

ORDER OF THE LEAGUE

BY FRED. M. WHITE.

CHAPTER XVI.

could laugh the mandates of the League to scorn. Had I long to live, I should see for her protection, and wherever she may be, she would come to me. Even now, if she comes to Rome, see her if you can and lay your case before her.

"And shield myself behind a woman! That does not sound like the chivalrous Visci of old. She is only a woman, after all."

"One in a million," Visci answered calmly. "If she holds out her right hand to you, cling to it as a drowning desperate man does to a rock; it is your only chance of salvation. And now it is late. I must go."

Despite his own better sense, Maxwell began to dwell upon the fact of gaining assistance from the mysterious Isodora. At meetings of the League in London, he had heard her name mentioned, and always with the utmost reverence and affection. If she could not absolutely relieve him from his undertaking, she could at any rate shield him from non-compliance with the mandate. Full of these cheerful thoughts, he fell asleep.

He found his friend the following morning quite cheerful, but in the daylight the ravages of disease were painfully apparent. The dark rings under the eyes and the thin features bespoke nights of racking pain and broken rest.

Visci noticed this and smiled gently. "Yes, I have changed," he said. "Sometimes after a bad night, I hardly know myself. It is cruel, weary work lying awake hour after hour fighting with the grim King. But I have been singularly free from pain lately, and I am looking much better than I have been."

"There might be a chance yet," Maxwell replied with a cheerfulness wholly assumed, and thinking that this "looking better" was the nearest approach to death he had ever seen. "An absence from Rome, a change of climate, has done wonders for people before now."

Visci shook his head. "Not when the main-spring of life is broken," he said; "no human ingenuity, no miracle of surgery can mend that. Maxwell, if they had deferred their vengeance long, they would have been too late. Some inward monitor tells me I shall fail them yet."

"You will for me, Visci, you may depend upon that. Time is no object to me."

"And if I should die and disappoint you of your revenge, how mad you would be!" Visci laughed. "It is a dreadful tragedy to me; it is a very serious thing for you; and yet there is a comic side to it, as there is in all things. Ah! I cannot see the droll side of life as I used; but when the bloodthirsty murderer sits down with his victim tête-à-tête, discussing the crime, there is something laughable in it after all."

"I daresay there is," Maxwell answered grimly, "though I am dense enough not to notice it. To me, there is something horribly, repulsively tragic about it, even to hear you discussing death in that light way."

"Familiarity breeds contempt. Is not that one of your English proverbs?" Visci said airily. "But, my good Frederick," he continued, lowering his voice to a solemn key, "the white horseman will not find me unprepared, when he steals upon me, as he might at any moment. I am ready. I do not make a parade of my religion, but I have tried to do what is right and honest and honourable. I have faced death so often, that I treat him lightly at times. But never fear that when he comes to me for the last time."

Maxwell pressed his friend's hand in silent sympathy. "You always were a good fellow, Visci," he said; "and if this hour must come so speedily, tell me is there anything I can do for you when—when—"

"I am dead? No reason to hesitate over the word. No Maxwell; my house is in order. I have no friends besides my brother and he, I hope, is far beyond the vengeance of the League now."

"Then there is nothing I can do for you any way?"

"No, I think not. But you are my principal care now; your life is far more important than mine. I have written to Isodora, laying a statement of all the facts before her; and if she is the woman I take her for, she is sure to lose no time in getting here. Once under her protection, you are safe; there will be no further cause for alarm."

"But it seems rather unmanly," Maxwell urged.

"Unmanly!" echoed Visci scornfully. "What has manliness to do with fighting cowardly vandals in the dark? You must, you shall do it!" he continued vehemently; but the exertion was too much for him, and he lay away forward over the table as if he would fall. Presently, a little colour crept into the pallid face, and he continued: "You see even that is too much for me. Maxwell, if you contradict me and get me angry, my blood will be upon your head after all. Now, do listen to reason."

"If my want of common-sense hurts you as much as that, certainly. But I do not see how this mysterious princess can help me."

"Listen to me," Visci said solemnly. Then he laid all his schemes before the other—his elaborate plans for his friend's safety, designs whose pure sacrifice of such were absolutely touching.

Maxwell began to take heart again. "You are very good," he said gratefully, "to take all this infinite pains for me."

"In a like strait you would do the same for me, Fred."

"Yes," Maxwell answered simply. "Now Salvarini's words come back to me now! Do you remember, when I wanted to throw my insignia out of the window that evening, the last we all spent together?"

"I recollect. It was two days before little Genevieve disappeared," Visci answered sadly. "Do you know, I have never discovered any trace of her or Lucrece. Poor child, poor little girl! I wonder where she is now."

"Perhaps you may see her again some day."

"It has long been my dearest wish; but it will never be fulfilled now. If ever you do see her once more, say that I—"

"Visci!"

As the last words fell from the Italian's lips, his head hung forward, and he fell from his chair. For a moment he lay motionless, a thin stream of blood trickled down his fair

beard, staining it scarlet. He lay quietly on Maxwell's shoulder.

"Do not be alarmed," he said faintly. "It has come at last—There are tears in your eyes, Fred. Do not weep for me. Do not forget Carlo Visci, when you see old friends; and when you meet little Genevieve tell her I forgive her—Good-bye, old friend Take hold of my hand. Let me look in your honest face once more. It is not hard to die, Fred. Tell them that my last words—'Jesu, mercy!'"

"Speak to me, Carlo—speak to me!"

Never again on this side of the grave. And so the noble-hearted Italian died; and on the third day they buried him in a single grave under the murmuring pines.

No call to remain longer now. One last solitary evening ramble, Maxwell took outside the city wall ere his departure. As he walked along wrapped in his own sad thoughts, he did not heed that his footsteps were being dogged. Then with a sudden instinct of danger, he turned round. The feet that followed stopped. "Who is there?" he cried.

A muffled figure came towards him, and another stealthily from behind. A crash, a blow, a fierce struggle for a moment, a man's cry for help borne idly on the breeze, a mist rising before the eyes, a thousand stars dancing and tumbling, then deep, sleepy unconsciousness.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SYMBOLS OF FATE.

Professional and Unprofessional Fortune Tellers.

What to learn.
The secrets of the past, present or future.
There is always some lucky hit—lucky for the fortune teller.

The most of people who have lived to any age have friends coming from a distance. Many have relatives who die and leave them fortunes. Young people are usually in love with some one of the opposite sex who is either dark or fair, and a journey is imminent in nearly all conditions. Crossing the water may mean going over a ferry or a running brook, as well as an ocean.

But the mystic quality lies in the fact that the person telling all these things is an announced seer—born with a caul, like David Copperfield, and having intimate relations with the world of futurity and the powers of mystery.

No matter how ignorant of the civilizing influences of this life the inspired fortune-teller may be, how cheaply cotten up, or with what sordid circumstances environed, professors of all the sciences are willing to kneel at her feet to learn the secrets of the past, present and future, from her occult knowledge.

A new mythology would be a boon to society in its present condition when everybody is looking for a sign.

The crowing of a cock was an omen of ill to Peter. It heralds a visitor in those days as well as a change in the weather.

If you drop the scissors, a fork or a pen, and the point sticks in the floor, somebody is coming.

If your nose itches you are going to kiss a fool.

If your left hand tickles you will handle a sum of money.

If the right hand, you will shake hands with a friend.

If you first see a visitor in the looking-glass it is a sign of misfortune.

Two spoons signify a wedding; tea-spoons are understood.

But these signs of necromancy are as old as the doings of Macbeth's witches, whose weird incantations are practiced to this day. Indeed, a Shakespeare fortune-telling book would not be a bad enterprise. It would give a higher tone to the soothsayer's art. It might be called "Easy Lessons in the Horation Philosophy" and serve as a textbook in supernatural lore, with a motto by the second witch:

"By the pricking of my thumbs
Something wicked this way comes."

Contagious.

"Laws, Mrs. Jue, what a-ailin' Mistah Jue?"

"Po' man got de lockjaw."

"Whew! Is it ketchin'?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! ketch it from rus' nails an' sich."

Making "a Clean Breast of It"

Softhearted Old Lady (when she heard the story and assisted applicant)—Dear me! Ah, poor man! You must indeed have gone through dreadful trials.

Tramp—I believe yer, mum! An' what's still wus, mum, I was nearly al'ays convicted!

The Servant Question.

Wife. "Bridget is absolutely worthless; she tries me from morning until night. I've a great mind to let her go."

Hubbard. "Well, how much do we owe her?"

Wife. "Only two months wages."

Hubbard. "Oh, well, we had better keep her."

The Old, Old Story.

"And will you let me go away without an answer, dear?" he said, gently, though his heart was throbbing double throbs.

"It is all so strange and unexpected, George,"—the words came soft and low.

"If sometimes in my dreams the thought has come that you might some day call me—Ah, dear, you must read your answer in my eyes."

And the answer read, "I'll not let you get away."

Partly.

Mrs. Buckrum. "How's dat baby ob you'n? Ye' wife was a sayin' tudder day ez how she hadn't named it yet. Reckon she'll call it arter yo', ob course?"

Mr. Hodge Crabtree. "Wall, no'm, only partly. She's goin' call 'im Willyum Crabtree, Willyum arter her brudder Bill, and Crabtree arter me."

A Firm Clutch.

"Mr. Featherly," said Bobby, "Sister Clara asked pa last night if you were a young man who keeps the Sabbath."

"I hope, Bobby," replied Featherly, anxiously, "that he told her that I do."

"Yes; he said that you keep everything you get a hold of."

NOW FOR SUMMER DRINKS.

The Effect of Food Beverages Upon the Human System.

With the advent of warm weather the demand for liquids to supply the wants of the body becomes vastly increased. A medical writer in St. Louis, treating of this subject, says: The heat excites the skin to exalted action, for it is mostly by means of the perspiration that the temperature of the body is kept down to its natural level, 98.4 degrees Fahrenheit. When the supply of liquids is scanty, or much below the actual demands, the greatest dangers are incurred. These are from accumulation of waste materials, which are naturally removed by way of the skin and kidneys, besides the still graver (immediate) risks of sunstroke and heat exhaustion. Beverages of some kind must be taken, and we may with some advantage study the claims of those offered from which to make a selection.

The heat of the body may be modified to some extent by the use of fluids cooled to any degree from that of the normal standard to the freezing point, the ice itself may be swallowed when necessary to hasten the reduction of temperature. When beverages are taken cooled in this way the amount needed is reduced. Hence the instinctive craving for refrigerating drinks in summer. The amount necessary for keeping down the temperature being less, makes such drinks advantageous in many ways. Too great bulk is avoided; this lessens distension of the stomach and consequent weakening of digestion. Profuse perspiration is apt to irritate a sensitive skin and cooling beverages lessen the necessity for such increased work of the sweat apparatus.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST ICED DRINKS.

Many objections have been raised against ice-water and cold drinks generally. Most of these have no real foundation. A few of them may be noticed for the purpose of showing their weakness. Thus the bad teeth observed so often among Americans, which has made dentistry in that country an art that has nearly reached perfection, are often attributed to the use of iced beverages. But the dental imperfection is to be noticed in every village and farm-house, where such drinks are practically unknown. If the universal use of the frying-pan, hot bread and the American fire were blamed for their results the truth would be much nearer approached. Bad cookery is the main cause of dental imperfection.

That dyspepsia—the American disease—is due to defective cooking and imperfect chewing of the food and too great haste in eating, is undoubtedly the case in most instances; still there are many who believe that iced drinks are responsible for almost every variety of indigestion. When digestion is in progress there is a large flow of blood towards the stomach. The lining of that organ is in a state of congestion. The presence of a little ice-water or the like can scarcely be felt for a moment when millions of blood vessels are carrying the blood to and from it at a tremendous speed and that at a temperature of 1.0 degrees Fahrenheit. The effect of a moderate amount of ice-water would be simply a little stimulation, increasing rather than retarding the digestive process. Of course no one advocates the filling of the stomach with ice-water or other fluid at any temperature during the digestive process, but a moderate amount of the former can do no harm—in fact, is rather beneficial. This cannot be said of alcoholics in any form, or of hot or very warm beverages. All these interfere more or less seriously with digestion, as experiments have abundantly demonstrated.

THE BENEFITS OF WATER DRINKING.

That water promotes appetite and digestion when taken with meals is shown by the fact that no "anti-fat" system of diet is so remarkably successful as that in which no drinks are permitted to be taken with meals or until two hours after them. When it is an object to reduce the amount of the blood, as in certain heart affections, the dry diet system is of great service, but the kidneys must be in excellent working order or this system must prove injurious. As a matter of fact, however, a considerable number of people in every community take too little fluids of any kind. They are afraid to drink when warm, do not desire it when cool, will not take it before or with meals, fearing to weaken digestion, and avoid drinking after meals, fearing an uncomfortable sensation of fullness. Liver and kidney troubles, headaches, neuralgia, &c., are often to be traced to this unnatural avoidance of fluids. It is probable that a large proportion of the benefits derived from the taking of unusual quantities of water. Hence the reputation of many a health resort is based upon drinking water, not upon any real virtue resident in any special quantity of that imbibed.

Enough, perhaps, has been said of the dangers of well water, of impure ice, and that obtained from defective cisterns. The purity of drinking water cannot be too carefully watched. The ordinary filter only makes matters worse. The materials through which the water flows soon become a breeding place for the lower orders of vegetable life, while they strain out the coarser particles of dirt and give it a delusive appearance of purity. The unglazed porcelain filter is mostly free from such objections. This takes out all organized bodies, and when the ice is not brought into contact with water thus filtered it gives all the security that can be required against taking into the system the germs of disease. There is no security against the products of putrefaction passing through such a filter. In fact, the only way to guard against these is to watch the source of water supply with unceasing vigilance.

LEMONADE.

Water as a beverage, iced or at the ordinary temperature, is frequently modified to render it more agreeable to the palate or stomach, or slightly nourishing or stimulating. The addition of a vegetable acid, such as lemon or lime juice or vinegar, usually with sugar in some form, makes the drink agreeable to the taste, more digestible and slightly nourishing. Such liquids satisfy thirst in smaller amounts than would plain water at ordinary temperature. Sometimes a mineral acid—sulphuric, muriatic or phosphoric—give the requisite sour to the "lemonade." Of these the dilute phosphoric acid is the least harmful. When taken in large quantities it is pretty sure to impair digestion. Muriatic and sulphuric acids have no place in beverages except in certain fevers and other conditions of actual disease. They should never be used as habitual drinks. Because phosphorus is an

essential ingredient in brain, nerve and bone, it has been thought that it might be well to increase the amount in the body by continually taking some compound containing it into the stomach. There is an immense amount of bromine in this, which the enterprising manufacturer has set slow to utilize. The phosphates, along with the different forms of phosphoric acid, do not add to the phosphorus in the body which can be used to advantage in building up new bone, nerve or brain. It has already become used up as much as the ashes and cinders after coal and wood has been burned. Combined with iron it makes an elegant, palatable preparation of that useful tonic, but no better than many other preparations of the metal. It certainly possesses no marvelous restorative properties by reason of the phosphorus present in this used-up condition.

OATMEAL WATER AND COLD TEA.

The addition of oatmeal to drinking water makes it nutritive, satisfying and agreeable to the stomach. For laborers it makes a useful addition to the diet, costs but little and repays the small outlay in the form of increased ability to perform labor, either physical or mental.

Diluted cold tea has long been known as an agreeable, slightly stimulating beverage. For this, or any other purpose, the tea leaves must not be boiled. If they are, a large amount of tannin is extracted along with the aromatic and stimulating principles, and this sadly interferes with digestion in many individuals. A pinch of soda bicarbonate—ordinary "baking-soda"—added to the leaves at the time boiling water is poured over them, and the "steeping" process limited to six or seven minutes, will remove almost all objections from cold or iced tea as an agreeable, stimulating summer drink. Coffee treated in a similar way may be used instead, but it contains much less of the stimulating principles.

STATISTICS.

The total number of bales of Australian wool received in England in 1885 was as follows—New South Wales, 279,516; Victoria, 349,034; South Australia, 131,400; New Zealand, 253,830; Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, 117,454; or a total of over 1,131,000, against 1,022,000 in 1885. Of Cape wools there were 1,354,000 bales, against 1,202,000.

Railways in India are in their infancy. If India were as well supplied with railways as England is, it would have 365,000 miles, instead of the 12,376 miles it now has. If the Indian Government continues the construction of railways at the same rate that it has been doing during the last thirty years, it will take more than 900 years to give India for its area the equivalent mileage of England.

In 1886 London imported from different parts of the country, by sea, 4,671,127 tons of coal, as against 4,363,966 tons in 1885; and by railway and canal, 7,128,380 tons in 1886, as against 7,031,488 tons in 1885. After making due allowance for exports, there has been a total increase in the coal trade within the London district during the past year of 150,013 tons. The price has been low, the average, including the dues of the London market, being only 16s. 2d. per ton.

Next to the annual expenditure for food and drink of the people of the United Kingdom comes that on articles of dress, principally consisting in cotton, dress, linen, and silks, in boots, shoes, wool, as well as in gold and silver, and hats, and jewelry, involving an outlay of ornaments high £148,000,000 gross, or a net of well-near £123,000,000, which expenditure comprises about £72,000,000 for house-rent the value of annual additions, £15,000,000 for coal, £14,000,000 for gas, and £2,000,000 for water, making in all £114,000,000. Then there is the expenditure in tobacco, amounting to some £13,000,000 gross.

In 1855 the number of telegraph messages in England was 4,411,000, and the cost per message was 8s. 6d. from one shilling and sixpence to 8s. 6d. At present the cost per message is 3s. 6d. In 1860, under the same tariff, they had risen to 1,863,839. In 1865 a reduced rate of from one to two shillings, and a sixpenny rate in certain large towns, the total rose to 4,650,231. In 1869 the number of messages was estimated at 7,500,000. Subsequently, under a tariff of one shilling for twenty words, the return for 1870 was 9,850,177; for 1875 it was 19,253,120; for 1880 it was 26,547,137 and for 1885 it was 33,493,224. From October, 1885, to October 1886, under the sixpenny tariff for twelve words, the address being counted, the total mounted up to 47,508,569 messages. By separating the inland messages in the last two returns the great immediate increase by the change of tariff becomes more evident, as these figures give 24,615,395 messages in 1884-85 at the shilling, and 37,692,249 in 1885-86 at the sixpenny rate.

A Monstrous Cabbage and Huge Caldron.

Howell tells a tale of a traveller who reported that he had seen a cabbage under whose leaves a regiment of soldiers were sheltered from a shower of rain. Another who was no traveller, yet the wisest man, said he had passed by a place where there were four hundred braziers making up a caldron; two hundred within and two hundred without beating the nails in. The traveller asking for what use that huge caldron was, he told him,—"Sir, it was to boil your cabbage."

Too Poetical.

Lady (to husband in the background). "Isn't it exquisite, George? Notice how delicately and harmoniously the tones of the colors are blended. That pale turquoise blue catches so beautifully the shell pink plush of the breaded flower. What do you think of it, George? Is it not a veritable poem. And only sixteen dollars a yard!"

Hubbard. "Yes, dear, it is a poem; but I think something in simple prose will wear as long and won't cost so much money."

To Sir Walter Scott.

"Who loves not more the night of June Than cold December's gloomy noon?" Well, he who hath but fannels tick, With ne'er a chance to live on tick; The man who owns toboggan chutes; The vender of the rubber boots; The mortal who by selling skates His lack of lucre mitigates— All find your sentiment at fault, Sir Walt! And dub it rot. Great Scott!

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