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PRISONERS TWO

THE TALE OF A LOCKED DOOR

"Shall I go in first?" whispers Saxon, as he sees his companion's face of woe.

"Oh, no, no! I would far rather go in alone. It will be better," says Krin, who feels there is unpleasantness in store for her, and cannot bear that he should witness her disgrace. So they leave the balcony, and, reaching the hall door, which they find open, Corinna enters the house alone.

As she opens the drawing-room door, Mrs. Crofton looks up quickly, and seeing Krin, draws a deep breath of relief. Then, fear having abandoned her heart, woman-like she permits anger to enter it.

"Where have you been, Corinna?" she cries, rising. "What do you mean by frightehing us all to death like this? Do you know it is nearly ten o'clock? With whom have you been?"

"With Saxon," returns Corinna, fearfully.

"What?" says Rhoda, with flashing eyes, her voice a little shrill.

"With Saxon. We did not mean it; we did not know. We went into the old tower, only for a moment, but the door closed behind us, we could not get out until Saxon flung himself from the window." She pauses breathless.

"Very nice, upon my word," says Rhoda, her tone a little shriller; "a charming story indeed! Locked up with Lord Rowden in an old ruin until ten o'clock. I wonder what the county will say?"

"We could not help it," says Krin, looking at her mother with imploring eyes; "it was nobody's fault; we would have been there now but for Saxon."

"And pray, if it was easy to leap from the window, why was it not done sooner?"

"But it was not easy. He might have killed himself; and we hoped until the last that some one would come to release us. Mamma, why don't you speak to me?"

"It is most unfortunate," says Mrs. Crofton, fretfully. "I don't know, I am sure, what is to be done. All the servants of course know of it, and Thompson has been out looking for you for the last two hours. It will be known far and near."

"It is more than unfortunate; it is disgraceful!" declares Rhoda. "From the beginning I have noticed your artful endeavors to entrap Saxon, but this is indeed the climax. You will not win your game, however, let me tell you that. No gentleman was ever yet gained by immodest and forward behavior."

"'Immodest!' Mamma, do you hear that?—do you hear what she says?" cries poor Krin, paling and trembling beneath the chandelier. "I tell you it was a mistake; it could not be helped. Mamma, speak to me."

"You had better go to your room, Corinna, while I try and think calmly of this unhappy business," says her mother, coldly, though in her heart she does not condemn her.

Krin, with quivering lips, and one small shaking hand laid upon her bosom, turns, and makes her way, not to her room, but into the still night air. What has she done? What horrible things have been said to her! Can Saxon think as they do? Has she been immodest,—forward? How unjust, how unbearable it all is! Oh! what shall she do? For the second time this evening she breaks into a storm of tears.

Somebody lays his hand upon her arm.

"Darling, have they been so very bad to you?" says Saxon's low caressing voice.

Krin's effort to reply is lost amid her sobs.

"You should have let me face them first. What did they say to you?"

"Oh, nothing,—that is, nothing in particular. Of course mamma was very angry; she was frightened, too, and she said so. That is all."

"I am sure something more than that must have been said to make you cry so bitterly. Tell me, Corinna; I have the right to know. What did your mother say?"

"It wasn't mamma. It was Rhoda."

"Oh!" says Saxon, angrily, and then he mentions Rhoda's name, and puts a word before it that is not complimentary to Rhoda. "Don't cry like that," he goes on, presently, in a very tender tone, putting his arm round her, and pressing her head down upon his breast; "don't, my pet: you are making me awfully unhappy. Corinna, be sensible, darling, and listen to what I am going to say. I want to ask you a question."

"What question?"—very drearily.

"I could not ask it if you speak in that tone. Oh, Krin, can you not guess what it is I want to say? I love you, darling, with all my heart; I want to hear that you love me too."

Krin raises her head, and makes a desperate effort to escape; but he holds her fast, and continues rapidly:

"Listen to me, Krin. It maddens me to see you made miserable, as you are now; I cannot bear it. Give me the right to look upon you as my promised wife, and I will protect you against the world. No one shall dare to say a cruel word to you. Sometimes,—I don't know why—but sometimes I have thought of late that you—care for me. Oh, love, do not tell me I am presumptuous."

There is no answer to this tender appeal, but he fancies (is it fancy) that she nestles a little closer to him. He tightens his arm around her, and whispers softly—

"Say one word, Corinna,—only one, to make me happy."

But Corinna is a woman, and finds it impossible to express herself in so compact a form.

"Are you quite sure that you love me?" she asks, with anxious emphasis, lifting her eyes to his for a moment.

"Quite sure. Must you ask that, darling? Don't you know it? There is nothing in this wide world I would compare with you."

"That is how I feel toward you," says Krin, innocently, with a little contented sigh.

It is needless to relate what follows. Everyone possessed of even a grain of sentiment will understand for themselves. Of course they are perfectly happy, and of course Corinna sheds a few more tears. They are the last she weeps for many, many months.

"Come," says Saxon, with a laugh, "if you cry any more I shall think you are regretting your decision. You must stop now, or I sha'n't answer for the consequences. It is very hard lines, both for me and my coat. I might as well be under a shower-bath. If it continues I shall certainly catch cold and be laid up with severe influenza."

Krin laughs too, though rather hysterically, and Saxon, putting his hand under her chin, turns her face up to his.

"You are better now," he says, "so we will go in together, and make our peace with your mother."

Hand in hand they enter the drawing-room and find the atmosphere decidedly cloudy. For the first time in her life Mrs. Crofton regards her kinsman with unsmiling eyes.

"Oh, Saxon, you have returned," she says, coldly.

"Yes, I have returned to ask a great favor of you,—the greatest favor you can bestow."

"A favor of me?"—with considerable dignity, while Rhoda in the background comprehends fully, and whitens with rage and disappointment.

"Yes, indeed, so great that I hardly know how to ask it." He quits Krin's side, and, going to her mother, takes her unresisting hand eagerly.

"Mrs. Crofton, will you make me a present of Corinna?"

There is a short pause, during which Mrs. Crofton draws breath and reviews the position. How utterly mistaken she has been all along. Well, if not Rhoda, it is at least Corinna. If blind to the charms of one daughter, it is because he is so infatuated by the graces of the other. The fact that he will be her son-in-law remains undisturbed, and if Mrs. Crofton bears a deeper affection for one of her children it is undoubtedly for Corinna.

"You amaze me! I had no idea of this," she says, at length, with perfect truthfulness. "I hardly know what to say, Saxon, but I hope with all my heart you will both be happy." Her voice falters a little, and she holds out her disengaged hand to Krin. The girl, coming quickly to her side, throws her arms round her neck and kisses her warmly.

"You are not a bit angry now, mamma, are you?" she asks, with a bright, sunny smile.

"I suppose I must forgive you now," returns her mother, tapping her cheek; "but you are a pair of naughty children, and succeeded in terrifying me more than I care to remember. Saxon, may I beg you to avoid that tower for the future,—at all events until this wild girl belongs to you entirely?"

"I will get a new lock put on tomorrow," says Saxon, and then he turns to Rhoda. "Now you must wish us joy," he exclaims, cheerfully.

"I do, most sincerely. I wish you joy—of each other," replies Rhoda, with the faintest possible pause. "Of course I saw from the very first how it would end, so I cannot imitate mamma's surprise."

There is a certain flavor about this speech that, to say the least of it, is unpleasant. Every one seems to think it will be wisdom to refrain from addressing her again.

"Corinna, you are looking very pale," says her mother, hastily; "all the excitement and fatigue has been too much for you. Bid us good night, dear, and go to bed."

"Good night," says Krin, obediently; and as Saxon follows her into the hall under pretense of getting her a candle, he whispers fondly: "Are you perfectly happy now, Corinna?" But Corinna does not get time to answer that question—in words.

The End.

THE YARN OF SS. "TOOTHPICK."

Captains of Freighters Often Encounter Submarines.

The mobilization of the timber supplies of the Allies to erect the great hut cities in Great Britain and in France is the subject of this month's instalment in The World's Work of the articles Mr. Frederick A. Talbot is writing on "How Britain Went to War." Here we learn all about how the British Government went into the timber business, about the appointment of Mr. Meyer and the efficient assistance rendered to the War Office by the Board of Works.

Mr. Talbot enlivens his chronicle with many amusing anecdotes. He says the captains who bring timber in freighters to this country can narrate many a stirring tale of struggles with the enemy.

One of these vessels, which I will call the s.s. Toothpick, although Lloyd's register will offer no confirmation of any such name, was coming south. Her holds were packed chock-a-block with railway sleepers. Suddenly a submarine came to the surface and peremptorily yelled a halt. But the captain of the timber-carrier was not to be intimidated. He kept his head and his course.

The Toothpick kept going. The commander of the hostile submarine, infuriated at the utter disregard manifested towards his challenge by the captain of the freighter, let fly a torpedo.

There was a crash and a huge column of water spurted into the air. The timber-carrier had been stung in the forward hold. A big hole was blown in her side and the wooden cargo burst into flames from the explosion. But the water poured in and swamped the conflagration.

Meanwhile the Toothpick waddled on.

The submarine was being left astern, but, the first blow proving unsuccessful, she crowded on speed to draw up on the port side. She let go another missile. It caught the timber-carrier in the after-ribs, inflicting another grievous wound and once again setting fire to the cargo. Dense clouds of smoke rolled forward. Verily things were getting decidedly unhealthy for those on board. But again the waters of the North Sea proved friendly by rushing in and quenching the fire ere it had got a grip.

Maddened beyond conception, the submarine again came tearing after the freighter, which was still driving forward as if there were no such enemy as German under-water assassins in existence. This time the latter buzzed around the starboard side of her quarry and presently away went another torpedo. Again the Toothpick received a disconcerting punch, also in the after-hold but on the opposite side. Another hole, another fire, and another inrush of water to put out the flames.

But the Toothpick was sturdily built, and though sorely wounded in three places she kept afloat and maintained her gait. Had the commander of that submarine reflected for a moment he would have realized that he had about as much chance of sending that timber-carrier to Davy Jones's locker with a torpedo as a German machine-gun has of pulverizing a "tank." As for the captain of the Toothpick, he merely chuckled at the chagrin of his enemy, who had blown away $75,000 in torpedoes without scoring a point.

The timber-carrier came wallowing into port, somewhat more unsteadily than usual, it is true, but with her cargo intact. The only comment of the skipper when he had presented his colorless official report concerning the incident was: "Thundering lucky they didn't plump one into the engine-room amidships! Then we should have been knocked out!"

Some people actually break down from overwork, but that is one malady that never develops into an epidemic so that it is necessary to quarantine against it.

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ON THE FARM

How Farmers May Save.

The value of food and fuel, also the rent saved by the use of the farm house are matters overlooked by many in their farm bookkeeping, and some farms are really yielding a small profit when the figures made, show them to be a losing proposition. Food is nowadays the chief item of expense with the city dwellers, and even in small villages the supply of products of the surounding country are only obtainable at a price that is a heavy drag on the pocket of the consumer, yet farmers are in a position to escape much of this great expense if they only take advantage of their opportunities by means of good housekeeping, added to a little work on the part of the farmer himself,

Time is not so precious on the farm in Winter but that home butchering of a beef and some hogs may be managed, and there are great opportunities for economy in the home consumption of poultry raised on the farm. The advice, so frequently given, to keep a really useful garden on every farm, should be followed in these days, and the proper stocking of the farm cellar with the best of potatoes, vegetables and roots should be well, attended to. An account of the saving made by these practices, should be kept, and credit given to the farm.

The opportunity to save money by means of the use of fuel produced on the farm, is rapidly disappearing in the older districts, yet many chances in this direction are let slip with a resulting loss in two directions. Too often are unremunerative orchards allowed to encumber good land breeding disease that is carried to more promising fruit plantations, when by a little labor the tree could be turned into fuel that would take the place of the coal which is being purchased at a high price. This work would naturally be done during the Winter, when other farm operations are not pressing.

The matter of saving of house rent is one that should give the farmer great cause of thankfulness in these times of high values of urban real estate, as he would quickly realize if forced to maintain himself and family on double his present cash income were he removed to the city.

It was found, by means of a survey of 1,000 families representing widely separated sections in 14 states, conducted by the United States Agricultural Department that the average annual value of meats consumed per family (other than poultry) was $107,25; of poultry products, $55.40, and of dairy products, $98.36. The quantity of dairy products consumed per family was equal to 2,640 quarts of milk.

The total value of food consumed was found to vary directly with the per family amount of meat used. As the relative value of meat consumed increases, the total value of food consumed per family increases.

Families living on their own farms reported higher consumption of food and a larger percentage of food derived directly from the farm than of those living on rented farms. The average quantity of fruit canned annually per family was found to be 122 quarts, of vegetables 32 quarts. In spite of all these unquestionable savings, the credit for them is too often denied the farm; and it must be admitted that these savings in the cost of living can be increased by a determined effort.

Origin of Potato Diseases.

From the consumers' side, the question of marketing potatoes is of the greatest importance, especially so in years when the prices for this commodity are advancing daily. The officers of the Experimental Farms recently had an opportunity of inspecting quantities of potatoes in the consumers' own cellars. The potatoes had been purchased in the ordinary way from small dealers. The condition of the potatoes was most unsatisfactory. In three cases the amount of rot came up to 75 per cent. of the total quantity in storage. This rot was the common Late Blight rot, and was certainly present when the potatoes were dug, and before shipping.

The consumer is helpless in such cases, and rarely is there a way open to him for compensation. Nor is the small dealer to blame. The blame rests entirely with the shipper and the grower. In order that such losses may be avoided and the consumer be in a position to secure for his good money, good potatoes that will keep over Winter, it is necessary for the growers, on their part, to exercise more care in digging, sorting and handling potatoes. Late Blight is a preventable disease; every farmer should know this fact, since the Experimntal Farms system has made every effort to demonstrate on many farms in the country the effect of spraying, with results showing the production of sound crops, and an increase in yield amounting to some 90 to 100 bushels per acre.

The sale of inferior potatoes is dishonest, if not illegal at the present moment. Farmers know from their own experience that storage rots cause great losses in their own cellars. It seems, however, the general practice to dispose of an infected crop immediately and shift the losses from rot from the farmer to the consumer. The latter, however, has to pay the price of good potatoes.

In some instances, no doubt, the consumer is to blame by storing potatoes (or other Winter vegetables) in too warm cellars. Potatoes and similar vegetables must be stored in a cool place. They cannot stand frost, which causes a sweetish taste in potatoes; but the temperature should never rise above 40 degrees Fahr. Where such conditions are non-existent it is better not to lay in a Winter's supply, as losses are sure to result.

Farmers are cautioned that the attitude of consumers will eventually result in demanding grading of potatoes just like apples; and the farmer who does not control diseases in the field will have all rotten or diseased potatoes thrown on his hands. Diseased potatoes, when boiled, still make good stock food, it should be remembered. A letter or postal card addressed to the Publication Branch of the Department of Agriculture will bring by return mail all the required information relating to the growing of crops of potatoes free from disease.

Prosperous Year Ahead.

"Present conditions should be promising for crop production next year," says Prof. C. A. Zavitz. "It is true the land in many parts of Ontario was very dry early in September. Along about the middle of the month, however, there were some fairly good showers in most localities, and the wheat that was sown either before or after these rains came on very well, and in most instances made a satisfactory growth before the winter set in. In some localities the rain kept off so long that a smaller amount of winter wheat was sown than there would have been had the rain appeared earlier. From what I saw through the Province in the latter part of the autumn the land seemed to be in very good condition, and, in most places, the plowing seemed to be well ahead. If the snow fall is normal there seems to be no real reason why the land should not be in very good condition indeed for spring work.

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Note: Another prominent Physician to whom the above article was submitted, said: "Bon-Opto is a very remarkable remedy. Its constituent ingredients are well known to eminent eye specialists and widely prescribed by them. The manufacturers guarantee it to strengthen eyesight 50 per cent in one week's time in many instances or refund the money. It can be obtained from any good druggist and is one of the very few preparations I feel should be kept on hand for regular use in almost every family." The Valmar Drug Co., Store 4, Toronto, will fill your orders if your druggist cannot.