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TOMMY

By Joseph Hocking

Author of "All for a Scrap of Paper," "Deer Than Life," etc. Published by Houghton & Stoughton, Limited, London and Toronto.

CHAPTER VI.—(Cont'd.)

"But surely she can't be such a fool as to refuse Harry! Why, there isn't a blither chap in Blunford! He's an only son, and his father's brass will go to him when he dies."

But Mrs. Lister did not speak a word; in her eyes was a far-away look, as though she saw something which her husband did not see.

"As for Alice, she sat for a long time thinking in silence."

Harry's words still rang in her ears; the memory of the look on his face as he left her still remained. Still she could not make up her mind. Yes, she liked Harry, in a way she admired him. He was a teacher in the Sunday School, he was a good business man, he was clever, and he was respected in the town; and yet she hesitated.

"Hour after hour passed away, and still she could not make up her mind. In spite of Harry Briarfield's words she had not forgotten the lad from whom she had parted months before. Why was it? She thought she had forgotten him. He had been unattractive of life; he had taken up with a girl whom she despised, a coarse, vulgar girl, and she had heard since that Polly Maxwell had been walking out with a number of young men. And Tom had preferred this kind of creature to her love. Her pride had been wounded, and self-respect had been shocked, and yet even now, while she was thinking of Harry Briarfield's words, her mind reverted to the boy whom she had loved.

The town hall clock boomed out the hour of midnight. Alice found herself mechanically counting the strokes of the deep-toned bell. Then she fell on her knees beside the bed, but the prayer which she had been wont to pray did not come to her lips. Her thoughts were far away; she pictured a distant battlefield; she imagined the boom of guns; she heard the clash of bayonets; she thought she heard the cries of wounded men; then a prayer involuntarily came to her lips: "O God, save him! O God, help him, and protect him!"

Thus it came to pass at the time Tom Pollard tried for the first time in many months to pray; and to formulate his undistracted thoughts, Alice Lister was kneeling by her bedside, also trying to pray.

CHAPTER VII.

Tom Pollard's mind was suddenly brought back to mundane things. It was now nearly one o'clock in the morning, and the night was chilly, the breeze having sprung up, the clouds had rolled away.

"He distinctly heard a shout, and as far as he could make out it came from the German trenches, which were not far away."

"Hollo!"

"Hollo!" said Tom, "what is it?"

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About the House

DOMESTIC SCIENCE AT HOME

Seventeenth Lesson—Meats.

Meat is a bundle of lean, muscular fibers that are held together by connective tissue, containing albumen, or protein; gelatinoids, or gelatine, and extractives or flavoring.

There are two factors to be remembered when cooking meat:

First. When making soups, broths and teas, the meat is placed in cold water, brought slowly to a boil and then cooked on the simmering surface at a temperature of 165 to 180 degrees Fahrenheit. By using this method, a rich delicious broth is obtained, which contains all the nutriment of the meat.

Second. When searing the outer surface of the meat, quickly use a strong heat. This keeps the juices and nutriment in the meat. Then continue cooking the desired length of time. By using this method all the nutriment and extractives are kept in the meat.

It is a known fact that albumen, gelatinoids and extractives or flavoring in meat are soluble in cold water.

Many housewives try to eliminate as much as possible of the order (telephone or leave it until the last minute and then rush out to buy anything, heater-skelter. The purchasing of food supplies should be the most important duty of the housewife. In this day of advancing prices it behooves us to husband very carefully our resources. Get full value for each penny spent.

By this I do not mean purchasing cheap goods, but that you must know just what you want and the time to get it. Cook in an appetizing manner and serve temptingly, and you will feel well repaid by the hearty appreciation of the family.

Do not order by telephone if you can possibly help it. Slip on your hat and coat and see for yourself just what you are paying for. Under your own personal supervision you

can brag about your garden all winter if you have your canned evidence on the dinner table.

Tom leant afterwards, it had been conceived and prepared for in secret. None but those in high command had any knowledge whatever of it. But evidently the enemy knew. As the German soldier who had warned Tom said "they were ready for them," and when the attack was made they were met by a storm of bullets. Indeed the whole adventure would have been disastrous had not the subaltern to whom Tom had spoken reported the conversation to a superior officer, who had hurriedly given orders for a number of Black Water to be brought up. As it was, although our loss of life was heavy, we did not have to yield any ground.

When the affair came to an end the Colonel of Tom's battalion sent for him.

"Now, my man," said the Colonel, "tell me exactly what you heard."

Tom told his story straightforwardly. It was little he had to say, and although the Colonel cross-questioned him very closely he was not able to shake his story.

"This is very strange," said the Colonel to the Major when Tom had gone; "no one breathed a word about our plans, and as you know I laid everything before the General at the Divisional Headquarters. They were good plans too, and if the Germans had not got hold of them we should have made a big haul. What is the meaning of it?"

The Major shook his head.

"It was the biggest thing we had planned for months," went on the Colonel, "and I can't tell you how sick I am. We had everything in our favor too. There must be some treachery somewhere!"

"Where can the treachery be?" asked the Major. "You know what the Staff General said. It was to be kept absolutely quiet; the men were to know nothing about it until an hour before the time, and all the junior officers were to be kept in darkness. You know how careful the General is too."

"But the fact is there, man!" cried the Colonel, "we have the evidence of this lad, who could not possibly have been mistaken. He seemed an intelligent fellow, and you saw how I cross-questioned him. Who is he?"

"I will send for his Sergeant," said the Major's reply.

A few minutes later Sergeant Ashworth appeared on the scene. It was the sergeant to whom Tom had spoken when he first came to Ypres.

"Tell me what you know of Private Pollard," said the Colonel.

Sergeant Ashworth spoke freely about Tom.

"A smart lad, sir," he said, "intelligent, and well-behaved. I spoke to him about whether he would like his lance-corporal's stripe, but he didn't seem to want it. He would make a very good non-commissioned officer, sir."

"He seems a lad of some education," replied the Colonel.

"Yes, sir, a lot of those Lancashire lads are very well educated; they are quick and sensible too, and Pollard is one of the best of them. My opinion of him is that he is utterly trustworthy and intelligent."

"Now then, Blundell," and the Colonel turned to the Major, "what do you think?"

"Of course we must report it to Headquarters," replied the Major, "but for the life of me I can't see through it."

The incident as far as the men were concerned was simply regarded as an affair which had missed fire. How they didn't know. But there it was; a number of their comrades had been killed, and many more had been wounded. Still it was what they had come to the Front for. Many of their attacks had failed, and no one seemed to know why.

As may be imagined, Tom thought a great deal about it. He knew by the Colonel's questions, and by the tone of

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