept, he would have known what to do. But she sat still, not speaking.

“You must have expected it, sooner or later.” She made no reply. He thought she might faint, and looked at her anxiously.

“Everything would be gone. Schwitter’s, of all places!” At the foot of the stairs, Schwitter pulled himself together. After all, the girl was only ill. There was nothing for the police. He looked at his watch. The doctor ought to be there by this time.

Another car. Perhaps it was the doctor. A young man edged his way into the hall and confronted him. “Two people just arrived here. A man and a woman—in white. Where are they?”

“Upstairs—first bedroom to the right.” Joe went up the staircase. At the top, on the landing, he confronted Wilson. He fired at him without a word—saw him fling up his arms and fall back, striking first the wall, then the floor.

The buzz of conversation on the porch suddenly ceased. Joe put his revolver in his pocket and went quietly down the stairs. The crowd parted to let him through.

Carlotta, crouched in her room, listening, not daring to open the door, heard the sound of a car as it swung out into the road.

It was the Lamb who received the message about Wilson; and because he was not very keen at the best, and because the news was so startling, he refused to credit his ears.

“Who is this at the phone?” “LeMoine’s my name. Get Dr. Ed Wilson at once. Doctor Wilson, the surgeon, has been shot.”

“I’m sorry—I thought you understood. I believe it’s not—not serious. It’s Doctor Max, sir.”

Doctor Ed, who was heavy and not very young, sat down on an office chair. Out of sheer habit he had brought the bag. He put it down on the floor beside him, and moistened his lips.

“Is he living?” “Oh, yes, sir. I gathered that Mr. LeMoine did not think it serious.” He lied, and Doctor Ed knew he lied.

“The Lamb stood by the door, and Doctor Ed sat and waited. The office clock said half after three. The bug with the dog collar in it was on the floor. He thought of many things, but mostly of the promise he had made his mother. Cold beads of sweat stood out on his forehead.”

He bathed her face in cold water to rouse herself. The night watchman was in the hall. He was fond of Sidney; she always smiled at him; and on his morning rounds at six o’clock to waken the nurses, her voice was always amiable.

So she found him in the hall, holding a cup of tepid coffee. He was old and bleary, unmistakably dirty, too—but he had divined Sidney’s romance.

“Coffee! For me?” She was astonished. “Get it down.” So she finished it, not without anxiety that she might be needed.

But duty’s attentions were few, and not to be lightly received. “Can you stand a piece of bad news?”

Strangely, her first thought was of K. “There has been an accident. Doctor Wilson—”

“Which one?” “Doctor Max—has been hurt. It ain’t much, but I guess you’d like to know it.”

“Where is he?” “Downstairs, in seventeen.” So she went down alone to the room where Doctor Ed sat in a chair, with his untidy bag beside him on the floor, and his eyes fixed on a straight figure on the bed.

When he intoned him—in the smoking room, that was—he asked for him. “I don’t see the chap who came in with us,” he said. “Clever fellow. Likes to know his name.”

“The staff did not know.” K. sat alone on a bench in the hall. He wondered who would tell Sidney; he hoped they would be very gentle with her.

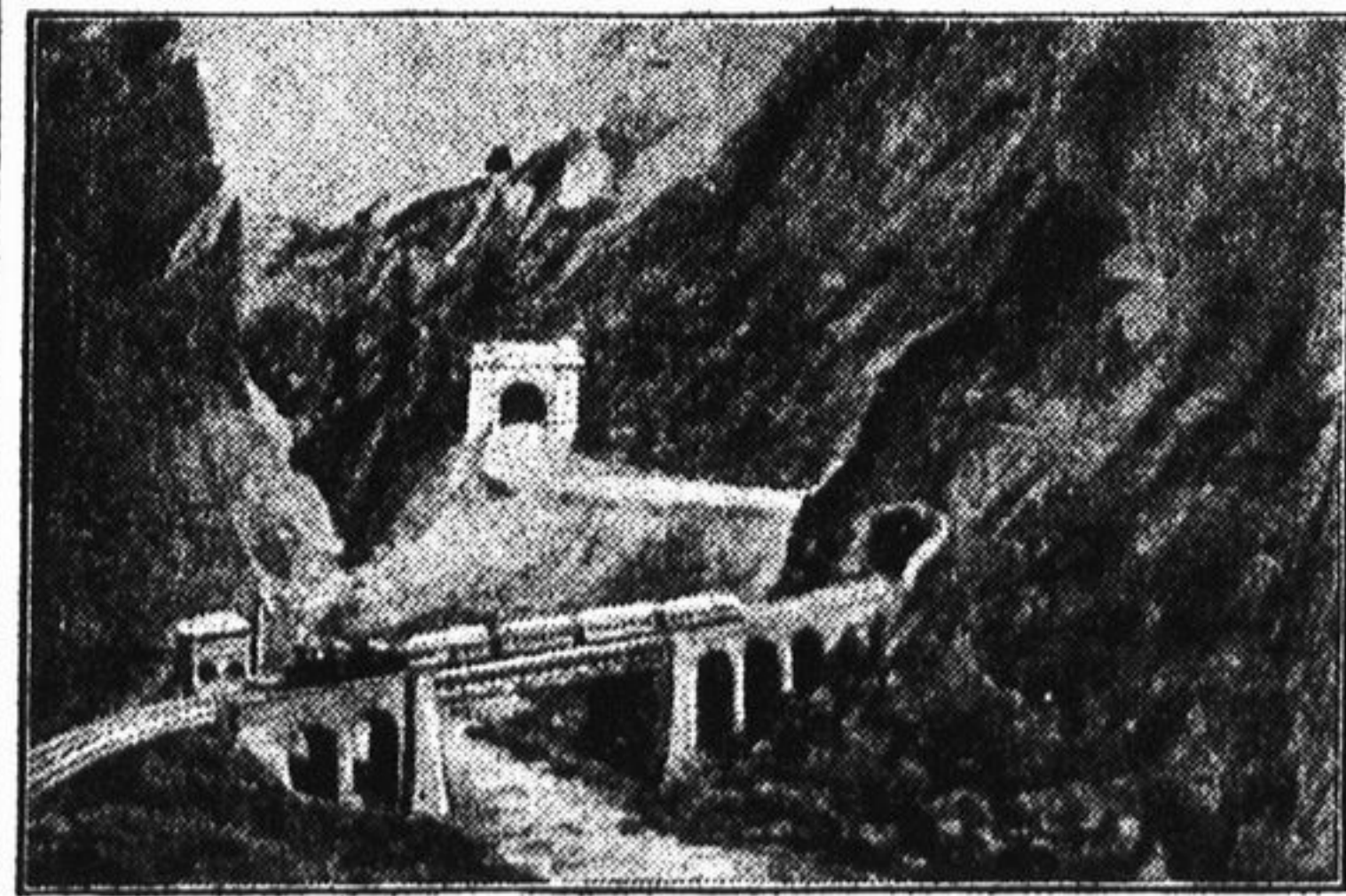
“One of the staff’s been hurt,” he explained. “If I don’t get some coffee now, I won’t get any.”

“I would be the Edwardes operation, wouldn’t it?” demanded Carlotta. The staff was bewildered. There were no rules to cover such conduct on the part of a nurse.

MOST REMARKABLE RAILROAD IN CHILE

Fifty miles inland from Valparaiso is the city of Santiago, the capital of Chile and the fourth South American city in population. From its broad central avenue, the Alameda, lined with statues and four rows of trees, one can look upon mountains crowned with perpetual snow.

Penetrating deep valleys, beside rushing torrents, clinging to the perpendicular sides of precipices a thousand feet deep, stretching by 118 eerie bridges over vast chasms, plunging through 25 tunnels, climbing the slopes of snowy peaks 15,000 and 22,000 feet in elevation, ascending far above the timber line, the train finally passes over the Continental Divide, at 10,400 feet elevation in a three-mile tunnel, and then descends to the fertile plains of the Argentine.



SECTION OF ROAD AND ENTRANCE TO TUNNEL.

ELECTRICITY IN USE

Heavily Laden Freight Trains Are Handled With Ease.

LOCOMOTIVES DO WORK WELL

Tractors Draw Their Loads up Steep Mountain Slopes at Speed of 15 Miles an Hour—Does the Work of Four Engines.

Probably nothing proves more convincingly the success of electrification in the case of a certain Western railroad than the ease with which heavily laden freight trains are handled on the steep mountain grades. Every 24 hours five of these trains, consisting of something like sixty cars each, are moved each way across the mountains, and so well do the big electric locomotives do their work that there is an average saving of four hours for each train on each 100 miles of the run.

All this is amazing when it is recalled that only a little more than 90 years ago George Stephenson’s first steam locomotive made its maiden trip on a rail line between Stockton and Darlington, England. The train was composed of 34 vehicles, representing a gross load of about ninety tons, and the rate of travel ranged between five and ten miles an hour.

From EMERIC TO AMERICA This Country’s Name Can Be Traced to Hungarian Prince Who Lived in the Eleventh Century.

The transformations that take place in a name, as it passes through different languages, can only be accounted for by carelessness in transmission.

Within the curvilinear body of each are eight massive 450-horse power motors, geared to a like number of driving axles, which produce a motive force of 3,440 horse power. Outwardly these locomotives appear to be two, because they are divided in the center; this is done in order to insure greater flexibility in handling and when rounding stiff curves.

Gain Made in Speed. The electric locomotive does the work of four ordinary steam engines, and is capable of handling its full tonnage on a heavy grade at from fifteen to sixteen miles an hour, as against the eight to ten miles an hour possible with four of its steam rivals.

Pioneers of Rail Transportation Wished English Customs Onto France—Contrary to Rule.

The appearance on French railroads of considerable quantities of English rolling stock has called attention to a curious survival on the French railroads which indicates their English origin.



CONSUMPTION OF COAL

A report issued by the New York Chamber of Commerce shows that the railroads of the country in 1916 consumed an unprecedented total of 200,000,000 tons of coal.

Following the rule in vogue in England. The pioneers of French railways were Englishmen, and nearly all the locomotive engineers were for many years brought from England.

These men followed the rules of the road which they had learned at home and passed them on to their French successors.

Cause of Puffing. It is the emission of waste steam through the stack that causes a locomotive to puff.

Small Pill Small Dose Small Price. CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS. FOR CONSTIPATION. Have stood the test of time. Purely vegetable. Wonderfully quick to banish biliousness, headache, indigestion and to clear up a bad complexion.

PALE FACES. Generally indicate a lack of iron in the blood. Carter's Iron Pills. Will help this condition.

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USE ALLEN'S FOOT-EASE. The antiseptic powder to be shaken into shoes and sprinkled into the foot-bath.

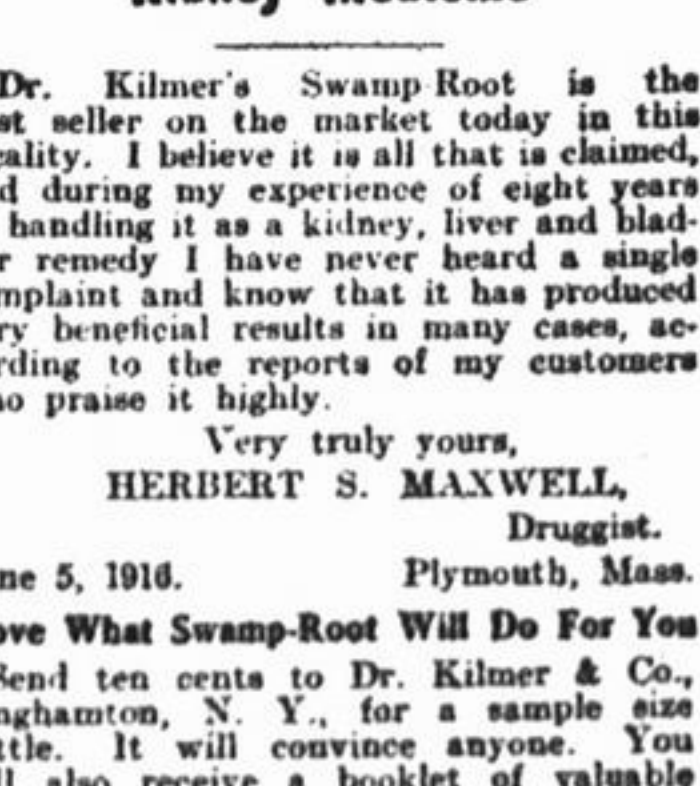
ECONOMY WITH GOOD LIVING. is excellently attained by adding to the daily menu a ration of Grape-Nuts. Goodness—Energy—Ease of Digestion—Excellent Flavor—are all found in this truly remarkable wheat and barley food.



"I Am Mad About You Tonight."



He Fired at Him Without a Word.



He Fired at Him Without a Word.