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**The Dictator Who Was
Misunderstood**

BY BERTRAM LEIGH.

PART I.

To the man standing at the open French window the quiet beauty of the landscape meant at that moment nothing; he was conscious only of the girl mounting the steps from the lawn to the verandah, from which, in less than a minute, she would enter the room.

In other circumstances, at another time, doubtless Ronald Sloane would have noticed, and with appreciation, the scene without the tennis lawn, the old rose garden beyond, with its quaint sundial, the sweep of the plain, and far away on the horizon, the shimmering blue of the sea. His whole consciousness was concentrated solely upon Joyce Falloden as she mounted the steps and came toward him.

She was worthy of his attention, worthy of the attention, indeed, could Sloane but have realized it, of a man bigger and more magnanimous than he was or could ever become. Tall and deep-bosomed, she carried herself with a natural grace that spoke rather of long tramps in the open country than of the calculated artifice of the ballroom. Her hair was dark brown and wavy without persuasion, and her neck was magnificently molded. But it was her face that most provoked admiration; the features were regular and beautiful, but their beauty was more intense than delicate, for her complexion was browned from her habit of roaming the countryside without a hat; she was like a Madonna who had lived long with gypsies.

Yet she had been wooed and won; John Malleon had found it possible to break through the rampart of her cold, exacting reticence and to enter into the castle of her intimate spirituality. Such a wooing, while provocative in Sloane of envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, was provocative also of a begrudged measure of admiration.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Sloane. Sorry to have kept you waiting, but we just had to finish that set."

"Oh, that is quite all right. I hope I have not come at an awkward time, but the committee has asked me to discuss with you one or two points in connection with the meeting on Monday, and the sooner they are settled the better."

"Certainly. What are they? Won't you sit down?"

Ronald Sloane was the village schoolmaster, a young man of some parts and a pronounced Socialist, and the meeting he had mentioned was to take place in the neighboring town, when one of the most advanced leaders of the Socialist Party was to be the principal speaker. Joyce Falloden, too, was an ardent Socialist and a prominent member of the local group which had arranged the big meeting for the following Monday. They were soon absorbed in the discussion of various matters connected with its incidental tactics.

"That will be excellent, admirable."

replied Sloane to a suggestion she had put forward. "We will leave it at that, Miss Falloden."

He rose to take his leave. She pressed him to stay to tea.

"I want to introduce you to Mr. Malleon," she said. "He arrived yesterday, you know."

"So I heard. The village is all agog. I assure you, and those who possess mouth organs are feverishly learning, 'See the Conquering Hero Comes' to play whenever he is unfortunate enough to appear in our one street."

He spoke bitterly, but thought he was speaking generously. Joyce, divining nothing of what was in his mind, tossed her head and laughed delightedly.

"He is out riding at the moment, but we expect him back for tea. Come into the garden and see mother. And you know the others—the Heuling crowd and the Mannering twins."

On the verandah he spoke, rather awkwardly, of what was foremost in his thoughts, the probable effect upon his own intercourse with Joyce Falloden of Malleon's return from his amazing adventure in South America.

"I say, Miss Falloden, won't Mr. Malleon wish you to give up socialism—at least your active interest in it—now that he is at hand to monopolize your attention? To judge from all I have heard of his five years of dictatorship in Romario—and I have heard quite a lot from various sources—I imagine that he can't possibly be in agreement with us, even in the mere matter of fundamental democratic principles."

"Mr. Malleon has always understood that I am a Socialist, and knows what to expect," she answered with a smile.

The greetings between Sloane and Mrs. Falloden and the tennis votaries were scarcely over when the maid brought the tea, and with the tea came John Malleon, erstwhile dictator-president of the Republic of Romario. He was of middle height and carried himself with the easy dignity of the diplomat rather than with the brusque smartness of the soldier, for, in spite of his military victories, which had given him the reputation of the world over of a miniature Napoleon, he was more statesman than general, and—as unmistakably he looked in his neat riding breeches and khaki shirt, open at the neck—more prince of men than either. His face was bronzed, the face of Caesar, but with a small brown mustache above the chiseled, laconic lips. His gray eyes were unfathomably distinctive of the masterful genius that burned within him.

"This is my friend, Mr. Sloane, John," announced Joyce.

"Pleased to meet you, often heard of you," said Malleon pleasantly, as the two men shook hands.

During the first amenities of tea-time the conversation was general and parochial, and neither Malleon nor Sloane acquitted himself with more than average banality. It was obvious that the Mannering twins, two girls, and the two sons and the daughter of old man Heuling were in a great taking at the presence of the man whose name had been for the last few years so much in the world's eye and on the world's lips, whose sudden career as dictator of a South American republic had seemed like some breathless chapter out of a glorious romance. Of course they had met him before, when he was a nobody, merely the son of an old family friend of the Fallodens. But now matters were different, and they were not quite easy in his company.

Malleon had gone to Romario on business for his father, had entered that country during one of its distressful and periodical revolutions, a revolution that had once succeeded, in so far as anarchy and a too indiscriminate brotherhood of man may be called success, had exerted himself primarily in the protection of the small colony of Americans and Europeans from massacre, and, in so doing, had discovered in himself the innate capacity for leading men.

It was a small step from that to obtaining the confidence of the law-abiding citizens of the capital, and a still smaller one to becoming, by the mere force and logic of events, the breaker of the revolution and the establisher of law and order. He was then gratefully elected President, broke the insurgents—who had all the

while been playing with a peculiarly poisonous form of bolshevism—in two swift and thorough campaigns, and been thereupon saluted, quite in the old Roman fashion, as dictator by his enthusiastic army. Then, of course, Romario's restless and powerful neighbor, Tarragonia, must needs make one of her habitual raids into Romarian territory. She was severely punished. For the first time in history the Romarians defeated the Tarragonians.

Malleon, returning from his campaigns in triumph, had devoted himself enthusiastically to the internal welfare of the country that was now completely his. In this task he succeeded admirably, and, when his term of office was over and he returned to the States, he left Romario immeasurably greater and incredibly happier than he had found her. To the Romarians he had become a hero, a savior, almost a fable, the establisher of a new prosperity, of a new earth if not quite of a new heaven. They called him, half in awe and half in affection, "El Establecedor." Malleon the Establisher.

And now he was seated, balancing on his knee his teacup, with a large piece of chocolate cake in the saucer, and gravely listening to the prattle of old Heuling's pretty daughter, who was mainly desirous of having him learn that her uncle's brother-in-law was a retired major-general, letting it be presupposed, by inference, that her interests, therefore, were at least laterally military.

Suddenly from the house came Malleon's ex-soldier valet.

"Yes, Hayward?"

"A telegraph for your Excellency," announced that functionary.

He handed it to his master who, with an apology to Mrs. Falloden, opened and read it.

"Thanks, Hayward. There's no answer."

His man bowed respectfully and retired. He liked these little ceremonies and performed them with a genial flourish, much to the amused tolerance of the shrewd gentleman he served.

"May I have another cup of tea?" asked John innocently.

Mrs. Falloden, talking to one of the twins, did not hear the request.

"Mother," said Joyce, "His Excellency desires another cup of tea."

Her voice vibrated with obvious italics; the scorn was unmistakable and unmistakable.

"My dear!" mildly expostulated Mrs. Falloden. "Certainly, John. Pass me your cup."

(To be continued.)

Light at Last.

The skipper was examining the ambitious young man who wanted to be the gunner's mate.

He asked him several questions, and was not at all pleased with the answers he received, and at last he said in desperation:

"How much does a six-pound shell weigh?"

"I don't know," the other confessed.

"Well," was the next question, "what time does the twelve o'clock train leave?"

"Twelve o'clock."

"All right, then; how much does a six-pound shell weigh?"

"Ah!" said the youthful mariner, as he suddenly saw light. "Twelve pounds."

Fortitude.

Though the Omnipotent decree That I descend into the mire, Yet will His hand reveal to me In smoking flax the unquenched fire.

For in the darkness I shall find Brave comrades, nurtured not to yield Enfranchised from the shifting mind, The craven heart, the nerve unstepped.

Out of the land of gloom and shade Him will I worship and extol, Who of all great things, greatest made The unconquerable human soul.

Just Stopped in Time.

Johnnie, who had been praying for months for a baby brother, finally became discouraged.

"I don't believe God has any more little boys to send," he told his mother, "and I'm going to stop it."

Early one morning a few weeks later he was taken into his mother's room to see twin boys who had arrived in the night. Johnnie regarded them thoughtfully for some minutes.

"Golly," he remarked, finally, "it's a good thing I stopped praying when I did."



Neither Safe Nor Sane.
Both—"We'll still be needed!"

The destruction of a forest is a direct loss to the public. A spark from a passing engine, or the dropping of a lighted match may cause the loss of public is thus deprived of lumber for building or construction purposes. It takes from seventy-five to a hundred years or more for trees in a forest to grow to maturity.

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The Purpose of Garden Paths.

Garden paths should always go somewhere, says W. S. Rogers in "Planning Your Garden."

"Paths which start nowhere and end at a blank wall suggest purposelessness. It may be taken as an axiom that the principal path should commence at some point conveniently near, and preferably facing, the door by which the house inmates enter the garden. Its direction should be through the flowers, and it should have a natural termination, or final destination. The best terminal to a garden path in my opinion is the summer house, and when that feature is nonexistent, an arbor, or some other erection, should serve the purpose. Failing that, the path might terminate in a square expansion, in which a seat, sun-dial, or other appropriate object might be placed.

"It would be better to end it at a tool house or garage, or even at a potting-shed, than to allow it to stop suddenly nowhere."

Ducks fly high in clear weather.

Even a dog banks his surplus bones.

Canadians are apt to think that their forests are illimitable and their supply of wood inexhaustible. This is not so. Fires and insects are depleting the reserves of forested land at an alarming rate and it has become a pressing national duty to conserve the forest resources and create new ones by reforestation.

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