

FIRE NOTICE

RENNIE'S SEEDS

We desire to advise our customers that although we have suffered a very large loss in Sunday's (Feb. 20th) fire, we have sufficient stocks stored at our warehouse at Long Branch and other warehouses in the city, to enable us to fill orders complete and to take care of the coming season's trade. We commenced shipping Monday, 21st, at noon and orders will be handled in our usual prompt manner.

RENNIE'S SEEDS
HEAD OFFICE, TORONTO, CANADA

All our branches have been supplied with their season's requirements.

THE CABLEMAN

AN EXCITING PRESENT-DAY ROMANCE

BY WEATHERBY CHESNEY

CHAPTER III.

"You quite understand, my dear," said Mr. Page, signing to his daughter to shift the cushions, so that his left foot should rest more easily. "You are to bring me a careful description of every member of this circus troupe. You are a keen observer, and it is essential that you should make the best use of your talent now. It won't be an easy task, because you will have to penetrate the paint and tinsel and describe the human being underneath."

"How am I to do that?" asked Elsa, and added, as she gave a carressing pat to the cushion which supported her father's gouty foot; "Is that more comfortable?"

"Yes, thank you, dear. How are you to do it? Why, observe them when they are performing. Speak to some of them, if you can. The members of a travelling circus are not generally exclusive, and in a foreign country particularly they will welcome advances made by those who speak their own language."

"But I can't go and begin a casual conversation!" she objected. "Even in a foreign country, people would think that queer."

"You can't," said her father, "but young Scarborough can. Tell him you are interested in the people, that you think their life romantic, and that you would like to see it a little closer. He's not the man I take him for if he doesn't manage somehow to gratify your whim."

Mr. Page laughed, and his daughter flushed slightly.

"I will do my best," she said.

"Yes, my dear, I know you will, for your father's sake," said Mr. Page. "I leave the method to your own woman's wit, and to circumstances, which your woman's wit will tell you how to turn to profit. If, however, an introduction to Mr. Val B. Montague, the manager of the troupe, is one of the circumstances, I should suggest that you give yourself the trouble to be charming to him. He is probably a cad."

"Then why am I to be charming to him?" demanded Elsa.

Mr. Page smiled. "Because, my dear, if he is a cad—and his name suggests that he can hardly be anything else—he will be all the more impressed by your condescension, and will probably offer to show you over his schooner. If he doesn't—"

"If he doesn't," Elsa broke in quickly, "I am to give him a hint that I want to be asked, and to continue the process of being charming until he takes the hint! Are those my instructions?"

There was a note of scorn in her voice, and her father was amused. He laughed loudly, and then winced with a sharp indrawing of the breath. A shooting pain in his gouty foot had cut his merriment short with a gasp. His daughter stood before him waiting for her answer, but the sight of that spasm of pain cooled her anger at the laugh.

"I want to know exactly what I am to do. Are those my instructions?" she asked again, but in a gentler tone. "The spirit of them, yes. But don't hint; ask straight out. Or, get Scarborough to ask, and back him up in his request."

"I will ask myself," said Elsa quickly.

Mr. Page shot a glance at her, moving his eyes only, not his head. He made a habit of economy in movement; and besides, as Elsa was not looking at him at the moment, by not moving his head he concealed the fact that he was observing her.

"You don't like your errand?" he asked.

"No."
"And I don't like sending you upon it. The part of the spy is always an unpleasant one to play; but unfortunately it is sometimes necessary. You understand that it is necessary here?"

"I believe you when you say it is. But I don't understand."

Mr. Page hesitated. Then he held out a white, rather large, but beautifully shaped hand to her. She came to his side.

"Little girl," he said, "we have been through hard times together, you and I; but though the world has been against us, we have been happy, between us. You have trusted me. Is that trust beginning to fail you?"

"No, father."

"Then why are you so reluctant now? Your task is an unpleasant one I admit; but I have never known you shrink from a task because it was unpleasant. I would spare you the unpleasantness if I could, but—" he pointed to his left foot, swathed in bandages, and resting on a pile of cushions. "Someone must go to Ponta Delgada, to see this circus," he said, "and I can't!"

She knelt down beside him, and stroked the big white hand which he held out to her.

"Of course I will go," she said. "Mr. Scarborough will be here in ten minutes. He and I are going to ride over on our bicycles. Of course I will go."

"But reluctantly? You do it reluctantly?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

For a moment she did not answer. Part of her reluctance came from the fact that she was going in Scarborough's company. That would have been a pleasure to her a day or two ago; but now, when the part of the spy had to be played, there was pain to her in having to make use of him for such a purpose. Besides, though she did not yet admit the fact to herself, her trust in her father, absolute hitherto, was beginning to be subject to qualifications.

"Father," she said at length, "how much longer is all this going on? When are we going to return to England and be known by our own name again?"

"When we can do so with perfect safety," said Mr. Page. "You can't imagine that I enjoy living in hiding, and that I have willingly separated myself from your mother all this time!"

"What is my mother doing? She never writes to me."

"And rarely to me," said her father. "Letters are not safe. But she is working for us, you may be sure, watching over the safety of her husband and daughter, and waiting anxiously for the day when we can return to her. It was she who sent us the cablegram."

"Danger—circus," said Elsa. "Father, what is the danger?"

"I don't know. When you return from Ponta Delgada I hope that you will give me the information that will enable me to answer your question. My dear, as you know, I have enemies."

"You mean the people who fastened the accusation of fraud upon you?"

Mr. Page winced. He always winced when the word fraud was used in connection with himself. "Yes," he said, "those, and others. When I know which of my enemies is a member of Val B. Montague's circus troupe I shall know what the danger is for which I must be ready. I think that is the meaning of your mother's cable, but I wish she had taken the risk of being a little more explicit. Ah someone has jumped off a bicycle at the front door! An invalid's ears grow sharp, and I hear the crunch of gravel."

"It's Mr. Scarborough," said Elsa from the window.

"Then, my dear, I don't delay you. You know what your work is—do it as thoroughly as you can. Our safety may depend on the accuracy with which you remember a mole on an arm or a scar on a forehead!"

Elsa thought involuntarily of the complete answer which her father always told her he had to all the charges against him.

"Our safety!" she cried. "How can it be threatened if—"

"Little girl," said Mr. Page quickly, "it can be, and is, or your mother would not have sent that message. Now, there is one thing more. Do your work thoroughly, but don't delay unnecessarily afterwards. If I should not be here when you return—"

She turned to him with a sharp cry: "Father! why do you say that?"

He was a prisoner in his chair, chained by the leg in the grip of his foe, the gout. How was it possible that he should not be here when she returned. Unless he meant—heavens! was the danger something which threatened not liberty only, but life?

Mr. Page smiled at her alarm.

"I don't mean that I shall be dead, my dear," he said. "I do not expect to move from this chair, or at any rate from this room, till your return. But we must prepare for everything—even for things which, at first sight, appear to be impossible. And so I say again, if I am not here when you return, look in my desk, and in the second small drawer on the left you will find a paper which will tell you what to do next. Hadn't you better go now? Young men, even the most devoted, don't like to be kept waiting."

Acting upon a sudden impulse, Elsa bent down, and kissed her father. The action was the more remarkable because she was not a girl who was given to showing her feelings in this way. Then she ran quickly from the room.

Mr. Page rested back in his chair with a smile. The caress had surprised him, and, curiously enough, it made him uncomfortable.

"I believe my little girl is beginning to suspect me at last," he muttered.

He waited till the sounds on the gravel below told him that the pair had mounted, and were off. Then, as though he had forgotten all about his gouty foot, he rose and went to the window. He used no stick, and he did not even limp; the gout, like many other things in his life, was a lie.

He watched the two bicyclists till a turn in the road hid them. Then he turned from the window with a sigh.

"That young man is a good sort, I believe," he said; "but I wonder whether he would cry off, or stick to her, if he heard the truth about her father?"

Then, a moment afterwards, with something like a moan, he added:

"And when she knows the whole truth—my God! will she stick to me?"

The malefactor had one virtue at least. He loved his daughter with a love that was ready to sacrifice all for her. For her sake he was about to undertake a task in which he had little hope that he would succeed; little hope, indeed, that when she returned he would be alive to welcome her.

CHAPTER IV.

In spite of the trouble which she felt to be hanging over her, Elsa enjoyed her ride to Ponta Delgada. The country through which they were riding was beautiful, the air fresh and exhilarating, the road was good, and she was riding with the man she loved. Moreover, though she had refused him last she knew that he loved her, and she thought that he was not one of those who love and then forget. He would ask her again some day; there was plenty of time; for she was only nineteen, and he was twenty-four, or perhaps twenty-five, certainly not more. Perhaps the clouds would blow over, and next time she would say "yes" to his question, and feel no shame in saying it.

At nineteen it is not easy to remain depressed for long, if health is good, if the day is fine, and if one is riding in the company of the man one loves.

Long before she reached Ponta Delgada, Elsa had let the Atlantic breeze blow away her cares for the present. She did not talk much; she had the healthy English girl's delight in physical exertion, and she devoted all her energy to setting a pace. It was not until the white buildings of Ponta Delgada, picked out with edgings of black stone like a funeral card, appeared in the distance before her, that her mind returned to the errand on which she had been sent. As she entered the beginning of the long street of mean houses which forms the approach to Ponta Delgada on the north, she slackened her pace, and allowed Scarborough to lead. Her mood of exaltation was over. She went slower and slower, and Scarborough thought it was because she was nervous in the traffic.

"Would you prefer to walk the last bit?" he asked.

She dismounted at once, and Scarborough took her machine and pushed it for her.

"Tired?" he asked.

"No," she said; "only hot; and I think, rather cross. Talk, please."

Her mind clamored for distraction; for something to engross her thoughts in the present; to take them away from her disappointment in the past and her fears for the future. Scarborough obediently talked; but after the first few sentences she did not hear what he said, or heard it vaguely, and answered without interest,

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How to Protect Milk.

D. B. Etters, of the dairy department of the Pennsylvania State College, in outlining some of the essentials for the production of clean milk, emphasizes the necessity of feeding palatable and nutritious feeds which are free from mold or decay or any other defects which might injure the health of the cow or impair the quality of the milk.

roots and plants, such as rape, cabbage, turnips and other feeds with strong odors. These should be offered after milking, and the portions not eaten removed from the stable at least three hours before milking. Cows that are allowed to graze in fields several hours before milking time.

Many objections have been raised in the past to the feeding of silage, but these complaints are diminishing each year. Silage does not impart unpalatable flavor to milk as many have contended. The presence of such in the milk may be due to poor grade of silage, improper feeding or the absorption of the odor from the stable air. A reasonable amount of a good quality of silage should be removed before the next milking so that the stable air will not impart the odor to the milk.

The cow should have access to a clean supply of salt, and as much fresh, pure water as she will drink should be provided. Under ordinary conditions a cow will drink three times as much water as she gives milk, i. e., if she gives 30 pounds of milk, she will require 90 pounds of water per day. Water is essential, not only for milk production, but also for food digestion. In cold weather the chill should be removed from water offered to the cows.

The "Starter" in Butter-making.

In spite of dairymen's conventions and free literature on the subject of butter-making (the term "starter" or even the "ripening" of cream is entirely new to many makers of dairy butter.

To understand exactly what a starter is it is necessary to know something of the action of bacteria in milk, the production of flavors, and the formation of lactic acid. It is the lactic acid bacteria that causes sweet, fresh cream to assume a sour, acid taste, which is commonly associated with ripened cream. Butter churned from this ripened cream is preferred by the majority of people to that which is churned from sweet cream.

The flavor of butter depends almost entirely on the presence of the right kind of fermentation or bacteria in the cream; therefore, the scientists have developed a "starter" composed of a growth of the right kind of acid-producing bacteria, with

which to ripen cream. If such a starter is used instead of allowing the cream to ripen naturally, there is a reasonable certainty of a desirable flavor in the butter.

A pure culture starter can be obtained from a dairy supply house or institution. The most important point is to make sure that it is really pure culture, of lactic-acid producing bacteria, and no other.

A good milk starter when ready for use should be softly coagulated, not too firm, and when stirred should appear smooth and even; not shiny, curdy or watery.

In ordinary farm butter-making the cream is separated from the milk as soon as possible after milking. It is then cooled to 65 degrees and a pure culture starter added at the rate of 5 to 12 per cent.

The best flavored butter is that produced when a small proportion of starter is used and when the cream is allowed to ripen as slowly as it would under natural conditions.

The use of a starter produces uniformity in flavor of butter produced from one churning and another. The general standard of quality of the butter is higher and its keeping qualities are improved, while the trouble often experienced in bringing cream to a state fit for churning is largely overcome.

Pedigreed Seed and Plants Best

Pedigreed stock has long been recognized as the most valuable, and much stress has been laid on breeding stock from parents of known qualities. Strict breeding of seeds and plants will produce like results, if the work is consistently followed. In every orchard, small fruit plantation and vegetable or flower crop there are many plants that produce but little, while there are others that are heavy yielders. The percentage of non-producers is far greater than the observant person realizes. Still such plants are there only too conspicuously if one takes the trouble to observe them.

The time is rapidly coming when all nursery stock and seed stock will be propagated from known parentage. The plants and seeds will be as finely bred as the finest animals. There are a few nurserymen who realize this, and they are offering pedigreed plants and seeds, but the great majority of nurserymen and seedsmen are too busy making sales to bother with such matters. Those who purchase stock for Spring planting should not fail to locate these progressive dealers and place a portion of their orders with them, not alone to show confidence in well-bred stock, but to insure productive plantings.

Without Success.

Captured German Officer (to English officer in charge of German prisoners)—You fight for money; we fight for honor.

English Officer—Ah, well! Neither of us seems to get what we want, do we?

THREE VITAL QUESTIONS

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