

Marian Mayfield

Or, The Strange Disappearance

CHAPTER IX.

The clouds were fast gathering over poor San Souci's heavens.

The commodore had quite recovered for the time being, and he began to urge the marriage of his niece with his favorite. Dr. Grimshaw's importunities were also becoming very tiresome. They were no longer a jest. She could no longer divert herself with them. She felt them as a real persecution, and expressed herself accordingly. To Grim she said:

"Once I used to laugh at you. But now I do hate you more than anything in the universe! And I wish—I do wish that you were in heaven! For I do detest the very sight of you—there!"

And to the commodore's furious threats she would answer:

"Uncle, the time has passed by centuries ago for forcing girls into wedlock, thanks be to Christianity and civilization. You can't force me to have Grim, and you had as well give up the wicked purpose," or words to that effect.

One day when she had said something of the sort, the commodore answered, cruelly:

"Very well, miss! I force no one, please to understand! But I afford my protection and support only upon certain conditions, and withdraw them when those conditions are not fulfilled! Neither you nor your mother had any legal claim upon me. I was not in any way bound to feed and clothe and house you for so many years. I did it with the tacit understanding that you were to marry to please me, and all your life you have understood, as well as any of us, that you were to wed Dr. Grimshaw."

"If such an understanding existed, it was without my consent, and was originated in my infancy, and I do not feel and I will not be in the least degree bound by it! For the expense of my support and education, uncle! I am truly sorry that you risked it upon the hazardous chance of my liking or disliking the man of your choice! But as I had no hand in your venture, I do not feel the least responsible for your losses. Yours is the fate of a gambler in human hearts who has staked and lost—that is the worst!"

"And by all the fiends in fire, Minion! you shall find that it is not the worst. I know how to make you kneel under, and I shall do it!" exclaimed the commodore in a rage, as he rose up and strode off toward the room occupied by Mary L'Oiseau. Without the ceremony of knocking, he burst the door open with one blow of his foot, and entered where the poor, feverish, frightened creature was lying down to take a nap. Throwing himself into a chair by her bedside, he commenced a furious attack upon the trembling invalid. He recounted, with much exaggeration, the scene that had just transpired between himself and Jacqueline—repeated with additions her undutiful words bitterly reproached Mary for encouraging and fostering that rebellious and refractory temper in her daughter, warned her to bring the headstrong girl to a sense of her position and duty, or to prepare to leave his roof; for he swore he "wouldn't be hectoring over and trodden down by her nor her daughter any longer!" And so having overwhelmed the timid, nervous woman with undeserved reproaches and threats, he arose and left the room.

And can any one be surprised that her illness was increased, and her fever arose and her senses wandered all night? When her mother was ill Jacqueline could not sleep. Now she sat by her bedside sponging her hot hands and keeping ice to her head and giving drink to slake her burning thirst and listening, alas! to her sad and rambling talk about their being turned adrift in the world to starve to death, or to perish in the snow—calling on her daughter to save them both by yielding to her uncle's will! And Jacqueline heard and understood, and wept and sighed—a new experience to the poor girl, who was

"Not used to tears at night. Instead of slumber!"

All through the night she nursed her with unremitting care. And in the morning, when the fever waned and the patient was awake, though exhausted, she left her only to bring the refreshing cup of tea and plate of toast prepared by her own hands.

But when she brought it to the bedside the pale invalid waved it away. She felt as if she could not eat. Fear had clutched her throat and would not relax its hold.

"I want to talk to you, Jacqueline," she said.

"Eat and drink first, Mimmy, and then you and I will have such another good talk!" said Jacqueline, coaxingly.

"I can't! Oh! I can't swallow a mouthful, I am choking now!"

"Oh! that is nothing but the hysterics, Mimmy! 'high strikes,' as Jenny calls them! I feel like I should have them myself sometimes! Come! cheer up, Mimmy! Your fever is off and your head is cool! Come, take this consoling cup of tea and

bit of toast, and you will feel so much stronger and cheerfuler."

"Tea! Oh! everything! I eat and drink in this unhappy house is bitter—the bitter cup and bitter bread of dependence!"

"Put more sugar into it, then, Mimmy, and sweeten it! Come! Things are not yet desperate! Cheer up!"

"What do you mean, my love? Have you consented to be married to Dr. Grimshaw?"

"No! St. Mary! Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Jacqueline, shuddering for the first time.

"Now, why 'heaven forbid?' Oh! my child, why are you so perverse? Why don't you take him, since your uncle has set his heart upon the match?"

"Oh, mother!"

"I know you are very young to be married—too young! far too young! Only sixteen, gracious heaven! But then you know we have no alternative but that, or starvation; and it is not as if you were to be married to a youth of your own age—this gentleman is of grave years and character, which makes a great difference."

"I should think it did."

"What makes you shiver and shake so, my dear? Are you cold or nervous? Poor child, you got no sleep last night. Do you drink that cup of tea, my dear. You need it more than I do."

"No, no."

"Why, what is the matter with my fairy?"

"Oh, mother, mother, don't take sides against me! don't or you will drive me to my ruin. Who will take a child's part, if her mother don't? I love you best of all the world, mother. Do not take sides against me! take my part! help me to be true! to be true!"

"True to whom Jacqueline? What are you talking about?"

"True to this heart—to this heart, mother! to all that is honest and good in my nature."

"I don't understand you at all."

"Oh, mother, the thought of marrying anybody is unwelcome to me now; and the idea of being married to Grim is abhorrent; is like that of being sold to a master that I hate or sent to prison for life; it is full of terror and despair. Oh! oh!"

"Don't talk so wildly, Jacqueline, you make me ill."

"Do I, Mimmy? Oh, I didn't mean to worry you. Bear up, Mimmy; do try to bear up; don't fear; suppose he does turn me out. I am but a little girl, and food and clothing are cheap enough in the country, and any of our neighbors will take me in just for the fun I'll make them. La! yes, that they will, just as gladly as they will let in the sunshine."

"Oh, child, how little you know of the world. Yes, for a day or two or a week or two, scarcely longer. And even if you could find a home, who would give shelter to your poor sick mother for the rest of her life?"

"Mother! uncle would never deny you shelter upon my account!" exclaimed Jacqueline, growing very pale.

"Indeed he will, my child; he has; he came in here last night and warned me to pack up and leave the house."

"He will not dare—even he, so to outrage humanity and public opinion and everything he ought to respect."

"My child, he will. He has set his heart upon making Nace Grimshaw his successor at Luckenough, that if you disappoint him in this darling purpose, there will be no limit to his rage and his revenge. And he will not only send us from his roof, but he will seek to justify himself and further ruin us by blackening our names. Your wildness and eccentricity will be turned against us and so distorted and misrepresented as to ruin us forever."

"Mother! mother! he is not so wicked as that."

"He is furious in his temper and violent in his impulses—he will do all that under the influence of disappointment and passion, however he may afterwards repent his injustice. You must not disappoint him, Jacqueline."

"I disappoint him? Why, Mimmy, Luckenough does not belong to me. And if he wants Grim to be his successor, why, as I have heard aunty ask him, does he not make him his heir?"

"There are reasons, I suspect, my dear, why he cannot do so. I think he holds the property by such a tenure, that he cannot alienate it from the family. And the only manner in which he can bestow it upon Dr. Grimshaw, will be through his wife, if the doctor should marry some relative."

"That is it, hey? Well, I will not be made a sumptermule to carry this rich gift over to Dr. Grimshaw—even if there is no other way of conveyance. Mother! what is the reason the professor is such a favorite with uncle?"

"My dear, I don't know, but I have often had my suspicions."

"Of what, Mimmy?"

"Of a very near, though unacknow-

ledged relationship; don't question me any further upon that particular point, my dear, for I really know nothing whatever about it. Oh, dear." And the invalid groaned and turned over.

"Mother, you are very weak; mother, please to take some tea; let me go get you some hot."

"Tell me, Jacqueline; will you do as the old man wishes you?"

"I will tell you after you take some refreshments," said Jacqueline.

"Well! go bring me some."

"The girl went and brought more hot tea and toast, and waited until her mother had drunk the former and partaken of a morsel of the latter. When, in answer to the eager, inquiring look, she said:

"Mother, if I alone were concerned, I would leave this house this moment, though I should never have another roof over my head. But for your sake, mother, I will still fight the battle. I will try to turn uncle from his purpose. I will try to awaken Grim's generosity, if he has any, and get him to withdraw his suit. I will get aunty to use her influence with both of them, and see what can be done. But as for marrying Dr. Grimshaw, mother—I know what I am saying—I would rather die!"

"And see me die, my child?"

"Oh, mother! it will not be so bad as that."

"Jacqueline, it will. Do you know what is the meaning of these afternoon fevers and night sweats and this cough?"

"I know it means that you are very much out of health, Mimmy, but I hope you will be well in the spring."

"Jacqueline, it means death."

"Oh, no! No, no! No, no! Not so! There's Miss Nancy Skamp has had a cough every winter ever since I knew her, and she's not dead nor likely to die, and you will be well in the spring," said the girl, changing color and faltering in spite of herself.

"I shall never see another spring, my child—"

"Oh, mother! don't! don't say so. You—"

"Hear me out, my dear; I shall never live to see another spring unless I can have a quiet life with peace of mind. These symptoms, my child, mean death, sooner or later. My life may be protracted for many years, if I can live in peace and comfort; but if I must suffer privation, want and anxiety, I cannot survive many months, Jacqueline."

The poor girl was deadly pale; she started up and walked the floor in a distracted manner, crying:

"What shall I do! Oh! what shall I do!"

"It is very plain what you shall do my child. You must marry Dr. Grimshaw. Come, my dear, be reasonable. If I did not think it best for your happiness and prosperity, I would not urge it."

"Mimmy, don't talk any longer, dear!" Jacqueline interrupted. "There is a bright spot on your cheek now, and your fever will rise again, even this morning. I will see what can be done to bring everybody to reason! I will not believe but that if I remain firm and faithful to my heart's integrity there will be some way of escape made between these two alternatives."

But could Sans Souci do this? Had the frolicsome fairy sufficient integral strength and self-balance to resist the powerful influences gathering around her?

(To be Continued.)

BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

He—I'd consider it a great pleasure to talk to a woman like Miss Gassaway.

She—What! Why should talk you to death.

He—I said I'd consider it a pleasure to talk to her, not to listen to her.

PUZZLED HIM.

First Tramp (in the road)—Why don't you go in? The dog's all right. Don't you see him waggin' his tail?

Second Tramp—Yes, and he's growlin' at the same time. I dunno which end to believe.

About the Farm

IMPROVING THE HERD.

My earlier memory of cattle was at a time when little care was given them, writes George E. Nichols. They calved mostly in March and April. Those cows that did not freshen in the spring were not bred or allowed to calve until the following spring. Not one in 100 came fresh in the fall. They were dry from November until the following spring. Such cows were fed hay, stalks and straw and no grain, except from the time of becoming fresh till they went to grass. The milk was set in little pans. The butter, after the cows were nicely on grass, was put in 100-pound packages and held until fall and sold to city markets. The farmer who made 200 lbs butter per cow was a wonder; 150 pounds was a good average amount per cow. My own lot averaged about 125 pounds. Pure-bred cattle were not much known or sought in those days. The first thoroughbreds I remember were Shorthorns and Devons.

I became a farmer, I suppose, because I was born on a farm. I became a caretaker of dairy cattle because everyone in this section kept dairy cattle. I became a breeder of registered cattle simply because I liked them. I early realized that cattle must be cared for well if we were to make a living out of them.

I well remember the first wheat bran I ever fed. I went 15 miles after it, our nearby towns not keeping such luxuries for cows. I was not satisfied with the results and disposed of the native cows. Over 30 years ago I got a registered Jersey bull. He was out of a cow giving 40 lbs. milk per day. Too many farmers change their minds about the proper way to grade up a herd. I remember selling a Jersey bull to a party who used him, getting a lot of splendid daughters. He wanted to get more milk and put in a Holstein to breed his herd. When the Guerneys did so well he wanted the breed and got them. As a consequence to-day he has a lot of ring-streaked and speckled animals no better than he started with years ago.

BUILDING UP THE HERD.

I used the registered bull for a few years, but the one-half, three-quarters and seven-eighths grades did not take on the color and shape of Jerseys fast enough to suit me, though they were an improvement on their dams as butter cows. I wanted some registered cows. I lacked the money, but finally I got a couple heifers. I had to be satisfied with cheap ones, but it gave me experience. I studied pedigrees and breeding. I bred some good ones and culled out the poor ones. I always used bulls from good milk and butter families. We had to make our own butter. The Babcock test was not known then. At first little pans, then the large, shallow pans were set in spring water. Then followed the deep cans set in ice water to force the cream separation a little faster. It was perhaps a little cleaner, too, but this was not fast or thorough enough. Then came the separator with a steam engine to run it. With this latter rig, we have been making butter for 14 years.

Our butter product of 125 pounds from the poorly kept native cow gradually grew with experience in feeding and better breeding. With the improvements for getting the cream out of the milk, our butter product soon reached 300 pounds of butter per cow. We have not increased the product much during the last ten years as I don't believe it pays, at least in a breeding herd, to force cows much higher. Better cows and better care called for better barns. I never put water in the stables, because I believed it best for the cattle to be out of doors as much as possible without exposure.

When I fixed over the barn, I put

in a silo. For several years I have fed dry cornstalks while they lasted with four to ten pounds hay per cow per day according to her time of freshening and capacity. The grain ration is what is termed a narrow one. I grind what corn and oats we raise, purchase gluten and wheat bran and a little oil meal, to bring the ration about 1 to 5. This may read easy, but to accomplish these results with no money except what was made off the farm, it was hard work. To bring a farm from ten cows to 40 or 50 head, put up good buildings in place of poor ones, look after and school a family of children (and poor indeed is he who has no children), to develop a herd from 125 to 300 pounds butter per cow per year, has taken nerve and perseverance, but it has paid.

The farm has earned it and I have put it back. It has proved a good investment. We can get good milk and butter cows, by having only grades, but we must be sure of the sire. He must be by a proven sire, of a good family. Our sire must be out of a cow equally as good or better than the sire. I believe a lot depends in the line of dams. If we are breeding only grades the sire must be a good one for all the improvement must come through him. While we are trying to improve our farms, herds and flocks, let us not neglect to improve ourselves. Have the house full of good reading matter for all members of the family and see that some sort of entertainment is not lacking. The old saying, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is too true on many a farm.

POULTRY HOUSES.

The greater number of poultry houses have one serious objection, it seems to me, and that is they are not made substantial enough writes L. E. Bartlett. A farmer who owns his farm should endeavor to make all buildings substantial, with good stone foundations—buildings that will last for a generation or longer. They will cost more in the first place, but in the long run will be the cheapest. I built a house recently, that will keep 100 hens comfortable during the winter, and will reduce the work of fighting mites to the minimum in warm weather.

The building is 16x20 feet with 8-foot posts, the longest way from east to west. The foundation walls are of limestone, laid in mortar and extend about 12 inches above the ground. The building is sheathed with cheap lumber and over that tarred paper, then sided with drop siding, and the roof shingled. There is one window in the east side and two on the south side, with a door between. The windows are covered inside with woven wire fencing.

On the inside I lathed and plastered it. The drop siding alone would do very well without the tar paper and sheathing where the house is plastered. Inside of the foundation walls I filled in with earth, packed down solid and laid a cement floor about level with the top of foundation walls, thus insuring a dry floor, where no surface water can run in. I partitioned off 8 feet from one end for sitting hens. The partition is of woven wire and a row of nests extends along under the partition about 2 feet above the floor.

The nests open into either room. By the use of a slide, which can be slipped over the opening to the larger room, when a hen wants to sit she can be shut away from the laying hens, and given an outlet to the smaller room only where feed, water, gravel and a box of dry earth are kept for her use. The roosts are in the larger room with no dropping boards under them. With a cement floor they are unnecessary. If covered with straw, it is easily cleaned. If the hens are kept shut in the house during the cold weather, it should be cleaned at least once a week and fresh straw scattered over it.

The plastered walls and cement floor may seem an unnecessary expense to some, but the advantages are great. The plaster is easily whitewashed and with a woven wire partition, and no dropping boards, there is small chance for insects to harbor. Mites can be easily got rid of and rats cannot get through the floor.

There is a dusting box about 4 feet square and 10 inches deep in the larger room. A couple of barrels filled with dry earth or road dust in the summer will keep the box supplied all winter, and the hens will keep themselves free from lice. A barrel or two of gravel should be laid in before winter also, and a pan of it kept before the hens all of the time. It is surprising how much of it they will consume. If the gravel is run through a coarse screen, so as to take out the larger stones that a hen cannot swallow, it will be better for them.

MOTHER'S RIVAL.

"My dear," said Newed, "did you bake that pie we had for dinner last night?"

"Yes, love," replied his little wife. "I hope it was all right."

"You bet it was," answered the treasurer of the combine. "I haven't had a nightmare like the one it gave me since I quit eating the pies my mother used to make."

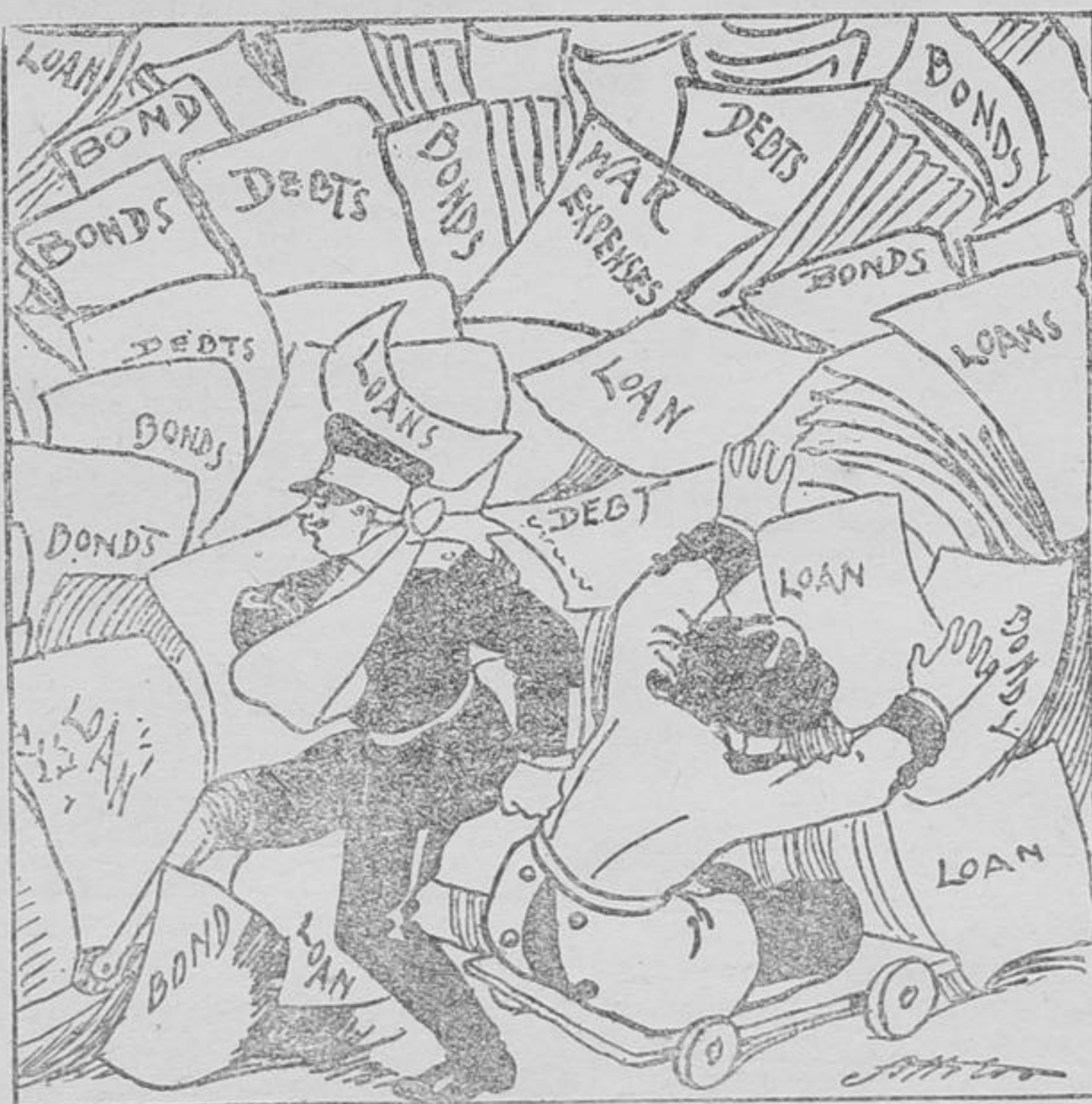
NOT CONCLUSIVE.

Jones—"I knew that man when he hadn't a dollar in his pocket."

Smith—"Why, did he ask you to lend him one?"

Jones—"No; I asked him to lend me one."

Smith—"Oh!"



AFTER PEACE.

The two combatants enter upon a harder struggle than ever.