The Price of Liberty

OR, A MIDNIGHT CALL

CHAPTER LV.

Reginald Henson had had more than one unpleasant surprise lately, but none so painful as the sight of Lord Littimer seated in the Longdean Grange drawing-room with the air of a man who is very much at home indeed.

The place was strangely changed, too. There was an air of neatness and order about the room that Henson had never seen before. The dust and dirt had absolutely vanished; it might have been the home of any ordinary wealthy and refined people. And all Lady Littimer's rags and patches had disappeared. She was dressed in somewhat old-fashioned style, but handsomely and well. She sat beside Littimer with a smile on her face. But the cloud seemed to have rolled from her mind; her eyes were clear, if a little frightened. From the glance that passed between Littimer and herself it was easy to see that the misunderstanding was no more.

"You are surprised to see me here?" said Littimer.

Henson stammered something and shrank towards the door. Littimer ordered him back again. He came, with a slinking, dogged air; he avoided the smiling contempt in Enid's eyes.

"My presence appears to be superfluous," he said, bitterly.

"And mine appears to be a surprise," Littimer replied. "Come, are you not glad to see me, my heir and successor? What has beome of the old fawning, cringing smile? Why, if some of your future constituents could see you now they might be justified in imagining that you had done something wrong. Look at yourself."

Littimer indicated a long gilt mirror on the opposite wall. Henson glanced at it involuntarily and dropped his eyes. Could that abject, white-faced sneak be himself? Was that the man whose fine presence and tender smile had charmed thousands? It seemed impossible.

"What have I done?" he asked.

"What have you not done?" Littimer thundered. "In the first place you did your best to ruin Hathorley Bell's life. You robbed me of a picture to do so, and your friend Merritt tried to rob me again. But I have both those pictures now. You did that because you were afraid of Bell—afraid lest he should see through your base motives. And you succeeded for a time, for the coast was clear. And then you proceeded to rob me of my son by one of the most contemptable tricks ever played by one man on another. It was you who stole the money and the ring; you who brought about all that sorrow and trouble by means of a forgery. But there are other people on your track as well as myself. You were at your last gasp. You were coming to see me to sell the ring for a large sum to take you out of the country, and then you discovered that you hadn't really got the ring."

"What—what are you talking about?" Henson asked, feebly.

"Scoundrel!" Littimer cried. "Innocent and pure to the last. I know all about Van Sneck and those forgeries of Prince Rupert's ring. And I know how Van Sneck was nearly done to death in Mr. Steel's house; and I know why—good heavens! It seems impossible that I could have been deceived all these years by such a slimy, treacherous scoundrel. And I might have gone on still but for a woman——".

"A lady detective!" Henson sneered. "Miss Lee."

Littimer smiled. It was good, after all, to defeat and hookwink the rascal.

"Miss Chris Henson," he said. "It never occurred to you that Miss Chris and Miss Lee were one and the same person. You never guessed. And she played with you as if you had been a child. How beautifully she exposed you over those pictures. Ah, you should have seen your face when you saw the stolen Rembrandt back again in its place. And after that you were mad enough to think that I trusted you. My dear, what shall we do with this pretty fellow?"

Lady Littimer shook her head doubtfully. It was plain that the presence of Henson disturbed her. There was just a suggestion of the old madness in her eyes.

"Send him away," she said. "Let him go."

"Send him away by all means," Littimer went on. "But letting him go is another matter. If we do the police will pick him up on other charges. There is a certain consolation in knowing that his evil career is likely to be shortened by some years. But I shall have no mercy. Scotland Yard shall know everything."

There was a cold ring in Littimer's voice that told Henson of his determination to carry out his threat. The other troubles he might wriggle out of, but this one was terribly real. It was time to try conciliation

"It will be a terrible scandal for the family, my lord," he whined.

Littimer rose to his feet. A sudden anger flared into his eyes. He was a smaller man than Henson, but the latter cowed before him.

"You dog!" he cried. "What greater scandal than that of the past few years? Does not all the world know that there is, or has been, some heavy cloud over the family honor? Lord and Lady Littimer have parted, and her ladyship has gone away. That is only part of what the gossips have said. And in these domestics differences it is always the woman who suffers. Everybody always says that the woman has done something wrong. For years my wife has been under this stigma. If she had chose to keep before the world after she left me most people would have ignored her. And you talk to me of a family scandal!"

"You will only make bad worse, my lord."

"No," Littimer cried. "I am going to make bad infinitely better. We come together again, but we say nothing of the past. And the world sneers and says the past is ignored for politic considerations. And so the public is going to know the truth, you dog. The whole facts of the case have gone to my solicitor, and by this time to-morrow a warrant will be issued against you. And I shall stand in open court and tell the whole world my story."

"In fairness to Lady Littimer," said Enid, speaking for the first time, "you could do no less."

"You were always against me," Henson snarled.

"Because I always knew you," said Enid. "And the more I knew of you the greater was my contempt. And you came here ever on the same errand—money, money, money. From first to last you have robbed my aunt of something like £70,000. And always by threats or the promise that you would some day restore the ring to the family."

"As to the ring," Henson protested, "I swear——"

"I suppose a lie more or less makes no difference to an expert like yourself," Enid went on, with cold contempt. "You took advantage of my aunt's misfortunes. Ah, she is a different woman since Lord Littimer came here. But her sorrow has crushed her down, and that forgery of the ring you dangled before her eyes deceived her."

"I never showed her the ring," Henson said, brazenly.

"And you can look me in the face and say that? One night Lady Littimer snatched it from you and ran into the garden. You followed and struggled for the ring. And Mr. David Steel, who stood close by, felled you to the earth with a blow on the side of your head. I wonder he didn't kill you. I should have done so in his place. And yet it would be a pity to hang anyone for your death. See here!"

Enid produced the ring from her pocket. Lord Littimer looked at it intently.

"Have you seen this before, my dear?" he asked his wife.

"Many a time," Lady Littimer said, sadly. "Take it away, it reminds me of too many bitter memories. Take it out of my sight."

"An excellent forgery," Littimer murmured. "A forgery calculated to deceive many experts even. I will compare it with the original by-and-by."

Henson listened with a sinking feeling at his heart. Was it possible, he wondered, that Lord Littimer had really recovered the original? He had had hopes of getting it back even now, and making it the basis of terms of surrender. Lady Littimer snatched the ring from Littimer's grasp and threw it through the open window into the garden.

She stood up facing Henson, her head thrown back, her eyes flaming with a new resolution. It seemed hardly possible to believe that this fine, handsome woman with the white hair could be the poor demented creature that the others once had known.

"Reginald Henson, listen to me," she cried. "For your own purpose you cruelly and deliberately set out to wreck the happiness of several lives. For mere money you did this; for sheer love of dissipation you committed this crime. You nearly deprived me of my reason. I say nothing about the money, because that is nothing by comparison. But the years that are lost can never come back to me again. When I think of my past the past of my poor, unhappy boy I feel that I have no forgiveness for you. If you ——Oh, go away; don't stay here—go. If I had known you were coming I should have forbidden you the house. Your mere presence unnerves me. Littimer, send him away."

Littimer rose to his feet and rang the bell.

"You will be good enough to rid me of your hateful presence," he said, "at once; now go.

But Henson still stood irresolute. He fidgeted from one foot to the other. He seemed to have some trouble that he could find no expression for.

"I want to go away," he murmured. "I want to leave the country. But at the present moment I am practically penniless. If you would advance me——"

Littimer laughed aloud.

"Upon my word," he said, "your coolness is colossal. I am going to prosecute you. I am doing my best to bring you into the dock. And you ask me—me, of all men—to find you money so that you can evade justice! Have you not had enough—are you never satisfied? Williams, will you see Mr. Henson off the premises?"

The smiling Williams bowed low.

"With the greatest possible pleasure, my lord," he said. "Any further orders, my lord?"

"And he is not to come here again, you uderstand."

Williams seemed to understand perfectly. With one backward sullen glance Henson quitted the room and passed into the night with his companion. Williams was whistling cheerfully, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets.

"Is that how you treat a gentleman?" Henson demanded.

"I ain't a gentleman," Williams said. "Never set up to be. And I ain't a dirty rascal who has just been kicked out of a nobleman's house. Here, stop that. Try that game on again and I'll call the dogs. And don't show any of your airs, please. I'm only a servant, but I am an honest man."

Henson stifled his anger as best he could. He was too miserable and downcast to think of much besides himself at present. Once the lodge-gates were open Williams stood aside for him to pass. The temptation was irresistible. And Henson's back was turned. With a kick of concentrated contempt and fury Williams shot Henson into the road, where he landed full on his face. His cup of humiliation was complete.

(To be Continued.)

VIRTUES OF THE MIKADO

DESCRIBED BY ONE OF HIS SUBJECTS.

Secrets of the Emperor of Japan's Popularity Among His Subjects.

Newspaper readers may very likely have been greatly amused, rather than deeply impressed, by one of the sentences in the official despatch of Marshal Oyama to Tokio announcing his great victory in the battle of Mukden, wherein he ascribed the "great virtues" of the Emperor as one of the chief causes of his victory. But when Admiral Togo sank the Russian ships he cabled to the same effect, and there is considerably more in the sentiment than appears at first sight.

The following statement has been furnished to the writer by a Japanese gentleman of position, who has been considerably concerned in Japanese politics, and who has the most intimate knowledge of all that pertains to the Royal House of Japan. It explains some of the secrets of the Mikado's intense popularity among his subjects, and of their real belief that all the good that in these days accrues to the country comes through his instrumentality. He says:—

The glorious awakening and the triumphal progress of modern Japan is entirely due to the genius of our Emperor, Mutsuhito, who is now fifty-two years of age. When he ascended the throne the country was in a most dangerous state, but by a series of master-strokes he himself got rid of all the bad and backward elements in Japan and set the new movement on its feet.

When he had banished the Shogun and established the new order of things he sent Prince Sanjo all over Europe to investigate the different forms of government and the social conditions of

THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES,

in order that he might adopt a system that would be suitable to Japanese requirements and progress. From that day to this there has scarcely been an item in the forward movement which has not been instigated or assisted by the Emperor.

We regard him as the saviour and maker of modern Japan. He came to our assistance when we were on the edge of a terrible chasm. There was on the one hand a feudal baronage with a despotic government, like that of our present enemy Russia, which was crushing the life out of the people, and on the other hand there was the dark spectre of a fierce revolution which it was possible might end in the extinction of a nation, so that, like Poland, Japan would exist only in name. From these Mutsuhito, our Emperor, saved us and has led us on. How can anybody be surprised that with such an Emperor and with such lieutenants as he has trained Japan is marching on victoriously?

He is an ideal man, from our point of view, and an ideal Emperor. He rises early, and at five o'clock every morning may be seen on horseback outside his palace. He makes a plain breakfast and then proceeds to the Gakumonio, the place for study and inquiry, where he examines the reports from his Ministers and the committees of the two Houses of Parliament, the foreign cablegrams, including the despatches from the seat of war, agricultural reports, and hundreds of other documents affecting the welfare of the country in one respect or another. Scarcely a paper passes him without his making some note or comment upon it. He is master of detail, and

EXTREMELY THOROUGH.

After all this he will attend State functions, visit the schools, listen to addresses by the most distinguished students, and generally do everything in his power to show his deep interest in the continuation of the process of Japan's enlightenment. It is not enough, he says, that at present Japan is showing herself to be the equal of European nations. The Empress assists him in all his work, and he constantly expresses his obligations to her. He says: "I am the committee of politics; she is the committee of education."

He is constantly thinking of his country and what he may do for it. Even in the depths of night, when the stars are shining and nearly all Japan is fast asleep, he may be seen clothed in a simple costume of army serge, to emerge from his palace and stride up and down the battlements. He is then deep in thought. He dreams dreams and soars among the spirits of the departed, listening intently to their wise advice and instruction. Thus he sees the dim outline of a great future. Sometimes his wife, clad as simply as he, walks by his side, but she never speaks lest she should disturb the workings of his mind.

Particularly he is constantly solicitous of the welfare of his brave soldiers who have done so much for the glory of Japan. When a new pattern of rifle was introduced the Emperor ordered one to be sent to the palace for his own use. Then he MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED, taking the rifle with him. He did not return for twenty-four hours, and during the whole of the intervening period he had been marching along the roads—alone, and with the rifle on his shoulder or in his hands. He did this simply to satisfy himself that it was not too heavy for the soldiers to carry. In the same way he has marched with the heavy "kit" on his back and the service shoes on his feet until his shoulders have been swollen and his feet sore and blistered. So he knows exactly what his soldiers have to go through.

He sent his sons to fight with Togo and Oyama. He brought them up in the best way. At the sports day in one of the public schools the Crown Prince once took part in some wrestling matches and defeated all comers until a farmer's son appeared in the ring. Many people thought that the farmer's son would feel himself obliged to let the Prince win but he did not do so. The Prince was defeated after a very short bout. Then the Emperor summoned the victor to his presence, and the boy went in fear lest he had been too bold. But the Emperor only said to him, "Will you become one of the companions of my son, and live and study with him while he remains in the school, for he needs many a man like you?"

Have not the virtues of such a man, and the acts which result from them, something to do with the successes of the country?

WILL PRESERVE VOICES.

British Museum to Treasure Gramophone Records.

At a recent meeting of the trustees of the British Museum it was decided that the records of voices of the most eminent singers and publicists of the times—men and women whose voices will interest future generations—should be collected and stored with other of the nation's treasures.

A difficulty confronted the Museum trustees—the difficulty of obtaining imperishable records. But no sooner was it raised than it was overcome. Mr. S. W. Dixon, manager of the Gramophone Company, at once offered to make imperishable records of the voices of such persons as a committee approved by the British Museum trustees shall select, and supply them free of charge. This offer the trustees have decided to accept, and before long the first of the records should be lodged in the archives at Bloomsbury.

The records are intended solely for posterity. They will not be used, for instance, for the purpose of giving Saturday afternoon concerts at the British Museum to the present generation. Their value will be in years to come, when grandchildren and great-grandchildren of persons living to-day will be able to listen to the great statesmen, singers, and actors of the present day.

RECORD PRICE.

Mr. Walter Jefferies, the president of the London Bulldog Society, has just sold one of his bulldogs, by name Royal Stone, for the record price—for an unshown dog—of $4,000. The dog is a grandson of the famous Champion Rodney Stone, who was unbeaten in England. Mr. Jefferies has only been repeating his past successes, for Champion Regal Stone, a son of Rodney Stone, was sold for $2,500 before he was exhibited

HEALTH

BRIGHT'S DISEASE.

A person suffering from chronic kidney disease is the victim of a serious malady, and of course should not attempt to manage his own case if he would avoid the proverbial reproach of the man who in his own doctor or lawyer. Yet in a disease of such long continuance the physician cannot ordinarily be in such constant attendance as in cases of acute disease, and in the intervals of his visits the patient can often aid very materially in the treatment if he is familiar with the general principles upon which it is based.

The main object of treatment is to guard the crippled kidney from anything that will further injure it or tax its enfeebled powers of elimination. To this end the diet should be very carefully regulated. Eggs, meat, rich or highly seasoned dishes, or alcoholic beverages, should be permitted only in the smallest quantities. The ideal food for a sufferer from Bright's disease is milk, since it meets nearly all the requirements of a food which can be digested and leaves the smallest amount of waste material, and at the same time flushes the kidneys, washing out the poisons that will injure still more the already damaged tissues if not quickly removed.

Most persons can take milk readily and digest it easily, but some either do not like the taste of it or cannot (or think they cannot) digest it. If it is the palate that rebels, the milk may be flavored with a little tea or coffee, or it may be made into a soup with oysters or clams or onions, or it may be jellied, or buttermilk may be substituted.

When milk is not digested it is usually because it is taken in too large amount or in too concentrated form. It may be diluted with Vichy or lime-water, or distilled water containing a little salt or bicarbonate of sodium. It should never be gulped down, but should be sipped and held in the mouth a moment to secure its admixture with saliva before swallowing. An exclusive milk diet can seldom be kept up for a long period, but the occasional resort to it for a week or ten days at a time is often of the greatest service in securing a rest for the kidneys, and in washing them free from all the accumulated debris of the meat-and-vegetable-eating periods.

A sufferer from Bright's disease should also be warmly clad, and should, so far as possible, avoid all exposure to cold and wet, shunning high, and especially east winds. For the few who can pick their climate to suit their needs, a removal to a tropical or semitropical country is of the greatest advantage.—Youth's Companion.

HOT WATER CURE.

The best toilet preparation in the world is plain hot water. Here are some of the uses to which you may put it. Drink a bowl of it every night if you want a good digestion, a good sleep, and a clear complexion. Put a bag of it to your feet when you have a cold, to your back when you have a backache, or at the nape of your neck when you have a headache or feel sleepless. Bathe the eyes with it when they are inflamed. Soak the feet in it when they are tired. Soak the hands in it before manicuring. Steam the face with it once a week for your complexion. Bathe the cheeks in it when you want them to be rosy. Bathe cold sores, fever blisters, and pimples in very hot water in order to dry them up. Like a patent medicine, a single dose of "hot water bag" will often cure toothache, neuralgia, rheumatism, and pain of all kinds. Try a free sample from the family tea-kettle.

HOW TO KEEP YOUNG.

Someone once asked a woman how it was she kept her youth so wonderfully. Her hair was snowy white, she was eighty years old, and her energy was waning; but she never impressed one with the idea of age, for her heart was still young in sympathy and interest. And this was her answer: "I know how to forget disagreeable things. I tried to master the art of saying pleasant things. I did not expect too much of my friends. I kept my nerves well in hand, and did not allow them to bore other people. I tried to find any work that came to my hand congenial. I did my best to relieve the misery I came in contact with, and sympathized with the suffering. In fact, I tried to do to others as I would be done by, and you see me, in consequence, reaping the fruits of happiness in a peaceful old age."

PURE AIR IN SICK ROOMS.

To purify the air of sick rooms put a small lump of camphor on an old plate. Make the poker very hot and with it rub the camphor; the fumes of camphor will rise rapidly and purify the whole room. Move about while you are doing this, so as to spread the camphor well. In ten minutes there will be no smell of camphor and the atmosphere will be pleasant and fresh.