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CHAPTER XIX.—(Cont'd.)

"You've been very good to Peter," she said. "I've wanted a chance to tell you so."

"You don't know what he's been through," she frowned. "Even he doesn't know. When I came to him, there was so little of him left. I'll never forget the first sight I had of him in the hospital. Thin and white and blind, he lay there as though dead."

"He loved so hard, with all there was in him, as he does everything," she explained.

"I suppose that was the trouble," he nodded.

She turned quickly. It was as if he said that was the mistake.

"After all, that's just love, isn't it? There can't be any halfway about it, can there?"

"I wonder."

"You—you wonder, Mr. Covington?"

He was stupid at first. He did not get the connection. Then, as she turned her dark eyes full upon him, the blood leaped to his cheeks. He was married—that was what she was trying to tell him. He had a wife, and so presumably knew what love was. For her to assume anything else, for him to admit anything else, was impossible.

"Perhaps we'd better turn back," she said uneasily.

He felt like a cad. He turned instantly.

"If only now he recovers his eyes."

"He says there's hope."

"It all depends upon her," she said.

"Upon this woman?"

"Upon this one woman."

"If she realized it—"

"She does," broke in Beatrice. "I made her realize it. I went to her and told her."

"You did that?"

She raised her head in swift challenge.

"Even though Peter commanded me not to—even though I knew he would never forgive me if he learned."

"You women are so wonderful," breathed Monte.

"With Peter's future—with his life at stake—what else could I do?"

"And she, knowing that, refused to come to him?"

"Fate brought us to her."

"Then," exclaimed Monte, "what are you doing here?"

She stopped and faced him. It was evident that he was sincere.

"You men—all men are so stupid at times!" she cried, with a little laugh.

He shook his head slowly.

"I'll have to admit it."

"Why, he's with her now," she laughed. "That's why I stayed at home to-day."

Monte held his breath for a second, and then he said:

"You mean, the woman Peter loves is—"

"is Marjory Stockton?"

"No other. I thought you must have guessed it from her."

"Why, no," he admitted; "I didn't."

"Then you've had your eyes closed."

"That's it," he nodded; "I've had my eyes closed. Why, that explains a lot of things."

Impulsively the girl placed her hand on Monte's arm.

"As an old friend of hers, you'll use your influence to help Peter?"

"I'll do what I can."

"Then I'm so glad I told you."

"Yes," agreed Monte. "I suppose it is just as well for me to know."

CHAPTER XX.

Paying Like a Man

Everything considered, Monte should have been glad at the revelation Beatrice made to him. If Peter were in love with Marjory and she with Peter—why, it solved his own problem, by the simple process of elimination, neatly and with despatch. All that remained for him to do was to remove himself from the awkward triangle as soon as possible. He must leave Marjory free, and Peter would look after the rest. No doubt a divorce on the grounds of desertion could be easily arranged; and thus, by that one stroke, they two would be made happy, and he—well, what the devil was to become of him?



The answer was obvious. It did not matter a penny to any one what became of him. What had he ever done to make his life worth while to any one? He had never done any particular harm, that was true; but neither had he done any particular good. It is the positive things that count, when a man stands before the judgment-seat; and that is where Monte stood on the night Marjory came back from Cannes by the side of Peter, with her eyes sparkling and her cheeks flushed as if she had come straight from Eden.

He dodged Peter this evening to escape their usual after-dinner talk, and went to his room. He was there now, with his face white and tense.

He had been densely stupid from the first, as Beatrice had informed him. Any man of the world ought to have suspected something when, at the first sight of Peter, she ran away. She had never run from him. Women run only when there is danger of capture, and she had nothing to fear from him in that way. She was safe with him. She dared even come with him to escape those from whom there might be some possible danger. Until now he had been rather proud of this—as if it were some honor. She had trusted him as she would not trust other men. It had made him throw back his shoulders—dense fool that he was!

She trusted him because she did not fear him; she did not fear him because there was nothing in him to fear. It was not that he was more decent than other men—it was merely because he was less of a man. Why, she had run even from Peter—good, honest, conscientious Peter, with the heart and soul and the nerve of a man. Peter had sent her scurrying before him because of the great love he dared to have for her. Peter challenged her to take up life with him—to buck New York with him. This was after he had waded in himself with naked fists, man-fashioned. That was what gave Peter his right. That right was what she feared.

Monte had a grandfather who in forty-nine crossed the plains. A picture of him hung in the Covington house in Philadelphia. The painting revealed steel-gray eyes and, even below the beard of respectability, a mouth that in many ways was like Peter's. Montague Sears Covington—that was his name; the name that had been handed down to Monte. The man had shouldered a rifle, fought his way across deserts and over mountain paths, had risked his life a dozen times a day to reach unknown El Dorado of the West. He had done this partly for a woman—a slip of a girl in New York whom he left behind to wait for him, though she begged to go. That was Monte's grandmother.

Monte, in spite of his ancestry, had jugged along, dodging the responsibilities—the responsibilities that Peter Noyes rushed forward to meet. He had ducked even love, even fatherhood. Like any quitter on the gridiron, instead of tackling low and hard, he had sidestepped. He had seen Chic in agony, and because of that had taken the next boat for Marseilles. He had turned tail and run. He had seen Teddy, and had run to what he thought was safe cover. If he paid the cost after that, whose the fault? The least he could do now was to pay the cost like a man.

Technically, he must desert her. He must make that supreme sacrifice. At the moment when he stood ready to challenge the world for her—at the moment when his heart within him burned to face for her all the dangers from which he had run—at that point he must relinquish even this privilege, and with smiling lips pose before the world and before her as a quitter. He must not even use the deserter's prerogative of running. He must leave her cheerfully and jauntily—as the care-free ass known to her and to the world as just Monte.

He had known her for over a decade. As a school-girl he had seen her at Chic's, and now ten years later he saw that even then she had within her all that she now had. That clear, white forehead had been there then; the black arched brows, the thin, straight nose, and the mobile lips. He caught his breath as he thought of those lips. Her eyes, too—but no, a change had taken place there. He had always thought of her eyes as cold—as impenetrable. They were not that now. Once or twice he thought he had seen into them a little way. Once or twice he thought he had glimpsed gentle, fluttering figures in them. Once or twice they had been like windows in a long-closed house, suddenly flung open upon warm rooms filled with flowers. It made him dizzy now to remember those moments.

He paced his room. In another week or two, if he had kept on,—if Peter had not come,—he might have been admitted farther into that house. He squared his shoulders. If he fought for his own even now—if, man against man, he challenged Peter for her—he might have a fighting chance. Was not that his right? In New York, in the world outside New York, that was the law: a hard fight—the best man to win. In war, favors might be shown; but in life, with a man's own at stake, it was every one for himself. Peter

himself would agree to that. He was not one to ask favors. A fair fight was all he demanded. Then let it be a clean, fair fight with bare knuckles to a finish. Let him show himself to Marjory as the grandson of the man who gave him his name; let him press his claims.

He was ready now to face the world with her. He was eager to do that. Neither heights nor depths held any terrors for him. He envied Chic—he envied even poor mad Hamilton.

If he could only be given another chance to do something for Marjory—something that would bite into him, something that would twist his body and maul him! If he could not face some serious physical danger for her, then some great sacrifice—

Which was precisely the opportunity now offered. He had been considering this sacrifice from his own personal point of view. He had looked upon it as merely a personal punishment. But, after all, it was for her alone. Peter played no part in it whatever. Neither did he himself. It was for her—for her!

Monte set his jaws. If, through Peter, he could bring her happiness, then that was all the reward he could ask. Here was a man who loved her, who would be good to her and fight hard for her. He was just the sort of man he could trust her to.

A knock at his door made him turn on his heels.

"Who's that?" he demanded.

"It's I—Noyes," came the answer.

"Have you gone to bed yet?"

(To be continued.)

Food Control Corner

Enforcement of the Canada Food Board's regulations as to food conservation has been placed in the hands of the police machinery of the municipalities and of the different Provinces throughout the Dominion.

It is the duty and privilege of the provinces to enforce federal laws and the Orders of the Canada Food Board have the effect of federal law, being passed upon authority of Orders issued by the Privy Council and published in the Canada Gazette. It, therefore, becomes the duty of police officers throughout the Dominion to acquaint themselves with these regulations regarding our food supply and to see to it that they are obeyed. At this stage of the world's food situation, when 4,750,000 people in Europe have starved to death as compared to 4,250,000 soldiers who have died as the direct result of battle, it is beyond cavil or dispute that these food regulations are absolutely necessary. Indeed many people in communication with friends in England or in France think our Canadian regulations mild in view of what people on the other side are undergoing. Patriotism as well as duty should inspire submission to these restrictions by the public and vigilant enforcement of them by the officers of the law.

In cases of convictions secured by the municipal police officers, it should be noted that where these convictions result in the imposition of fines, the money from these fines is to be paid to the municipal treasuries, and similarly in the cases where Provincial officers secure convictions. The Canada Food Board has circularized these Orders in official form throughout the police machinery of the various provinces, beginning with the Attorneys-General and continuing through the lists of Crown Attorneys and Crown Prosecutors. In some provinces the Chief Constables have also received copies of the various Orders affecting the public. As a result, throughout Canada of recent weeks, there has been a crop of convictions. In all cases the Magistrates have stood firmly behind the regulations and imposed the penalties as provided. These run from \$100, to \$1000 in fines or imprisonment up to three months or both. Restaurant keepers, who have served meat on prohibited days and hours, served sugar on the tables or wasted food, have been brought to task and the wide spread publicity this has entailed will do a great deal more

to assure conservation of food in public eating places than anything else. The Anti-Loafing Law, also bearing upon our war-time food production, has likewise been enforced. Magistrates have seized the opportunity of dealing with loafers, tramps and "sports" by putting them to work on the farms. "Non-essential" industries have been interpreted by some Magistrates into more or less definite groups and men who had no better excuse than employment in said questionable industries have been ordered to get into more useful occupations. In Winnipeg a great change has been observed in the streets since this law went into effect. The idlers and loafers have disappeared.

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FOE STRIPS INVADED ITALY.

Cattle and Foodstuffs Taken; Women Often Slain.

An Italian motor driver named Frisi, who was captured by the Austrians during the great retreat last November and who just escaped from captivity, reported that all the cattle and foodstuffs in the invaded provinces have been systematically requisitioned by the military authorities, who for this purpose utilized the motor trucks captured from the Italians, says a despatch from Rome. Italian drivers were compelled to act as interpreters as well.

Frisi said that a squad of Bosnian soldiers took him to Vittorio Veneto, where they requisitioned everything of value besides foodstuffs. Two girls refused to give up a small pig and begged the Austrian soldiers to let them keep it. At their suggestion Frisi pleaded hard with the Austrians, who took the pig and silenced the two girls, who were loudly weeping, by shooting both dead at close range.

Similar cases of defenceless women and children murdered in cold blood for attempting to defend their property were frequent in every town and village.

Do You Know This?

The middle verse of the Bible is the eighth verse—of the 118th Psalm. The twenty-first verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra contains all the letters in the alphabet except the letter "j." The longest verse is the ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther. The shortest verse is the ninth verse of the eleventh chapter of St. John.

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