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The Sealed Room

By Edwin Baird.

CHAPTER VII.

Yocum, throughout the recital, had stood as if carved from stone; and, now the recital was finished, he did not immediately speak.

At length he cleared his throat and said, with a sorry attempt at jocularity:

"Well, old-sox, I reckon this means 'good night' for me. Our partnership's busted—or soon will be. Your wife'll be handin' me my passports—"

"She's not my wife yet, and never will be perhaps," said Tom. "She no more imagines that I want to marry her than a woman living on the planet Mars. I'll probably make an everlasting fool of myself when I pop the question, and she'll laugh at me, no doubt, and then say, in that sweet way of hers: 'Thank you kindly sir, but I'm not in the market to-day for a farmer.'"

"If she does," flared Yocum, "She's not fittin' to marry Tom McKay."

Tom knitted his brows over that. He wasn't quite sure of its meaning, but he knew what Yocum was trying to say, and this somehow enheartened him.

He was not a bad sort of man. He had always tried to live a clean, decent life, and he was generous, good-natured, and slow to anger. And he would do anything beneath heaven for her. Would she have him on those conditions?

With a world of anxious longing he asked himself the question, and could not answer it. Reason told him that she would; but in another moment he was afraid she wouldn't.

And at this psychological moment Yocum contributed orally to the adverse supposition.

"Tom," said he in a sorrowful voice, abating activities with the dapple-gray mare, "marriage is a serious question."

"So is a proposal of marriage," said Tom.

"It's one time in your life," pursued the gloomy Yocum, "when you get it go slow. You hadn't oughta rush in heedless, like as if you was askin' a gal to go with you on a Sunday-school picnic. Ought you, Tom?"

"Yes, I guess that's so. But—"

"And another thing: Matrimony's committed just once in a man's life, or leastways it s'posed to be, and if you—"

"Yes, yes," cut in Tom, a little irritably; "I've known all that since Pete was a pup. But, I tell you—"

"Now, looky here, Tom," said Yocum, moving toward his employer in a brotherly fashion, "you're goin' altogether too swift in this matter. You wouldn't buy a stud horse or a brood sow without you took your time and made sure you was gettin' full value for your money. Then why do you wanta make the greatest deal in your life without even stoppin' to think?"

"Think? As if I hadn't been thinking! I've thought of nothing else since I first laid eyes on her!"

"In other words, since eight o'clock last night. About twenty hours, all told."

"Twenty hours or twenty years, it would be all the same," said Tom. "I tell you, my mind's made up. It'll be just the same next week, next month, or next year, as it is now."

"Well, just to prove that," said Yocum, his unruffled voice contrasting with Tom's nettled tone, "why not wait a few weeks?"

There was further discussion in this vein, waxing more and more specific; and the upshot was that Tom didn't catch the four-fifty train.

A myriads things thereafter claimed his time—for the full tide of the midsummer rush was now upon him—and the hours lengthened into days, the days into weeks, and the weeks into a month, and he did not go back to her.

There were moments when he, forgetting her, was content with his lot, unwilling to think of matrimony and satisfied all was well; but just as often there came times—times of solitude in the fields, or lonely times in the farmhouse—when he was visited by a nameless longing, when a vision of her face appeared before his mind's eye, alluring, enticing, strangely appealing; and on these occasions he was persuaded that his life was incomplete, and this bred a desire to return to her and scale the citadel of her heart.

This desire, nebulous for a space crystallized one day in late July. It was a blazing hot Sunday, and Tom was seeking relief from the heat in the shade of the front porch, when he saw an automobile coming from the direction of the Zuckerman's farm; and then he saw the occupants were Mrs. Adolph Zuckerman, Dora Kirk, Miss Plum, and Winifred. He also saw they were headed straight for his house.

His first thought was that he was in his shirt sleeves and collarless, and his next that he must speedily make himself presentable. But escape was hopeless. He had scarcely risen from his chair before Mrs. Zuckerman hailed him from the road, and before he could gain the front door she was tooling the car up the driveway toward the steps.

And now, putting a brave face on the matter, he was cordially extending an invitation to his unexpected callers to "come up out of the hot sun and keep cool on the porch."

Yocum, newly returned from church and therefore garbed in his best, sauntered out, was introduced to Miss Plum, and presently strolled away with her, "to show her around the ranch." A little later Dora and Mrs. Zuckerman also departed, nobody knew where.

Tom, alone with Winifred, became acutely conscious that he had neglected to shave that morning. Memory of this omitted duty contributed generously to his discomfiture.

A small silence, not devoid of embarrassment promptly ensued on the vine-clad porch. It was ended by Winifred's telling him, as he had already been told by the others, that she and Miss Plum had visited the country to-day to see Dora.

"Never in all my life," she pursued, facing him animatedly, "have I seen such a wonderful change in a person. Why, Dora's another girl—not the girl I used to know, at all. And it's all due to you."

"Not to me," denied Tom, trying to hide his slippered feet beneath his chair, "but to the sunshine and her wholesome environment, and the pure country air."

"Well, anyway, it was you who gave these things to her, or at least made it possible for her to enjoy them. And we'll never be able to thank you sufficiently. I was with her that day at the hospital when your telephone message came, and if you could only have seen her, if you could only know how happy she was, how she almost wept with joy at the thought of going back to the green growing things, and the cows and chickens, and the great outdoors, you'd feel repaid for your kindness to her a thousand times over."

More talk followed, chiefly of a similar sort, and all of it distressing to Tom. Embarrassed by her encomiums, mortified by his appearance, convinced he was making a sorry impression, he could not but feel relief when at last she rose to go.

An unlooked-for delay attended her departure. Miss Plum and Yocum had wandered far afield, and only the most imperative summons—the need of haste to avoid missing the next train for Chicago—could coax them back to the automobile. Yocum, blissfully unaware of the fuss he had occasioned, stood talking with her, in a lowered tone, till the car was moving; and there was an unaccustomed look in his eye as he watched it disappear with her toward the railway station.

Early on the following morning Tom conceived a satisfactory excuse for absenting himself for a day or two, and straightway looked up Yocum, whom he was so carefully planning to deceive. It soon became evident, though, that the deception was unnecessary.

Yocum, discovered in the barnyard, began the conversation by saying:

"Boss, if it's all the same to you, I'd like to get off for t'-day. I wanta visit my folks in Springfield."

The alacrity with which the request was granted apparently delighted Yocum. At any rate, he immediately started for the railway station.

A few hours later Tom started too. Around six o'clock on that genial evening Tom entered the gaudy "parlor" of Mrs. Stookey's rooming house, preceded by that affable woman, all friendly smiles and graciousness.

(To be continued.)

Four-year-old Charlotte was having trouble with her English, but she had entirely passed her difficulties on one point. "I see how it is now, mother," she said the other day. "Hens set and lay; and people sit and lie, don't they, mother?"

New Zealand's winter comes in our midsummer, and last July was one of the severest winter months in the history of the Island commonwealth. Nearly half a million sheep were lost as a consequence of the storms that prevailed then.

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ABOUT THE HOUSEHOLD

Selecting Kitchen Utensils.

Often, time is lost and fuel is wasted as a result of choosing the wrong kind of kitchen utensils. They should be durable, have a smooth finish, be easily cleaned and suited to the purpose for which they are intended.

Tin makes a satisfactory utensil for most quick baking processes, as it is light in weight and heat and cools rapidly. The best grade is the heavy block tin. Pure tin is soft and pliable, and consequently iron or steel are often used as a foundation. If this foundation material is exposed by scraping or scratching the utensil, rust will attack the iron.

Enamel, agate, and granite ware are made on iron or steel foundations. Should the enameling material become chipped, the iron body soon will rust. Often utensils of inferior quality are sold as bargains, and soon chip and rust. The pure-white and the blue-and-white enamel wares are not suited for cooking processes where great heat is necessary. The gray and brown varieties are much more durable.

Aluminum is attractive and of light weight. There is no danger of chipping or rusting this material. It is very desirable for many processes of cooking, as it heats rapidly.

Iron is used for processes of cookery where a high temperature is necessary. It is durable if kept dry and free from rust. When not in use it should be coated with saltless grease to protect it.

Earthenware is used for long, slow cooking or baking processes. The lids of earthen baking dishes should fit tight to keep in all moisture and heat.

Cooking utensils made of glass are attractive, easily cleaned, and sanitary. Such utensils have been proved successful for baking processes when made of a material which can be subjected to high temperatures with no injurious effects.

Utensils should never be bought until needed. When selecting cooking utensils, choose articles with smooth-finished rims and made of one piece of metal. Avoid seams and useless curves, as well as dirt-catching handles. A heat-resisting wood makes the best handle.

Recipes for Cool Days.

Chicken Curry—Add two cups cold chopped chicken to two cups white sauce; season with one teaspoon curry-powder, heat thoroughly, and dish into the rice. Mushrooms and a little celery top, chopped fine, may be used instead of curry powder. Stock in which the chicken has been cooked may be used instead of white sauce in preparing this dish. Thicken the stock as for chicken gravy, season to taste, and add chopped chicken.

Sweet-Sour Stew—This may be made of meat, or merely a meat bone to produce a good stock is equally nice. If meat is used, select a cheap cut of beef. Cut into pieces of proper size for serving; put over the fire in sufficient water to cover well, and cook until tender. Remove the meat, and add an extra pint of water, one-half cup vinegar, two tablespoons sugar, salt to season, and two or three whole pepper-corns if they are at hand. Peel and cut into rather thin slices enough potatoes to make one cup, enough turnips and carrots to make one-half cup each; a sweet pepper from which the seeds and inner skin have been removed is cut into thin slices or rounds and added with the other vegetables, also one cup finely shredded white cabbage and, if liked, a medium-sized onion, sliced thin. Cook until the vegetables are tender. This will require about half an hour. A few minutes before time to serve, add the meat and let it heat in the stew. Serve very hot. This is fine on a cold day.

Canada Roast—One pound cooked beans, one-half pound cheese, bread crumbs, salt. Put beans through the meat grinder. Add the cheese and enough bread crumbs to make the mixture sufficiently stiff to form into roll. Bake in moderate oven, basting occasionally with tomato juice.

Cottage Cheese Sausage—One cup cottage cheese, one cup dry bread crumbs or one-half cup cold cooked rice, one-half cup bread crumbs, one-fourth cup peanut butter or two tablespoons savory fat, one-fourth cup coarsely chopped peanut meat, one-half teaspoon powdered sage, one-half teaspoon thyme, one tablespoon milk, one teaspoon salt, one-fourth teaspoon pepper, one-third teaspoon soda, one tablespoon finely chopped onion. The bread crumbs may be made from left-over corn, barley, or other quick breads. Cook the onion in the fat until tender but not brown. Dissolve the soda in the milk and work into the cheese. Mix all other dry ingredients thoroughly with the bread crumbs. Blend peanut butter and onion with the cheese, and mix with them the bread crumbs. Form into flat cakes, dust with bread crumbs or cornmeal, and fry a delicate brown in a little fat in a hot frying pan.

Sausage Rolls—These baked rolls are very appetizing and are easily prepared. Make a baking-powder biscuit dough roll; roll out in a sheet about half an inch in thickness, and cut into small squares. Have ready any good sausage mixture—pork, beef, or a mixture of left-over meats, well seasoned. Form into small cakes, place a cake in the centre of each small square of the dough, bring the ends to the top and press together firmly; place in a buttered baking tin, the edges not touching, and bake for about twenty minutes. Serve hot, with or without gravy.

Bean Loaf—Two cups lima beans, one cup dry bread crumbs, four tablespoons peanut butter, two tablespoons grated onion, one tablespoon drippings, one tablespoon dried celery leaves or poultry seasoning, two teaspoons salt, one-fourth teaspoon pepper, one cup rice stock or other liquid. Wash and soak the beans over-night, then cook in boiling water till soft—about forty-five minutes. Drain, and when cool chop coarsely. Add crumbs mixed with seasonings and peanut butter, then add liquid and fat. Put into a greased bread pan and bake in a moderate oven thirty minutes. This yields eight servings.

Figure It Out.

Over 100,000 people are employed in Canada's fishing industry and the sum of $26,000,000 is invested in it. There are 200 steam vessels, including trawlers, fish tugs, canners, tenders and fish carriers, operating on the oceans and inland waters. The sailing and gasoline-driven craft include 1,300 vessels of various kinds. There are over 27,000 sail and row boats and 11,000 motor boats employed in fishing. In the salmon canning industry of British Columbia, over $3,000,000 in invested in cannery plants. The investments in nets, traps, lines, smoke houses, etc., run into millions. No less than $3,000,000 are invested in freezers and ice-houses and $2,250,000 in fishing piers and wharves.

The Sugar Question.

Shall we face the sugar shortage in Canada honorably and courageously? Or are we going on quietly hoarding even if only a little in every home? Manufacturers, confectioners and public eating places are doing their share well. Soldiers and munitions workers want sugar more than the persons doing ordinary work. Let them have it. It must come from the private homes; there only is there hoarding, however slight in every individual case. Don't be mean for the sake of a sweet tooth.

Canadian restaurants are not permitted to give their customers all the sugar they ask for. Manufacturers and confectioners have also been put upon strict sugar rations, and could not well get below their present minimum. Why should people at home expect to get it? When all the people in private homes get down to the level of restaurants and sugar manufacturers, the shortage will be fully met. Two pounds a month—the limit—means 6 spoonfuls a day.

Confectioners are often accused of using much sugar. The fact is they take only about 5 per cent. of Canada's total consumption—about 12,000 tons a year out of nearly 300,000 tons. Real saving in sugar must come from the remaining 288,000 tons, most of which is used in the 1,500,000 homes in the Dominion. If each of these honestly cuts the sugar consumption to the 2 pounds a month for every person allowed by the Food Board, there would be no sugar difficulty. It is plain now which foot the shoe is on.

THE LAST CEREMONY

Organizing a Soldier's Funeral Described by an Officer.

I was signing a seemingly interminable number of forms when the quarter-bloke, who had been talking to someone over the 'phone, came over to me.

"Hospital notified headquarters, sir, Private Webb, of B Company, died this morning from pneumonia. Arrangements to be made for funeral on Friday."

B Company was composed of raw recruits, and they cannot take their part in the rendering of the last honor to a departed comrade without training. I had to get busy. First the War Office and the Records Office had to be notified, the latter of which would pass the news on to the relatives. The chaplain also had to be notified, and the attendance of a band and gun-carriage to be arranged for. From the batmen, storekeeper, I was able to secure a firing party, one of them no longer fit for service.

When the hour of the funeral the men were ready. They marched up outside the hospital. It was wished first going in, but I took at their comrades.

The coffin, covered with the Jack, was carried out and placed gently on the gun-carriage. Then began the dull beat of the drums, the wailing of the "March," and the procession of the men of other companies gathered to watch standing to salute. In front walked the then came the gun-carriage with the firing party on either side, then of the company, lifting their the slow time, their heads bowed, arms reversed, and last the other.

Past headquarters, where the turned out and presented arms, so on to the last resting place, the chaplain, waiting at the head, intoning in a monotonous voice until the grave was reached.

The firing party took their places, the muzzles of the rifles in the air, their hands crossed, on the muzzles, their bent heads resting on the rifles. As the coffin began to be lowered, the rifles were reversed, butts resting across the grave. The chaplain rang out, and the rifles were volleyed.

The funeral was over, and as the cemetery the ranks formed up, the band struck up a lively step.

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Food Control Corner

Peace—But Not Plenty.

The end of the war does not mean that Canada must [illegible] increase the production of food. In addition to the [illegible] tive powers have [illegible] the war and who [illegible] from this continent to [illegible] the people of the neutral [illegible] also be considered. [illegible] Food Board calls attention [illegible] that, the complete [illegible] enemy nations have [illegible] cered as in some [illegible] less people are [illegible] Counting Russia, [illegible] Turkey, Bulgaria, [illegible] tries, France, Belgium, [illegible] Great Britain, a [illegible] 000,000 people are [illegible]

Canada will have [illegible] for her agricultural [illegible] greatest possible [illegible] and increase production [illegible] too great.

Live Stock Conservation.

To formulate [illegible] meeting the [illegible] tions in the live stock [illegible] panying restoration [illegible] of the leading Canadian [illegible] and representatives [illegible] being called to [illegible] T. A. Crerar, M.P. [illegible] Those who have [illegible] situation realize [illegible] opportunity [illegible] industry on a [illegible] basis than ever [illegible] stimulated by [illegible] Canada. An [illegible] expected to develop [illegible] tion of normal [illegible] manufacture, [illegible] Europe has [illegible] the war, in [illegible] heavy demand [illegible] upon this continent [illegible] breeding stock [illegible] come.

"The Million [illegible] ing upon farms [illegible] to maintain [illegible] war time [illegible]

Office, 3, [illegible] sometime [illegible] toil

"And ceaseless [illegible] And then ha[illegible] To friend [illegible] way

Sometime, we [illegible] More leisurely [illegible] that we may be [illegible] Beneath wi[illegible] bow.

Sometime, we [illegible] time To cheer the [illegible] grief; By gentle words [illegible] To bring to [illegible]

Sometime, we [illegible] In shady spots [illegible] and hand a cup [illegible] To thirsty lips [illegible]

Sometime, as [illegible] We'll call [illegible] hill, With flowers [illegible] The world [illegible] and cheer [illegible] Pass So needless [illegible] We may have [illegible] Our best [illegible]

Sometime [illegible] To-day, [illegible] to share [illegible] "All I ever [illegible] those who [illegible] help To-morrow [illegible] bar, And quickly [illegible] Call never [illegible]

HINDENBURG'S [illegible]

[illegible] of Famine, But [illegible] Cause of Surrender.

"Facts [illegible] his message to the [illegible] that the three [illegible] acceptance [illegible] Marcel Hatin [illegible] Although [illegible] part in the decisive [illegible] determining [illegible] lapse was the [illegible] army was on [illegible] "The first [illegible] plenipotentiaries said [illegible] were, in substance [illegible] is at your mercy [illegible] serves of men [illegible] completely exhausted [illegible] side for us to [illegible]

FLYING [illegible]

Caused Havoc [illegible] Germans in La[illegible]

Says a London [illegible] raids are [illegible] They are [illegible] invulnerable against [illegible] fire, capable of [illegible] of developing [illegible] designed almost [illegible] demoralizing of [illegible] ground strafing.

These machines [illegible] maximum amount of [illegible] minimum amount of [illegible] pilot and plane. [illegible] bases among the [illegible] forces in France.