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The Canada Starch Co. Limited, Montreal

VALLEY FARM;

Or, Felicity's Inheritance.

CHAPTER V.

It was one thing for Joyce to make up her mind to trust Robert Stone whatever she might hear, it was quite another to banish Eliza's words from her memory. Try as she might, she could not forget them; and Fate seemed bent on adding to her uneasiness, for the following afternoon the clergyman's wife from Stanton Orby came to call and she, too, had something to say about Robert Stone.

She had driven the three miles in her little phaeton, and while a smart, diminutive groom stayed with the ponies, she seemed quite content to chat with Joyce, sitting in Felicity's basket chair on the lawn in the shadow cast by the old house. While Joyce was wondering whether she dare order tea, Eliza came out with it, and the visitor expressed herself most grateful for a cup after her dusty drive in the hot sun.

Mrs. Warrender was a very pretty woman, and exquisitely dressed. The task of entertaining her was a light one, for she talked incessantly, in the rapid, jerky way some modern women affect. Joyce was sorry that for once Felicity had not refrained from going to the hayfields, for this would have been a visitor after her own heart. She was amusingly frank about her own affairs, and openly curious about theirs; and it was difficult to believe she was a clergyman's wife, so utterly unsuited did she seem for the position.

"Philip ought to have come with me. I told him so, but he cried off. He hates calling. You'll excuse him, won't you, Miss Hamilton? I only heard the other day that two nice girls had come to the Valley Farm, or I should have been here before.

"It is very good of you."

"Not at all. Came to please myself—was glad of something to take me out. I hate going out without an object, don't you? You will be a boon in this dead-alive place. So few persons one can know about here.

"Don't you like the country?" Joyce ventured to ask.

"Like it? I loathe it! Thank goodness I am only here just in the middle of the summer. How Philip endures it all the year round is a mystery to me."

Joyce's eyes asked the question she was too well-bred to utter, and Mrs. Warrender burst out laughing.

"You are thinking I'm a funny sort of clergyman's wife, aren't you? They all do. I can't help it. I wasn't cast for the part, and I should act it very badly, so I don't try. When Stanton Orby gets too much for me, I run away."

"And Mr. Warrender?"

"Oh, he has his hobbies, or I think he would run too! He plays golf, and fishes a great deal. Just now he's mad about photography. Then he has his horses, and is always off somewhere. People make a great fuss of him—far more than if I were on the scene, I tell him."

"I suppose a clergyman's duties are not so arduous in the country as the town?"

"Oh, dear me, no! Of course, people want marrying and burying occasionally, but for the rest they really prefer to be left alone. I tell Philip, What's the use of bothering about services that nobody wants to come to? And if folks like to be wicked, let them. He couldn't prevent them if he tried, so why trouble? He laughs at me and says I am a heathen, but I'm right for all that. Don't you think so?"

Joyce was silent.

"For my part, I'm always relieved when I find out that the poor people are drunken, or idle, or something of that sort, the careless voice rattled on, 'then you don't have to do anything for them.'"

Joyce replenished Mrs. Warrender's cup and handed the cake, racking her brains the while for some other topic of conversation. The lady's views, she felt, were as difficult to combat as Eliza's—and quite as depressing.

"I shall shock you," Mrs. Warrender said. "You are good aren't you? I can see it in your face."

"I am afraid not," she answered, coloring, "but I try to be."

"Don't, my dear! Good people are so dull, so uninteresting. Now, tell me, are you the pretty one? I've heard about you, you see."

"No. My friend, Miss Gray, is very pretty indeed."

"H—m! You are pretty enough. Does she try to be good, too?"

"She doesn't have to try," replied Joyce, smiling.

"Worse and worse. Comes natural to her, I suppose. By-the-bye, who's managing for you—who looks after the farm?"

"Mr. Stone is, just for the present. Miss Gray's late uncle——"

Mrs. Warrender sat suddenly upright. Joyce stopped short at the look of consternation on her face.

"Robert Stone! My dear child, you mustn't have him. He is quite beyond the pale. I thought he had gone away."

"He—he was away when we first came, but he returned, and Miss Gray was glad to have some one who knew what to do. We like him very much. What have you against him, Mrs. Warrender?"

"I? Oh, nothing! I take no interest in village affairs, as I told you, but I certainly heard rumors. If I was ever told what he had done, I've forgotten it. But he is a bad lot—there's no doubt about that. He is a good-looking man—I've seen him once or twice in the lanes. There was a good deal of talk about him this spring—all through Mr. Carleton's illness, I believe. But I'll ask Philip about it. He never came to church, never—neither did Mr. Carleton, for that matter."

"But you don't think that is necessary in the country, do you?" Joyce could not help saying.

"Now that's too bad of you! I certainly don't—not for me, at any rate. But whether the man comes to church or not, Miss Gray ought to get rid of him. He is not old or ugly enough for the post, and I'm sure her uncle lost all faith in him before he died."

Joyce was thankful that for the rest of Mrs. Warrender's visit nothing more was said about Robert Stone and his supposed misdeeds. That lady was far more interested in her own affairs than in those of other people, and she chatted away so amusingly that Joyce would have been greatly entertained by this peep into a life so different from her own if it had not been for the feeling of uneasiness, the lurking dread that would not be banished. The visitor had been everywhere and seen everything; she had wintered in Egypt, had passed the spring months on the Riveria, and had just returned from a visit to Paris. As Joyce listened to her adventures, she could not help thinking that a little of Mrs. Warrender's society would go farther towards curing Felicity of what Eliza called her folly than any number of visits from Mr. Carmichael.

"You and Miss Gray will come and see me, won't you?" she asked, when at last she took her leave, Joyce walking with her to the gate. "It's a pretty place, the rectory is—so is Stanton Orby, for that matter. Ever seen it? Oh, you must come"—as Joyce shook her head. "Thatched cottages, pretty gardens, village green—that sort of thing, you know. I tell Philip it would be quite endurable if it were not for the people. The men have no morals and the women no manners—I don't know which is the worst. Such a shocking example for the upper classes, isn't it, Miss Hamilton?" she added, with that flash of fun in her eyes that went far to condone much of what she said. "The place is overrun with children—little terrors who haven't a tongue among them. They always stare at me as if I were a circus."

As she gathered up the reins and bent to shake hands she lowered her voice.

"I will ask Philip all about Robert Stone and tell you when you call. In the meantime, do advise Miss Gray to get rid of him. I never interfere in other people's affairs on principle, but I must in this case. I'm sure you are both much too nice to be imposed on by such a man."

After that Joyce determined that nothing would induce her to go to the rectory, and neither should Felicity if she could help it.

Rather to her surprise Felicity declared she had no intention of returning Mrs. Warrender's call. The walk was too far for her, she said, and she did not want to know any new people—she was quite happy as she was.

This speech rather alarmed Joyce; it sounded so unlike the old Felicity. She began to wonder if it were not her duty to persuade her to go, and she exerted herself to describe the visitor, half hoping that Felicity would change her mind. Perhaps, after all, it would be better to hear what the world had to say about Robert Stone. But although Felicity was interested, she remained firm. Joyce might go if she liked—she rather hoped she would; but waste a whole afternoon on a stranger, she would not!

Joyce's conscience would not let her rest, and a little later she plucked up courage to tell Felicity a little of what Mrs. Warrender had said.

Felicity burst out laughing, and refused to believe a word against "Mr. Robert."

"Don't be such a goose, Joyce. You look as tragic as if the man had committed a murder. He is a good man—brave, and chivalrous and true, and I don't care that what any one says about him!" She snapped her fingers. "And if I'm satisfied, I'm sure you needn't worry yourself. It has nothing to do with you, in any case."

Which was true, if somewhat unkind, and it had the effect of silencing Joyce. She fervently hoped that Felicity would not allude to it again, but as they sat at the open window of the sitting-room late that evening, she called out to Robert Stone as he was going down the garden on his way home.

"Mr. Robert, come and defend yourself," Felicity called in her laughing, mischievous way. "Joyce is trying to poison my mind against you. She's been hearing dreadful things about you this afternoon."

He leaned his arms on the sill and started past Felicity at the shrinking figure beyond her. Dark as it was, he could see the pain in Joyce's face, and his own softened, but not before both girls had seen a look of consternation in his own eyes.

"I think I will plead guilty at once, and save Miss Hamilton the trouble of enumerating my sins," he said calmly. "I am sure you don't want to, do you?"

Joyce shook her head. Nothing should make her, she told herself! Felicity might say what she liked.

Felicity did telling him of the visitor that afternoon, making it appear as Joyce had been quite upset by her insinuations.

"It seems a little vague," he said when she had finished. "I am quite disappointed. I am a poor sort of a villain, Felicity. My worst crime appears to be that I don't go to church."

"I haven't been since we came down here," she said gaily. "It's too far, for one thing, and as I tell Joyce, there would be no one to see me, and no one worth looking at. So I don't think that's very dreadful, Mr. Robert."

"I do—at least I should if it were true; but as a matter of fact, I do go, though not to Stanton. Your uncle always went to Blytheby. It's a little farther, but it's a lovely old church. We took him there, and—and I go whenever I can."

He raised his cap and left them, his tall figure soon disappearing in the gloom of the garden. Joyce caught her breath, and the sudden tears pricked her eyes. She was glad he had gone. If Felicity had continued to banter and tease him, she could not have borne it, she told herself.

Felicity did not return to the subject. She seemed subdued, and was so silent during supper that Eliza looked at her uneasily from time to time. She had never enquired where the old man had been laid first time, that she had been rather heartless.

That night Joyce could not sleep. She lay quaking in the huge four-poster bed, wide-eyed and miserable, till the old grandfather's clock in the kitchen wheezed out the hour of two. She listened with straining ears to the mice scampering overhead in the attic or rustling behind the wainscot, while the stirring of the sparrows in the ivy filled her with nervous fears. Moonlight flooded the room, but she felt that pitch darkness would have been preferable. One corner was thrown into shadow by a tall bureau, and in this had been placed the old man's chair. To the girl's excited imagination it seemed as if she could see the outline of a shadowy form sitting there, and now and then a sigh seemed to echo through the room. The night was too warm to hide her head beneath the clothes, and she hardly dared to close her eyes, feeling sure that if she did so a spectral hand would draw back the bed-curtains, and she would open them to find a face gazing at her.

At length her fears became so unendurable that she sprang out of bed and hurried to the window. It calmed her a little to gaze out over the peaceful moonlit garden, to see the rustic bench at the far end, the roses amongst which she and Robert Stone had had such pleasant talks. The night-breeze stirred her pretty dark hair as if with gentle fingers, and the moon smiled placidly down on the girlish, frightened face.

"I wish I had brought a book up with me," she said aloud. "I would light the candle and read in bed. Anything would be better than imagining all sorts of things. But I dare not go down for one."

She looked round the bare room and her eyes caught sight of a big family Bible that lay on the top of the bureau, and with a sigh of relief she went back to bed carrying the heavy book with her.

Joyce lit the candle and turned over the yellow pages with reverent fingers. It was very old; the print was brown, the s's looked like fs. There were several names on the fly-leaf, and she judged that by the oldest date it must have belonged to Mr. Carleton's great-grandfather. It was certainly interesting, and she was grateful for anything that would beguile the time and distract her thoughts.

There were faded book-marks between the pages, and here and there some dried rose-leaves, or a ravel of bright flossy silk. Joyce wondered whose fingers had placed them there. As she idly turned the leaves a half sheet of note-paper fluttered out and lay upon the counterpane. It was covered with fine, careful writing in pencil, and there was neither beginning nor signature. It looked as if it were the half of a letter, torn off, and, unlike the other things in the book, it was not at all old. With a little thrill of excitement, Joyce picked it up and read it.

. . . . "to come and make a new will. I have burnt the old one. I have been greatly deceived in Robert Stone, and can no longer trust him. The rumors you heard were true—I have proved them. He has not only been robbing me, but has robbed others in my name. This I cannot forgive. Other things have come to my ears this week about which I will tell you when I see you. Let me know when you can . . . ."

That was all. Only a fragment, but pregnant with meaning. Joyce read it again with dilated eyes and trembling hands. She understood it but too clearly. It was an old man's hand, stiff and precise. Mr. Carleton had, no doubt, written it one night when unable to sleep—this rough draft of a letter to his lawyer—and half of it had lain forgotten in his Bible.

Joyce placed the book at the bottom of the bed and blew out the light, then cowered down amongst the clothes with the letter crumpled up in her hand. She would still trust Robert Stone—still believe in him, she said feverishly, but it was hard—very hard!

What had he said to her? "I think you are the sort of girl to trust a man through thick and thin, even if appearances were against him."

And she would.

Joyce was harassed with no more ghostly fears that night. A very real trouble had chased away her imaginery woes.

* * *

Not once in the two days that followed did Joyce meet Robert Stone face to face. Both Felicity and Eliza unconsciously helped her to avoid him, the one by showing no desire for her company, the other by keeping her busy in the house.

The third day was Sunday. The heat and monotony had tried even Joyce's sweet temper, and when twilight fell she wandered out of the house leaving Felicity absorbed in a new novel and Eliza laboriously writing to a friend. There was no fear of encountering Robert Stone, for after looking round in the morning he came no more on Sundays.

It was pleasant in the rickyard, with a little breeze bringing to her nostrils the scent of the new stacks of hay. She strolled to the end, and leaning her arms on a bar of a big gate, with her chin resting on her hands she stood for a long time, lost in thought, gazing down the croft.

It was there Robert Stone found her. Coming round by the hedge, his footsteps making no noise on the grassy field-path, he took her so much by surprise that she gave a little start; but she did not speak—only looked up at him with grave dark eyes, in which there was a touch of fear.

It had given him a shock to come on her so suddenly. In her white dress she looked almost unreal, standing so motionless in the fading light. But he did not show it. He, too, leaned an arm on the gate, a little way from her, and looked down at her in silence.

He was the first to break it.

"This is a reward for being a good boy and going to church," he said, in his deep pleasant voice.

"Have you been to Blytheby?"

"Yes. This is a short cut home."

All was very still. A dog barked in the distance, and from the wheat-field beyond the wood came the harsh, grating note of the cornerake. Joyce tried in vain to think of something to say. She could imagine with what winning grace Felicity would have chatted to him; and here was she, feeling shy and foolish, standing silent as if under a spell, because Robert Stone lingered in pausing to say a few words! She told herself it was because he looked different to-night; he was wearing a well-cut lounge suit of the tweed and a bowler hat. But after another swift upward glance she knew it was not his clothes that made her feel so tongue-tied and nervous.

He stood with one foot on a bar of the gate, leaning towards her, and his gray eyes never left her face. Joyce kept here on the horizon, where the rose and gold of the sunset had faded to pearl and opal, and waited for him to speak. But he, too, seemed to have nothing to say. A line of Browning's had flashed into his mind—

"Never the time, and the place, and the loved one altogether," and he was thinking that for once the poet was wrong.

"I must go in," she said at length. "It is getting late. Good night, Mr. Stone."

"Ah, no, not just yet, please! Do stay a little longer. It is so peaceful, so beautiful here. And it seems so long since I saw you. I wonder if you have any notion how I have been looking out for you. Where have you been hiding yourself these three long days, little white rose?"

His voice had grown dangerously soft and low, and he put one brown hand over the white one lying on the gate.

Joyce trembled but did not speak. She could not.

"Why do you look so troubled?" he whispered. "Aren't you happy here with me? But what a fool I am! Why should you be? You haven't been thinking about me day and night. You haven't had the heartache."—How little he knew! Joyce thought, with a wildly-beating heart.—"But never mind me. Forget what I have said. Only remember we are friends, and tell me what is troubling you."

Should she tell him? Joyce wondered. She would never have a better chance. Perhaps he would clear up all this mystery. Surely it was only fair to let him explain if he could. Her courage returned at the mere thought, and drawing her hand away she took that letter from her pocket.

"I found this—in old Mr. Carleton's Bible," she said in a small shaky voice. "I—I think he wrote it. It's about you, Mr. Stone, and—and it upset me a little. Will you read it?"

He took it from her, and read it through twice. Then he gave it her back.

(To be continued.)

That Was All.

A little lad was found on the street crying very bitterly because his cart was broken.

A kindly disposed stranger endeavored to cheer up the little fellow by saying: "Never mind, my boy, your father can easily mend that."

"No, he can't," sobbed the boy. "My father is a preacher and don't know about anything."

Don't be a kicker, but if you feel that you must kick, put your best foot forward.

She looked at him doubtfully after the proposal. "The man I marry," she said, "must be both brave and brainy." "Well," he declared. "I think I can lay just claim to being both." "I admit you are brave," she responded, "for you saved my life when our boat upset the other day; but that wasn't brainy, was it?" "It certainly was," he retorted. 'I upset the boat on purpose."

A young lawyer had been appointed to defend a negro who was too poor to employ counsel for himself. Eager for an acquittal the young attorney challenged several jurors who, he said, might have a prejudice against his client. "Are there any others?" he whispered to the negro. "No, boss," said the defendant, "but Ah wants yo ter challenge dat Judge. Ah'se been convicted undah him several times now and Ah think he's got er prejudice ergainst me."

HOME

Pot Roasts.

Pot roasts have long been known among the thrifty poor, for by this method of cooking the coarse, cheap cuts of meat may be rendered tender and palatable. Moreover, very little fire suffices for a pot roast, and this is a great consideration when coal is at winter prices. An ordinary roast requires a prime joint of meat, a large fire and constant attention. A pot roast gives results almost as good with an inferior cut of meat, a small fire and scarcely any attention.

The primitive way of producing a pot roast is to use an iron saucepan, but it must be confessed that better results are obtained if use is made of a covered pot of coarse earthenware, which should be placed in the oven instead of being stood over the fire. Such a pot can be bought in many different sizes.

In pot roasting the meat is placed in the pot with a little boiling water; the lid is kept closely covered to shut in the steam, the heat of which penetrates the meat and softens the gelatine and the coarse fibres of the meat. By the time this is done the outer part of the meat begins to take unto itself the rich color and flavor which are usually associated with baked or roast meats. Even pot roasts can be modified to make them more savory than plainly cooked meat, and the directions below show how cheap and despised foods may be used to the best advantage.

Pot Roast Beef.—Take 6 pounds of brisket of beef and remove the bones and cartilage, which can be used later for soup making. Coil the beef and keep it in position with skewers and string. Place the beef in a saucepan with a pint of boiling water. Before putting on the lid cover the top of the pot with a layer of kitchen paper to shut in the steam. Place the saucepan in a hot oven or stand it over the fire and allow the water to boil rapidly for an hour. See that the pot does not boil dry. At the end of an hour stand the pot on the hob or in the corner of the kitchen range. Stand it in a cool part of the oven and in either case let the cooking continue slowly for three hours. This joint may be eaten hot, but it is more delicate if it is placed while hot under the pastry board with one or two flatirons on top and allowed to remain until it is quite cold.

Spiced Beef.—Take a piece of shin beef weighing about four pounds, brush over the outside with vinegar and dredge it lightly with powdered allspice. Place the meat in the pot with a pint of boiling water and proceed as for roast of beef, but let the slow cooking last for two and a half hours only. This may be eaten either hot or cold. If hot serve it with well boiled carrots, turnips and onions, mashed with a little butter; if cold serve salad or sliced cucumber as accompaniments.

Breast of Mutton.—Remove the skin from a breast of mutton, roll the breast and place it in a pot with a pint of boiling water. Cover the pot well and let the cooking proceed very briskly for an hour. At the end of that time lift out the breast and spread it on a chopping board. As soon as it is cool enough to handle remove all the bones. Mince finely a large Spanish onion, add a teacupful of white bread crumbs, a small teaspoonful of powdered sage and a seasoning of pepper and salt. Spread the mixture evenly over the surface of the breast of mutton, which should then be rolled round and secured with skewers and string. Replace the meat in the pot and allow the slow cooking to continue three hours. A savory variation of this dish can be made by omitting the sage and onion stuffing, and sprinkling the meat with a little curry powder before rolling it.

Oyster of Veal. — Buy three pounds of the stewing part of a shoulder of veal. Remove the bone and fill the cavity with a stuffing made of one-half pound of sausage meat mixed with a teaspoonful of chopped parsley and half a teaspoonful of sweet herbs. Place the meat in the pot with a pint of boiling water. Cover the pot closely, cook the meat fast for one hour and slowly for two. A great improvement will be found if a few rashers of bacon or thin slices of salt pork are placed in the pot when the slow cooking is commenced.

Household Hints.

Freshen leather by polishing with linseed oil.

It helps in the kitchen to use zinc on the working table.

If cauliflower is good, it is heavy and compact in appearance.

For layer cakes the oven should be hotter than for loaf cakes.

Ceilings must be white, as they are to reflect and diffuse the light.

When jelly will not set add the juice of a lemon or some white vinegar.

To prevent honey becoming "sugary" keep tightly covered and always in a dark place.

Warmed-up meat loses flavor, therefore the gravy should be very good and well seasoned.

Kneading boards and such things should be kept in a cupboard or some place entirely free from dust.

Keep a small box in the kitchen, and into this throw all matches. The contents of this box will be most useful for lighting fires.

Children's dresses may be rendered almost fireproof if in the last rinsing water, or in the starch in which they are stiffened, one ounce of alum or sal-ammoniac is dissolved.

To polish aluminum make a mixture of borax, ammonia and water. Apply with a soft cloth.

To waterproof boots melt together two parts of beeswax with one part of mutton fat and apply to the leather at night.

Soak new brooms in strong hot salt water before using; this toughens the bristles and makes the brooms last longer.

See that anything stored away for future use is tightly covered, otherwise it absorbs impurities or may taint eggs, butter and milk.

When making pies cut your apples into irregular pieces instead of slicing them. The pieces will not pack together as closely and will cook much more quickly.

For those having asparagus ferns that do not seem to grow try putting a spoonful of castor oil around the roots and notice the change in about six weeks.

If you rub a bit of dry soap across the new spool of silk you will not be bothered by having the silk unwind too quickly when threaded into the machine.

For home-made camphorated oil take one ounce turpentine, one ounce sweet oil, one cake of camphor. Cut camphor into small pieces, put into a bottle with turpentine and sweet oil, and shake well until dissolved. It is then ready for use.

Washing in hard water and neglecting to thoroughly dry the hands after washing are frequent causes of chaps and chilblains on the hands. The most effective water softener in winter is oatmeal, though a little trouble is entailed in preparing it for use.

When fruit for stewing is very acid, a pinch of borax will correct the acidity. It may not be generally known that to prevent the juice of fruit soaking into pudding or piecrust, thus making it heavy, the crust should be brushed over with beaten white of an egg.

Many persons are fond of baked fish but hesitate to have it often because the pan is so unpleasant and difficult to clean. If you will grease your pan well and then cut a piece of paper to fit the bottom of it, lay this on the greased pan and then grease the paper you will have no difficulty in cleaning the pan. The fish will come out easily and will not stick. Scalding water with a little washing soda will cleanse the pan quickly and thoroughly and leave it absolutely sweet with no lingering odor of fish.

CAPT. WILMOT S. NICHOLSON.

Naval Hero Always Lands in the Thick of Things.

In the battle in the North Sea the cruiser "Aurora," the first of those exceedingly fast vessels which have been completed and which are termed "destroyers of destroyers," was in action with the German cruiser Kolberg, and left her in a sinking condition. The captain of the Aurora is Wilmot S. Nicholson, a Scotchman whose parents, General and Mrs. Nicholson, live at St. Andrews. As commander of the Hogue he was mentioned in despatches for the seamanlike manner in which he took the Arethusa in tow on a pitch dark night after the naval action at Heligoland on August 28th.

It was in that same spirit of rendering aid to a helpless ship that led him to endeavor to rescue the Cressy, when she was torpedoed on September 21st, and when his own

Capt. Nicholson.

Who seems to find fighting everywhere.

cruiser, the Hogue, was also sent to the bottom. Captain Nicholson was one of the fortunate ones on that occasion, and soon afterwards he was made commander of the Aurora.

Numerous adventures have been the lot of Captain Nicholson during his 27 years in the navy. He joined in 1887 and two years later was on the Calliope at Samoa, when that vessel alone, by excellent seamanship of her captain, steamed out of the harbor to safety while seven other men-of-war of other nations were driven ashore. Later he was commander of the Prince George when she was rammed in a gale of wind in the Bay of Biscay, and having to do with the interior economy of the ship, he contributed largely to her being saved. In 1909 he gained his captaincy, and for some years held an appointment with the Admiralty.

The high esteem in which he was held was apparent when he was appointed to the Dreadnought as Flag Captain to Admiral Sir Charles Briggs, then commanding the Fourth Battle Squadron. This was his last appointment prior to that on the Hogue.

There is talk of building a $70,000 brewery at Fort George, B.C.

A youth always wants to marry a pretty girl because his parents want him to marry a sensible one.

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FROM MERRY OLD ENGLAND

NEWS BY MAIL ABOUT JOHN BULL AND HIS PEOPLE.

Occurrences in The Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

Serious floods have occurred in the upper parts of the Thames Valley.

A fourth Tyneside Irish Battalian is to be raised at Newcastle, thus forming an entire Irish Brigade.

A destructive fire occurred at Birmingham when the premises of Messrs. Baldwin were gutted.

Mr. Edwin White, the well-known yacht builder and marine engineer, died at Cowes on the 14th inst., at the age of 73.

The late Mr. Daniel Montgomery McKecknie, of St. Helens, Lancashire, metal extractor, left personality amounting to £72,875.

The 12-inch gun of a dreadnought is 50 feet long The cost is about $50,000, and it costs $500 each time it is fired.

Miss Annie Johnson, of Murton, Durham, who has just celebrated her 102nd birthday, has smoked a pipe for over 60 years.

A dramatic recruiting appeal is made by a new poster headed "Avenge Scarborough," and is helping recruiting a lot.

The death has occurred at Portsmouth, at the age of ninety-two, of Josiah Pearce, believed to be the oldest Crimean veteran.

Eight hundred trees are to be planted in Bermondsey streets to help unemployed and to beautify the streets at a cost of about $2,000.

One hundred and fifty German prisoners from Togoland have arrived at Liverpool under the guard of fifty native police and soldiers.

In Manchester in ten days lately 1,000 men enlisted. Since the outbreak of war the recruits from Manchester district have numbered 55,000.

It is calculated by March, when the great effort will be made by the Allies in France, Great Britain will have about a million men in the western field.

The heart of the cabinet-making district in London, New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, was the scene lately of a disastrous fire, which caused damage estimated at £10,000.

Mr. Thomas Wicks, the veteran cathedral chorister, who took part in three Coronations, has died at Wells. He had lived under six monarchs, and had sung before four of them.

There was a falling off of £98,388 in the Birmingham exports to the United States last quarter, as compared with the September quarter the figures being £194,524, against £292,912.

The Coopers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland has passed a resolution asking the Government to repeal the tax on beer and substitute a tax that will be more evenly borne by all.

The sudden distaste in England for things German has extended to German wines. "The demand for German hock and Moselle has completely disappeared," said a well-known wine merchant.

A baby born at Whitby just as the bombardment of the town began has been christened George Shrapnel, the first name in honor of the King and the second as a memento of the German attack.

The distinction has been conferred on the former Allan liner Australian of being placed in the Navy List as the flagship of Rear Admiral Dudley de Dhair an exceptional honor for a merchant ship.

During the past year 1,294 vessels of 1,722,154 tons were built in the United Kingdom. Germany came next with 184 ships of 505,719 tons, and the aggregate for all countries was 3,153 vessels of 3,471,937 tons.

The death is announced of Mr. Fred Winter, the author of the words of the well-known song "The Rosary." Mr. Winter has been a patient in the Royal Hospital for Incurables, Putney Heath, for nearly ten years.

Lancaster House, the treasure store of relics of Old London, now contains a new centre of attraction. This is the tooth of a mastodon, which was dug up during excavation work in South London. It is about a foot in length.

Cardinal Bourne has granted dispensation to the Catholics of England by which they may eat meat on Fridays and Fast-days. In a pastoral letter he says that this step is necessary because of the high price of fish and the usual substitutes for flesh.

It is reported that the Belgian refugees in England owing to the scarcity of English hands are being employed in the Lancashire woollen mills while others are teaching Lancashire girls the art of fine lace making in which they are so expert. This is expected to give a needed impetus to English lace making.

GERMANY IS BEATEN.

Military Peer Believes Kaiser's Forces Are Becoming Weaker.

Lord Sydenham, who is a noted authority on military subjects, contributes to the London Times an article reviewing the situation at the end of six months of war.

"No reasonable grounds for any reversal of the verdict of the past six months," he says, "can be suggested. Relatively to the allies the Germans must grow steadily weaker in men and material. Every plan of their strategists has come to naught. The surprise which the Germans held in store has not materialized and their vaunted Zeppelins are beginning to be regarded as failures.

"The inspired propaganda to which we have grown accustomed is peculiarly significant of the confidence in German arms and German valor having left. Victories have to be invented for popular consumption, and frantic efforts are being made to break the solidarity of the entente and to enlist the United States as champions of everything that they were created to prevent.

"The ruthless barbarity shown to non-combatants, the deliberate violation of all international conventions, framed to promote humanity in war; the mendacious reports spread by all available agencies; the violent diatribes directed against Great Britain—even the high honor preferred upon the obscure author of the 'Hymn of Hate'—combine to tell their fate to any student of psychology.

"When the leaders of a great nation resort to methods of this kind it is a sure indication that they believe their cause to be lost. Neither nations nor individuals villify opponents whom they feel able to overcome. Germany, though still unconquered, is beaten. And if the allies remain steadfast, sparing no effort and grudging no sacrifice, the forces already at work will complete what the Germans' lack of success on land and sea has begun."

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