

Deliciously warming - Hot Bouvil

EAST AND WEST

Fate brings together, in London, those whom war had parted in Russia.

Maroussia sat on the top of the bus and stared disconsolately into the yellowish London fog which eddied about her. Though it was only two o'clock in the afternoon, lamps glimmered here and there at street corners. But they only emphasized the general gloom, as the bus, leaving the busy West End, plunged into thoroughfares which seemed increasingly stolid and unattractive.

Anyone interested in Maroussia would have found some difficulty in placing her. The slight figure, in a well-cut but worn black tail-coat, was almost painfully thin. Of her face, shaded by a plain velour hat, little could be seen but a small tilted nose, a drooping mouth, and the pale contour of the rounded chin. Her hands closed listlessly in her lap over a shabby bag; the high-heeled shoes showed signs of hard wear, but she wore silk stockings.

However, no one took the slightest notice of her. It was Saturday afternoon, and life ebbed away from the city to the clang of descending iron shutters. Nearly all the seats were occupied by young people of both sexes, freed for a while from office fetters. Laughter and chaff made a pleasant contrast to Maroussia's silence.

Maroussia told herself, a little bitterly, that she even preferred the poky little bedroom in her fifth-rate boarding house to this congeniality from which she was excluded.

Her thoughts flew back to her Russian home, which she had left with such haste and at such risk to the happy time before the war and revolution, the easy life, the many friends, her beloved godmother with whom she had lived for the last ten years since her parents' death from cholera. Her eyes suddenly filled with a rush of scudding tears.

"Excuse me——"

The crisp, well-bred tones sounded so close to her that she gave a violent start. Surely she would have known that voice anywhere. It could not be—it was! And looking up through wet eyelashes with a sudden thumping joy, which set all the blood to her heart, she half rose from her seat uttering a glad cry: "North Anglia-chain!" (our Englishman).

"Maria Ivanovna—Maroussia—can it be you?" stammered the fresh-faced young man with the sleek fair hair.

Then, clasping hands, like children oblivious of the whole world, they sat close to each other on the jolting, swaying bus, which had suddenly turned into a celestial chariot.

After the first fire of cross-questions had subsided, Ronald Crawshay recited the situation.

"Look here," he said authoritatively. "I know a hopping place round here I haven't had time to teach, and if you have, you'll forget all about it. Do you remember the food, the food, the food we have at your jolly white house on the hill-top, and how the children ran after me, gaping at my Sam Brownes and my leather leggings? Ah! A British officer was 'some' person in South Russia then. Now I am just nothing—a hard-working clerk in my uncle's office. Not half bad, but give me the old days. Here we are. Come along, little lady!"

MOTHER! MOVE CHILD'S BOWELS

"California Fig Syrup" is
Child's Best Laxative



silver radiance—through the centuries—"

Her voice broke. She was crying. Ronald drew her towards him, his arms closing round her. And once more he asked caressingly:

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"Oh, Ronald, don't make me tell you, please!" And then in a passionate outburst: "Ronald, are you ashamed of me?"

"Ashamed—I? But my dearest, what made you think so?"

"It is only your mother! Oh, Ronnie, why haven't you taken me to see your mother?"

Ronald was silent. He had striven with himself for many weeks, seeking a solution. And now he could procrastinate no longer.

"Look here, sweetheart," he began, speaking very gently, "it's a very, very old story, and has really nothing to do with you; only, you know, elderly people have their prejudices—they can't help them. Now, my mother, who is very sweet and kind and all that, has an odd distrust of Russians."

Maroussia disengaged herself from the encircling arm and sat up very straight.

"Russian! Good heavens! Why, she doesn't even know me!"

"It isn't that," Ronald explained patiently, "Years ago she was engaged as the bride could be held; many, of course, had to be left behind. Ours was a small town and might not have fared so badly if the Soviet had not been under Ostankino."

"I remember—that red-haired lawyer—"

"Yes, he—he wanted me, and when you left, told me that nothing would happen to dear Aunt Varia or to me if I promised to marry him. At first I refused, but later I consented—and I—"

"Maroussia, my dear! That brute?"

"What could I do? There was my darling godmother, so old and frail, and everything getting so dear and we had so little left. But when the wedding day was fixed I suddenly realized what it meant and could not go through with it. I went down on my knees and begged and prayed him to release me."

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