

# THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

CHAPTER I—Eugene Bantry, a Canadian (Ind.) young man, who has been east to college, returned home and astounded the natives by the gorgeousness of his raiment. His stepbrother, Joe aged male gossip who daily assemble at the National House for argument as the good for nothing associate of doubtful characters. II—Eugene's appearance has a pronounced effect upon Mamie Pike, whose father, Judge Pike, is the wealthiest and most prominent citizen of Canaan. Joe worships Mamie from afar. Eugene interferes in a snow fight between Joe and his hoidenish and very poor girl friend, Ariel Tabor, who is worsted. Ariel hotly resents the interference and slaps Eugene, who sends her home. III—Ariel, unbecomingly attired, attends Mamie Pike's ball. IV—Joe, concealed behind some plants on the Pike veranda, watches hungrily for a glimpse of Mamie. Ariel is ignored by most of the guests. Ariel discovers Joe, but shortly afterwards, learning that her uncle, Jonas Tabor, has died suddenly, leaves. V—The Daily Tocsin of the next day tells of Joe's discovery on the Pike veranda and of his pursuit and escape therefrom. It also refers to wounds in the head of himself and of Norbert Flitcroft, who detected him. Joe retreats to the "Beach," a low resort kept by his friend, Mike Sheehan, who dresses his wound. VI—Joe leaves Mike's place. He visits Ariel Tabor, who by the death of her Uncle Jonas has become rich. She wishes Joe to accompany her and her grandfather to Paris. Joe refuses and leaves Canaan to avoid arrest for the trouble at Judge Pike's. VII—Joe is heard from two years later as a ticket seller for a side show. Eugene Bantry also meets him seven years later in a low resort in New York, but wisely refrains from adventuring it. VIII—Joe returns to Canaan a full fledged lawyer. Even his father ignores him, and he is refused accommodations at the National House. IX—Joe is welcomed at the "Beach," and "Happy Fear," one of Joe's admirers, seriously assaults Nashville Corey, a detractor. At the end of Happy's term in prison he visits Joe, who now has a law office on the square, with a living room adjoining. Joe has a large practice, principally among the lower classes, and is frequently attacked by the Tocsin. Joe begins, in his loneliness, to yield to the seduction of the bottle. Bantry's engagement to Mamie Pike is announced. Bantry is now associate editor of the Tocsin, owned by Judge Pike. X—Joe awakens after a "bad night" with the words, "Remember, across the Main-street bridge at noon," ringing in his ears. He goes there and is presently joined by the most beautiful and most beautifully girl he has ever seen. XI—She turns out to be Ariel Tabor, arrived in Canaan the night before from her long sojourn in Paris. She has seen Joe as she alighted from the train and, realizing his condition, had escorted him home after exacting from him a promise to meet her the next day (Sunday) across the Main-street bridge at noon. Joe learns that Ariel is stopping at Judge Pike's home, the judge having entire charge of her money, etc. XII—Eugene Bantry, although engaged to Mamie, is much smitten with Ariel's charms. Judge Pike tries his usual blustering tactics with Ariel, but subsides when she tells him that he shall ask him to turn over the care of her estate to Joe Louden. XIII—Ariel holds a sort of informal reception at Judge Pike's and learns that the "tough element" is talking of running Joe for mayor. XIV Happy Fear and Nashville Corey have more trouble. Joe corners Happy and sends Claudine (Mrs. Fear) to meet him. XV—Ariel visits Joe's affairs in his hands. While there Happy Fear rushes in and announces that he has killed Nashville Cory in self defense. Joe makes Happy give himself up. XVI—Mamie Pike admits to Ariel that she, too has begun to believe in Joe Louden. XVII—The Tocsin makes virulent attacks on Joe Louden and Happy Fear. Mike Sheehan hints that he may shortly have some interesting secrets to divulge in connection with Judge Pike's affairs. XVIII—The Tocsin continues its attacks. Judge Pike informs Ariel that her supposed fortune consists of valueless securities.

CHAPTER XX.

NOW, in that blazing noon Canaan looked upon a strange sight—an open carriage whirling through Main street behind two galloping bays, upon the back seat a ghostly white old man with closed eyes, supported by two pale ladies, his head upon the shoulder of the taller, while beside the driver a young man whose coat and hands were bloody, worked over the hurts of an injured dog. Sam Warden's whip sang across the horses; lather gathered on their flanks, and Ariel's voice steadily urged on the pace, "Quicker, Sam, if you can." For there was little breath left in the body of Eskew Arp.

Mamie, almost as white as the old man, was silent, but she had not been blind in her daring now that she had been sought to dare. She had not come to be Ariel's friend and honest follower for nothing, and it was Mamie who had cried to Joe to lift Eskew into the carriage. "You must come, too," she had said. "We will need you." And so it came to pass that under the

eyes of Canaan Joe Louden rode in Judge Pike's carriage at the bidding of Judge Pike's daughter.

Toward Ariel's own house they sped with the stricken octogenarian, for he was "alone in the world" and she would not take him to the cottage where he had lived for many years by himself, a bleak little house, a derelict of the "early days" left stranded far down in the town between a woolen mill and the water works. The workmen were beginning their dinners under the big trees, but as Sam Warden drew in the lathered horses at the gate they set down their tin buckets hastily and ran to help Joe lift the old man out. Carefully they bore him into the house and laid him upon a bed in one of the finished rooms. He did not speak or move, and the workmen uncovered their heads as they went out, but Joe knew that they were mistaken.

"It's all right, Mr. Arp," he said, as Ariel knelt by the bed with water and restoratives. "It's all right. Don't you worry."

Then the veteran's lips twitched, and, though his eyes remained closed, Joe saw that Eskew understood, for he gasped feebly, "Pos-i-tive-ly-no-free-seats!"

To Mrs. Louden, sewing at an upstairs window, the sight of her stepson descending from Judge Pike's carriage was sufficiently startling, but when she saw Mamie Pike take Respectability from his master's arms and carry him tenderly indoors, while Joe and Ariel occupied themselves with Mr. Arp, the good lady sprang to her feet as if she had been stung, regardlessly sending her workbasket and its contents scattering over the floor and ran down the stairs three steps at a time.

At the front door she met her husband, entering for his dinner, and she leaped at him. Had he seen? What was it? What had happened?

Mr. Louden rubbed his chin beard, indulging himself in a pause which was like to prove fatal to his companion, finally vouchsafing the information that the doctor's buggy was just turning the corner. Eskew Arp had suffered a "stroke," it was said, and, in Louden's opinion, was a mighty sick man. His spouse replied in no uncertain terms that she had seen quite that much for herself, urging him to continue, which he did with a deliberation that caused her to recall her wedding day with a gust of passionate self reproach. Presently he managed to interrupt, reminding her that her dining room windows commanded as comprehensive a view of the next house as did the front steps, and after a time her housewifely duty so far prevailed over her indignation at the man's unwholesome stolidity that she followed him down the hall to preside over the meal, not, however, to partake largely of it herself.

Mr. Louden had no information of Eugene's mishap, nor had Mrs. Louden any suspicion that all was not well with the young man, and, hearing him enter the front door, she called to him that his dinner was waiting. Eugene, however, made no reply and went upstairs to his own apartment without coming into the dining room.

A small crowd, neighboring children, servants and negroes, had gathered about Ariel's gate, and Mrs. Louden watched the workmenmen disperse this assembly, gather up their tools and depart. Then Mamie came out of the house and, bowing sadly to three old men who were entering the gate as she left it, stepped into her carriage and drove away. The newcomers, Colonel Flitcroft, Squire Buckalew and Peter Bradbury, glanced at the doctor's buggy, shook their heads at one another and slowly went up to the porch, where Joe met them. Mrs. Louden uttered a sharp exclamation, for the colonel shook hands with her stepson.

Perhaps Flitcroft himself was surprised. He had offered his hand almost unconsciously, and the greeting was embarrassed and perfunctory, but his two companions, each in turn, gravely followed his lead, and Joe's set face flushed a little. It was the first time in many years that men of their kind in Canaan had offered him this salutation.

"He wouldn't let me send for you," he told them. "He said he knew you'd be here soon without that." And he led the way to Eskew's bedside.

Joe and the doctor had undressed the old man and had put him into nightgown of Roger Tabor's taken from an antique chest. It was soft and yellow and much more like color than the face above it, for the white hair on the pillow was not whiter than that. Yet there was a strange youthfulness in the eyes of Eskew, an eerie, inexplicable, luminous, live look. The thin cheeks seemed fuller than they had been for years, and, though the heavier lines of age and sorrow could be seen, they appeared to have been half-erased. He lay not in sunshine, but in clear light. The windows were open, the curtains restrained, for he had asked them not to darken the room.

The doctor was whispering in a doctor's way to Ariel at the end of the

room opposite the bed when the three old fellows came in. None of them spoke immediately, and, though all three cleared their throats with what they meant for casual cheerfulness to indicate that the situation was not at all extraordinary or depressing, it was to be seen that the colonel's chin trembled under his mustache, and his comrades showed similar small and unwilling signs of emotion.

Eskew spoke first. "Well, boys?" he said and smiled.

That seemed to make it more difficult for the others. The three white heads bent silently over the fourth upon the pillow, and Ariel saw waveringly, for her eyes suddenly filled, that the colonel laid his unsteady hand upon Eskew's, which was outside the coverlet.

"It's—it's not," said the old soldier gently—"it's not on—on both sides, is it, Eskew?"

Mr. Arp moved his hand slightly in answer. "It ain't paralysis," he said. "They call it 'shock and exhaustion,' but it's more than that. It's just my time. I've heard the call. We've all been slidin' on this ice this long time—and it's broke under me!"

"Eskew, Eskew!" remonstrated Peter Bradbury. "You'd oughtn't to talk that-a-way! You only kind of overdone a little—heat o' the day, too, and—"

"Peter," interrupted the sick man, with feeble asperity, "did you ever manage to fool me in your life?"

"No, Eskew."

"Well, you're not doin' it now!"

Two tears suddenly loosed themselves from Squire Buckalew's eyelids despite his hard endeavor to wink them away, and he turned from the bed too late to conceal what had happened. "There ain't any call to feel bad," said Eskew. "It might have happened any time—in the night, maybe—at my house—and all alone—but here's Ariel Tabor brought me to her own home

and takin' care of me. I couldn't ask any better way to go, could I?"

"I don't know what we'll do," stammered the colonel, "if you—you talk about goin' away from us, Eskew. We—we couldn't get along!"

"Well, sir, I'm almost kind of glad to think," Mr. Arp murmured, between short struggles for breath, "that it'll be—quieter—on the—National House corner."

A moment later he called the doctor faintly and asked for a restorative. "There," he said in a stronger voice and with a gleam of satisfaction in the vindication of his belief that he was dying. "I was almost gone then. I know!" He lay panting for a moment, then spoke the name of Joe Louden.

Joe came quickly to the bedside. "I want you to shake hands with the colonel and Peter and Buckalew."

"We did," answered the colonel, infinitely surprised and troubled. "We shook hands outside before we came in."

"Do it again," said Eskew. "I want to see you."

And Joe, making shift to smile, was suddenly blinded, so that he could not see the wrinkled hands extended to him and was fain to grope for them.

"God knows why we didn't all take his hand long ago," said Eskew Arp. "I didn't because I was stubborn. I hated to admit that the argument was against me. I acknowledge it now before him and before you—and I want the word of it carried!"

"It's all right, Mr. Arp," began Joe tremulously. "You musn't—"

"Hark to me." The old man's voice lifted higher. "If you'd ever whimpered or give back talk or broke out the wrong way it would of been different, but you never did. I've watched you, and I know. And you've just gone your own way alone, with the town against you because you got a bad name as a boy, and once we'd given you that, everything you did or didn't do we had to give you a blacker one. Now it's time some one stood by you. Ariel Tabor'll do that with all her soul and body. She told me once I thought a good deal of you. She knew. But I want these three old friends of mine to do it too. I was boys with them, and they'll do it, I think. They've even stood up for you against me sometimes, but mostly for the sake of the argument, I reckon, but now they must do it when there's more to stand against than just my talk. They saw it all today—the meanest thing I ever knew! I could of stood it all except that!" Before they could prevent him he had struggled half upright in bed, lifting a clenched fist at the town beyond the windows. "But, by God, when they got so low down they tried to kill your dog!"

He fell back, choking in Joe's arms, and the physician bent over him, but Eskew was not gone, and Ariel, upon the other side of the room, could hear him whispering again for the restorative. She brought it, and when he had taken it went quickly out of doors to the side yard.

She sat upon a workman's bench under the big trees, hidden from the street shrubbery, and, breathing deeply of the shaded air, began to cry quietly. Through the windows came the quavering voice of the old man, lifted again, insistent, a little querulous, but determined. Responses sounded intermittently from the colonel, from Peter and from Buckalew, and now and then a sorrowful, yet almost humorous protest from Joe; and so she made out that the veteran swore his three comrades to friendship with Joseph Louden, to lend him their countenance in all matters, to stand by him in weal and woe, to speak only good of him and defend him in the town of Canaan. Thus did Eskew Arp, on the verge of parting this life render justice.

The gate creaked, and Ariel saw Eugene approaching through the shrubbery. One of his hands was bandaged, a thin strip of courtplaster crossed his forehead from his left eyebrow to his hair and his thin and agitated face showed several light scratches.

"I saw you come out," he said. "I've been waiting to speak to you."

"The doctor told us to let him have his way in whatever he might ask," Ariel wiped her eyes. "I'm afraid that means—"

"I didn't come to talk about Eskew Arp," interrupted Eugene. "I'm not laboring under any anxiety about him. You needn't be afraid; he's too sour to accept his conge so readily."

"Please lower your voice," she said, rising quickly and moving away from him toward the house; but, as he followed, insisting sharply that he must speak with her, she walked out of earshot of the windows and, stopping, turned toward him. "Very well," she said. "Is it a message from Mamie?"

At this he faltered and hung fire.

"Have you been to see her?" she continued. "I am anxious to know if her goodness—ad bravery caused her any—any—"

"You n— your mind at rest about that," retura Eugene. "I was there when the judge came home to dinner. I suppose you fear he may have been rough with her for taking my stepbrother into the carriage. He was not. On the contrary, he spoke very quietly to her and went on out toward the stables. But I haven't come to you to talk of Judge Pike either."

"No," said Ariel; "I don't care particularly to hear of him, but of Mamie."

"Nor of her either!" he broke out. "I want to talk of you!"

There was no mistaking him, no possibility of misunderstanding the real passion that shook him, and her startled eyes betrayed her comprehension.

"Yes, I see you understand!" he cried bitterly. "That's because you've seen others the same way. God help me," he went on, striking his forehead with his open hand, "that young fool of a Bradbury told me you refused him only yesterday! He was proud of even rejection from you! And there's Norbert and half a dozen others, perhaps, already since you've been here. He flung out his arms in ludicrous, savage despair. "And here am I—"

"Ah, yes," she cut him off. "It is of yourself that you want to speak after all, not of me!"

"Look here," he vociferated. "Are you going to marry that Joe Louden? I want to know whether you are or not. He gave me this and this today!" He touched his bandaged hand and plastered forehead. "He ran into me—over me—for nothing when I was not on my guard, struck me down—stamped on me!"

She turned upon him, cheeks aflame, eyes sparkling and dry.

"Mr. Bantry," she cried, "he did a good thing! And now I want you to go home. I want you to go home and try if you can discover anything in yourself that is worthy of Mamie and of what she showed herself to be this morning! If you can, you will have found something that I could like!"

She went rapidly toward the house, and he was senseless enough to follow, babbling: "What do you think I'm made of? You trample on me, as he did! I can't bear everything! I tell you—"

But she lifted her hand with such imperious will that he stopped short. Then through the window of the sick-room came clearly the querulous voice: "I tell you it was. I heard him speak just now—out there in the yard—that no account stepbrother of Joe's! What if he is a hired hand up his job and quit than do what he's done to help make the town think hard of Joe. And what is he? Why, he's worse than Cory. When that Claudine Fear first came here, Gene Bantry was hangin' around her himself. Joe knew it, and he'd never tell, but I will. I saw 'em buggy ridin' out near Beaver Beach, and she slapped his face for him. It ought to be told!"

"I didn't know that Joe knew—that," Eugene stammered huskily. "It was—it was—a long time ago!"

"If you understood Joe," she said in a low voice, "you would know that before these men leave this house he will have their promise never to tell."

His eyes fell miserably, then lifted again, but in her clear and unbearable gaze there shone such a flame of scorn as he could not endure to look upon. For the first time in his life he saw a true light upon himself, and, though the vision was darkling, the revelation was complete.

"Heaven pity you!" she whispered.

Eugene found himself alone and stumbled away, his glance not lifted. He passed his own home without looking up and did not see his mother beckoning frantically from a window. She ran to the door and called him. He did not hear her, but went on toward the Tocsin office with his head still bent.

(Continued Next Sunday)

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### ...Paul Oblonsky's Ruse...

(Original)

Paul Oblonsky, a Russian comedian, having become interested with his countrymen in the cause of political liberty, left the stage and became a writer in behalf of the czar.

While Oblonsky was publishing his pamphlets, which were all eminently satisfactory to the government, he was engaged in disseminating literature of an entirely different kind. He made journeys from his home to different points to organize, advise and encourage different secret societies that represented the most radical element of the revolution. Of course the day came when he was reported to the police as a suspect, but so wary had he been that the chief would not believe he was a revolutionist.

One day a telegram came to the police at St. Petersburg that a meeting of revolutionists had been broken up at Moscow and a man resembling Paul Oblonsky had got away. The chief sent at once to Oblonsky's house to discover if he was at home. The man who went on the errand knew Oblonsky by sight and as he approached the house saw him sitting at an upper window. He returned and reported the fact to his superior.

Not long after this a spy of the government in Warsaw reported that Oblonsky was one of a band of conspirators, of which he (the spy) was also a member. Still doubting the truth of information implicating a man who had deflected the government, the chief sent the same messenger he had used before to Oblonsky's house. On the way the messenger met Oblonsky in a carriage driving with his sister.

The chief was puzzled. Those who use spies are never certain but that they are spies of the enemy. However, he telegraphed orders that if at any time Oblonsky was seen in Warsaw the occurrence be at once reported. In a few days a telegram came announcing that Oblonsky had been seen entering that city from the suburbs in a drosky. The informant was not in the pay of the government; therefore Oblonsky was not followed. The chief sent one of his best men at once to Oblonsky's house, directing him to make sure whether or no Oblonsky was there. He was to go in and speak with him. Oblonsky had been seen entering Warsaw an hour before the receipt of the telegram. He surely would not have had time to return before the official could get to his house. As the messenger approached he looked up at the window where Oblonsky was accustomed to read or write, but he was not there. Entering the house, he found Oblonsky's old mother.

"I have called," he said, "to get a copy of your son's last political pamphlet for the chief of police. It is reported that there are in it some features objectionable to the government."

"Indeed," said the old lady, "I will call my son, who will hand you one himself." Thereupon she went upstairs, and who should come down but Oblonsky himself, with the pamphlet in his hand. The official wished him good day, took the pamphlet and returned to the chief. Immediately an order was sent to Warsaw to send the person who had seen Oblonsky entering the city to St. Petersburg. A man arrived the next day who declared that he knew Oblonsky well, and he had certainly seen him as he had reported. The chief sent for Oblonsky ostensibly to discuss the objectionable passage in his pamphlet, but really to subject him to the view of the informer from Moscow. The informer at once declared that Oblonsky was the man he had seen in the drosky entering Warsaw.

The chief was now satisfied that there had been a mistake. He gave orders for the secret police to watch those who had reported against Oblonsky, thinking that they might be revolutionists endeavoring to get rid of a friend of the government.

One morning an official occupying a high position in the government was found murdered in his office. Among those reported to have left the office shortly before the finding of the body was Oblonsky. For the first time the chief began to believe that Oblonsky was a revolutionist, and if so he must be one of the most adroit as well as most dangerous of the lot. The chief did not order Oblonsky's arrest, but surrounded his house with spies. They reported that every morning and afternoon Oblonsky sat at his window writing. But when they reported that with the most careful watching they could not detect the slightest movement the chief sent an official to arrest him.

The official found the suspected man's mother and sister, who declared that Oblonsky was in his room writing an important article in defense of the government and had given orders that he was not to be interrupted. The official brushed past them and went upstairs to the room. There sat Oblonsky, but not a whit startled at the interruption, for he did not even look up. He was a dummy, the exact image of Oblonsky. Oblonsky had left St. Petersburg the morning of the assassination and was now being smuggled across the frontier.

The moment the official saw the dummy he remembered having seen Oblonsky on the mimic stage in a play wherein it was necessary to make him appear there while absent changing his costume. For this purpose a lay figure had been constructed so nearly like the actor that the closest scrutiny from the audience could not detect the fraud. The figure had represented the Revolutionist at his window except on the occasion of his having been driving both in St. Petersburg and Warsaw. His sister had taken it to Warsaw for the purpose of misleading the police.

T. EUGENE DRAPER.