

MAIL THE DAY BREAK

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SYNOPSIS: Joscelyn Ware, a London journalist who is engaged in exposing the wrongs of the laboring classes, befriends Lily Childers and her baby son. Lily has been married to a worthless scamp passing as Hugh Childers. In reality his name is Noel Palliser. As the police are on the point of arresting him for swindling he pretends to commit suicide, and thus escapes. Joscelyn and Lily go into the country, near London, that the woman and her baby may recover from the hardships they have undergone.

Near where they are staying lives the Palliser family, which is interested in a tea-house company which Joscelyn has been investigating. The head of the family has died but recently, and a large fortune has devolved upon the elder son, Clive, with a substantial legacy for Noel.

Lily recognizes Noel Palliser as her supposedly dead husband as he is bringing home another bride. She seeks an interview with Noel, and is murdered by him. The crime is, however, attributed to a tramp.

Clive Palliser becomes much interested in Joscelyn Ware, and promises to support Lily's child. He is called to London by a strike of the employes of Kiosks, Limited, of which he is the managing director.

dressed the crowd, had been interviewed, and was not averse to her photograph appearing in the Daily Dial. "Kitty" too, was a pretty name. It slipped glibly and crisply from the tongue. Stephen Scooper, of the Daily Dial, knew the value of these things. So he had boomed "Kitty" for all she was worth. But he was reserving his heavy fire in the shape of Joscelyn's

and shoulders were visible as he passed, and she saw his features quite distinctly. But she did not associate him with the missing letter. It was a letter of sympathy, and offered help, with mention of cut flowers dispatched at Clive Palliser's request, and only of value to herself. "A pleasant-spoken gentleman," commented Mrs. Faulder, "and I shall be curious, miss, to see what



(CONTINUED FROM LAST SUNDAY.)

CHAPTER XIII

(Continued.)



MRS. FAULDER'S return to the parlor she found Joscelyn Ware, and gave some account of the gentleman who wished to sketch both the Hall and the cottage, before retiring.

Joscelyn had brought with her from the room above both a letter and a telegram. The letter, that she had found awaiting her on her return from the funeral, was the one penned by Clive Palliser in the small hours of that morning after he had attended to the affairs of Kiosks, Limited. The reading of it had touched her very deeply, though just at a moment when the fact that the paper on which it was written was embossed with "Kiosks, Ltd.," had caused the other side of the man's nature to intrude itself uncomfortably upon her thoughts.

The very words, "Kiosks, Ltd.," stood in her sight for oppression and the ugly tyranny of capitalism. Yet what had been written below them had given her a deeper insight into the sensitive thoughtfulness and the penetrative, delicate understanding of the writer. He was becoming more and more of an anomaly as he revealed himself to her. And he was undoubtedly unfolding himself to her with a remarkable rapidity, under the influence of the humanity that was being quickened within him. Their acquaintance was but a matter of days, but big human and tragic issues had been crowded into the brief space of time, and one stressful hour is often sufficient for the formation of a close friendship or a deadly enmity. No man had hitherto made such an impression on Joscelyn as he had done, no other man had ever furnished her with so much food for thought. He was compelling her deep admiration, and at the same time awakening most uncomfortable regrets by reason of the other side to his nature.

And, vice versa, no woman had so far taken such a hold on Clive Palliser's imagination as Joscelyn Ware had done. He had never been a woman-hater, but his opinion of the sex had not been an exalted one. He was—as the phrase goes—most eligible part. Women had, in plain terms, done their best to hook him, and his penetrative nature had seen through their efforts. He had despised them accordingly. He looked upon the women who were crowding into the labor market from another aspect, as representing a phase in modern political economy. They were cheapening the price of labor, an obvious advantage to such a large employer of human labor as himself. Now a woman had come into his life who had commanded his respect and admiration. She was a woman worker, but he had detached her from his general views. Directness was one of his characteristics. He never shrinked an issue, nor flinched from an admission where he himself was concerned. And after the penning of the letter, which at this moment Joscelyn was reading a second time, he had looked directly into his own heart in his searching way, and recognized that she had installed herself in a place there. It had taken him a back, as a man is taken a back when he suddenly discovers an intruder, whether it be in his heart or hiding under his bed.

Joscelyn laid aside the letter, and turned to the telegram, delivered what time Mr. Charles Bowater—according to cards—was on the premises. It was from Stephen Scooper, the editor of the Daily Dial.

"Article appears tomorrow," it ran. "Must have more articles on the same subject. See me some time today, if possible. Wire reply."

In the words of one of the sub-editors, "Scooper was going for Kiosks, Limited, bald-headed." Joscelyn's article had whetted his appetite for more. It had surpassed his expectations. That was the kind of hot, live, convincing stuff that he wanted. It had arrived at the psychological, journalistic moment, a most admirable follow-up to the disturbances in the Tottenham Court road and the Euston road.

Joscelyn's reply had been laconic:

"Sorry. Impossible."

Who shall say what inspired that answer? At the moment of penning it she had told herself that she had written all she had to write on the matter, and the needs of the child under her care claimed her immediate attention. There was so much to be done. But she had also experienced that pricking so suggestive of an uneasy conscience. Was she compromising, also, with her principles, under the influence of Clive Palliser's very human, delicate letter? It was a kind of double pricking on the part of her conscience. Under the circumstances, considering Clive Palliser's attitude toward her and Lily's child, had she done well and fairly in the writing of the one article? But, well or not, the situation was beyond repair now. And her face flushed. Her principles and her shamefulness of her own sex were intense things. She was no banner-wagger, hysterical, self-advertising creature of the kind that does a cause more harm than good. The respect and the sympathy of the public must be aroused, not converted into disgust and ridicule by unsexlike buffoonery.

Her conscience was again stabbing, in twin-fashion. Was she a traitor to her principles in not going on? Had she treated the man fairly, who was scheming with such delicate understanding for Lily's child's?

article for the morrow. In this issue all that had been written on the subject of Kiosks' disturbances was in the reporting and interview style. The methods of the company were not actually indicted, except by Kitty in her interview. The weight of the paper was not behind the matter. Scooper was reserving a leading article on the subject for the morrow. In his big campaign against Kiosks he was not relying solely on Joscelyn's one article. His journalistic hawk's were out in quest of anything in evidence against the company. Employes were being interviewed. There would be no need, in this case, to stimulate correspondence by writing the first letter in the office.

According to Kitty's interview, the trouble had originated, as follows: One of the girls employed at the Tottenham Court road branch of Kiosks had written to Mr. Dietrich Schneiderkopf, the company's manager, complaining of the bad and insufficient food supplied the employes of that particular branch, alleging that in many cases it consisted of the scraps from the customers' plates of the previous day hashed up. She had also complained that, apart from the food being bad, there was no time to attempt to eat it, granted one had the courage. The answer to her letter had been instant dismissal. The food question and her allegations, true or untrue, had not been investigated.

Joscelyn had a sensitive face, quick to flush. It was hot to the eye now as she read. She had had experience of the food supplied to Kiosks' employes. Had the depts been properly staffed, there would have been sufficient time for meals; but, as it was, despite regulations about meals and hours, it was a case of snatching food when opportunity occurred. And food—good, wholesome food—with time to eat it was a worker's right. It was iniquitous, in Joscelyn's eyes, that this company, which paid 33 per cent. should deduct from the women's slender wage for the laundering of their cuffs and caps—six to twelve shillings for a week's labor that frequently ran into over seventy hours.

Joscelyn read on. The staff of the Tottenham Court road branch had demanded an investigation and the reinstatement of the dismissed employe, to be dismissed themselves in a body. They had, however, enlisted the sympathy of the public and persuaded those employes who had been brought up to take their places to refrain from doing so. The branch had been closed temporarily. Kitty, evidently a firebrand girl, but not much of an organizer, had taken upon herself in her interview the responsibility of the later disturbance in the Euston road. She had, as she told the reporter, suddenly boiled over, sprung upon one of the marble-topped tables and, amid the cheers of several ardent male admirers, called upon her fellow-employes to show their sympathy by following her from the shop. How she subsequently climbed atop a cat, was arrested and bailed out; how an admirer of hers struck a constable and went, proud as a hero, to the station, has been narrated.

When the interviewer asked, Kitty what the likely outcome would be, she had shaken her "pretty" head—Daily Dial readers liked little touches of that kind, and were consequently supplied with them—and replied that she "Didn't quite know," and then added, with a charming twinkle of violet eyes, "Perhaps I shall start a tea-shop of my own."

Joscelyn smiled faintly, and looked again at the charming photograph. Very fascinating. Then her thoughts traveled to the plain, anxious-faced girls, who were not attractive, who did not work for pocket money, who had not male admirers, for whom no capital would be forthcoming to start tea-shops for themselves, to whom a weekly wage of something between six to twelve shillings represented clothes, lodging and partial board. The employes of Kiosks were responsible for their own breakfasts.

And the flush on her face deepened, and her mouth grew tight.

She wondered how matters had progressed on this day? Had the closed branches been restaffed and opened as usual? Would the employes have the courage and the self-sacrifice to combine in a body? She did not think so. Capital would probably triumph.

sort of a picture he'll make of the cottage, and I'm wondering if he'd care for me and Tom to be standing in the porch, just natural-like." Then she looked about her again. "Well, well, he's the only person who's been in this room, except you and me, miss, and he couldn't have taken the letter."

"I suppose I must have put it somewhere—and forgotten," said Joscelyn.

Then she listened. The child was awake, and she went upstairs to him quickly.

Her thoughts were in another channel as she gathered him up in her arms. What a wonderful thing a small baby was! What must it be like to possess one—of one's own?

Then a churchyard scene played itself vividly before her eyes, and something splashed down on the mile's face.

Presently Joscelyn told herself that she must force her thoughts into a more practical groove. She must make definite arrangements for the child's future along the lines mapped out by Clive Palliser. Also, she simply could not afford to neglect her work.

Again uneasiness pounced on her. For herself, it mattered nothing. But it was conceivable that her article on the methods of Kiosks, Limited, might react unfavorably on the child's future when the author's name became known.

CHAPTER XIV

A CERTAIN amount of grim satisfaction was expressed on his features as Clive Palliser prepared to quit the head offices of Kiosks, Limited, after having crammed two days' work into one. On the following afternoon he intended returning to Eidon. He had been sarcastically amused with the Daily Dial's account of the disturbances. It had been characteristic of the paper's methods that it had thrust Kitty Lascelles' picture in a prominent place and generally gushed over her. The two branches had been restaffed and opened. There had been nothing approaching a real disturbance. The dismissed employes had endeavored in a feeble kind of way to picket the two establishments and prevent customers from patronizing them, but they were only a handful, and the police had judiciously moved them on. The bulk of the employes had remained unmoved. The outbreak, as he had told Schneiderkopf, had been sporadic. Women lacked the power of combination, and the majority realized on which side of their bread the butter lay. Many of the papers had given humorous descriptions of what had happened. It had been merely a flash in the pan. Clive Palliser had decided not to send the letter penned on the previous evening to press.

In his abrupt, sarcastic way he had told Schneiderkopf that he anticipated seeing Kitty Lascelles shortly started at the music halls at a fabulous salary. She would find that far more paying than running a tea-shop of her own.

The many clerks at the head offices thanked heaven silently when the managing director took his departure at a comparatively early hour for him.

He was a man of simple habits, and his town house, one of his father's legacies, was far too big for him, but he kept it up as a matter of form. Its size and loneliness impressed him when he reached it.

When, after a solitary meal, he found himself in the library, he went to the telephone and was put in communication with Eldon Hall. His brother Noel answered him.

"How's William Caul?" asked Clive.

"He's—still—alive. They seem to think today that he might pull round. The hemorrhage has stopped."

"You had those flowers sent?"

"Yes."

"I shall be with you tomorrow afternoon," said Clive after a pause.

He put down the instrument and lit a cigar. Then, looking directly into his heart, he beheld the intruder still there. He had been so busy, so absorbed in his many enterprises, that he had not had time to contemplate matrimony. Also, no woman had so far provided him with an ideal.

"By heaven!" he said, suddenly pacing the room furiously, as if staggered at himself, "I'm in love!"

It was so, and with his usual quickness he had recognized the fact.

It was late when he went to bed, and then slept never a wink. He saw her, beautiful, motherly, nursing a dead woman's child in her arms; he pictured her bravely fighting her way through life, a woman worker, Joscelyn Ware.

He was in love. The ideal woman had come into his life. But what place did he hold in her thoughts? That was the question he asked as he rose, early next morning. It was not much past dawn. He went to the window and drew back the blind.

DAILY DIAL THE METHODS OF KIOSKS, LIMITED.

Clive Palliser almost permitted himself the luxury of an "O" at the sight. But his teeth clicked on it, and his mouth went most uncompromisingly hard. So long as the Daily Dial had been content to interview Kitty Lascelles, publish her portrait and describe the recent disturbances in reporting, semi-humorous style, it had not mattered so much, though sufficiently annoying. But the contents-bill was sufficient in itself to explain to him the Daily Dial's attitude and purpose. The matter was going to be taken up seriously.



That contents-bill split a leading article and a special correspondent to Clive. He might belittle the power of the press, and overvalue the power of advertisement as an influence with editors, but he was compelled to acknowledge the power of the Daily Dial to boom or "damn." The editorial weight had not been behind the matter of the previous day. But this contents-bill proclaimed it to be there now. Let the public take these so-called grievances of the employes seriously, let the employes themselves realize that they were being taken seriously and had public opinion at their backs, and the strike that he had dismissed as improbable might become reality.

Shares were sensitive things. There were any number of so-called humanitarians—in his slight meddling busy-bodies—ready to espouse any cause on mere hearsay facts, and rush into print and pamphlets and exaggerated language about white slavery and the need for combination of unions and so forth. In the drapery business this was already being done. An outcry had gone up against the "living-in" system, a union had been formed, and employes were showing a tendency to trim their sails to the wind. But the cry of the tea-shop girl had not yet been raised loudly enough to concentrate serious attention upon her conditions of life.

Clive dropped the blind. Dawn had not long broken. He was not the kind of man to be flustered. He belonged to the order of cool, hard-hitting fighters, whose brain was behind his blows. But he recognized now that he was in for a big fight—Clive Palliser, chairman and managing director of Kiosks, Limited, vs. the Daily Dial.

A moment before the passing of the newspaper cart he had not only admitted the presence of the intruder who had installed herself in his heart and recognized her effect on it, but also in his direct way he had looked beyond. He was no sentimental youth to make a mistake as to the nature of his feelings. He was in love, and the issue of such love was marriage or not marriage, an issue which rested normally at least with the woman. He had not slept a wink during the night, but his thoughts had not been of a vague, philandering, godless, sentimental kind. He was a dominating nature, spoilt by and somewhat self-conceited from success, but he had not—do him what justice—decided that the fact that he loved her was sufficient reason in itself for Joscelyn to marry him. He would make love as strenuously and directly as he transacted business, and put the matter to the issue at the first decent opportunity.

This had been the trend of his thoughts when the newspaper cart passed. And it was a tribute to Joscelyn Ware that Clive Palliser, as a rule the most certain and arrogantly confident of men, had not ventured to decide what the issue would be beforehand. He had never known such a wretched feeling of uncertainty, such vague, dismal pessimism, on any memorable previous occasion. Of this he was sure: The ideal woman had come into his life, and the meaning of the word "love" had been revealed to him. And his love was not proved the less intense by the fact that, hard upon its revelation, he had immediately proceeded to look into the future practically.

But the passing of a newspaper cart and a contents-bill had changed the tenor of his thoughts. One of the reasons of his success was his power of detachment. He pulled down a thought-proof shutter on love, sentiment and Joscelyn Ware, and concentrated on Clive Palliser vs. the Daily Dial as he went to the bathroom for his cold tub. He was considering the same conflict as he snaved himself with his usual methodic care.

There was no undue rushing to obtain a copy of the paper. He was always an early riser. When he entered the library, one of his private secretaries, looking as if he would have welcomed another hour of bed, was waiting him, prepared to get through an hour and a half's work before breakfast. Almost at the same moment a manservant entered with a budget of morning papers, and proceeded to spread them out on their proper table. Clive crossed the room and selected the Daily Dial. He opened it deliberately. Haste would have been an admission of weakness.

"THE CRY OF THE TEA-SHOP GIRL" was set in larger type and topped the wording already displayed on the placard—"The Methods of Kiosks, Limited."

Clive did not immediately read what followed. His eyes, very blue and hard, traveled to the space in the paper devoted to the leading articles. Here the heading was more laconic, simply "Kiosks, Limited." On the opposite page, amid much matter on the same subject, was the portrait of Kitty Lascelles. It had proved so popular on the previous day that Stephen Scooper had decided to repeat it.

But there was nothing frivolous about the tone of the leading article, though Kitty's charming portrait might hardly suggest slavery, bad food, under-pay and over-work. No humorous description about the leading article. It referred the reader for detail to other columns, and proceeded to a general indictment of the company and its methods. Its general tone was that of a weighty judge, reviewing the evidence against a defendant, at the same time sunning up dead against him on the strength of it. The writer called the reader's attention to the current quotation of Kiosks shares in the financial column, and pointed out that the last half-yearly dividend was equivalent to thirty-three per cent per annum; that this same company paid its employes wages varying from six to twelve shillings for a week of nominally sixty hours, but which in practice ran into over seventy, sometimes eighty hours. Again the writer referred the reader to other columns, to the opinions of employes, but chiefly to the eloquent, living article, with its appropriate title, "The Cry of the Tea-shop Girl," by the Daily Dial's special lady commissioner, whose moving articles on "London by Night," dealing with the outcast women of a great city, had made such a profound sensation.

Clive Palliser turned to the columns in question, and read what Joscelyn Ware had written and the editor of the Daily Dial had amended, strengthened where he thought it would stand strengthening, and added high color where high color seemed commendable, to say

nothing of interspersing the matter with big-typed captions at intervals. The authorship was covered by "Our Special Lady Commissioner."

Clive Palliser read it slowly, read every word; read the description of a day in the life of one of his employes, as Joscelyn had experienced it; read the restrained but throbbing appeal for fair conditions for the woman worker, and happened upon the phrase that the woman worker of today was the mother of tomorrow. Factory and workshop had been legislated for, but not the woman clerk and the tea-shop girl. Economic conditions were daily driving more and more women into the labor market, but conditions of labor and living that helped to unsex them and unfit them for motherhood—because they worked they did not cease to be women—were a sin against God's most wonderful design of creation.

Clive Palliser read on, his mouth hard and his eyes very blue. Women might work, but though a few perverted creatures might try to fly in the teeth of eternal design and give the lie to a truth, wifehood and motherhood were included in every true woman's aspirations.

And then Clive Palliser read of the ugliest side of underpaid woman's labor under joyless conditions, touched upon most delicately, but set down fearlessly.

He breathed more quickly. Love had not long dawned upon him, and with the dawning of love and an ideal woman revealed to him, the man's thoughts had been raised to a higher plane, not only with regard to one woman, but the sex. It is generally so.

He read on. His lips hardened suddenly. What followed was a thinly disguised personal attack on himself. He did not know that the special lady commissioner had not written it, that it had been tacked on to her article, embodied with it, by Stephen Scooper, with a view to uniformity and general effect.

It roused up all the fight in his nature. If part of the article had given him food for furious thought, if love and a woman had somehow become mixed up with his thoughts and softened and weakened him, and caused him to consider the possibility of another success, this personal attack stiffened all that was stubborn in his being. The Daily Dial had flung down the gauntlet, had challenged him and his methods before the eyes of the public. To climb down and accept this whipping like a schoolboy, and whimper that he would try to be a good boy and mend his ways in future; he, Clive Palliser, managing director, the man to whom shareholders looked and counted as an infallible god, bend the knee and do penance in public at the dictation of a paper that was trying to get even with him for transferring the bulk of his advertisements elsewhere!

No! He jerked the paper from him. But the public, the great public, is the jury in such cases, and an alert one, when once it had been well prodded in the ribs and thoroughly awakened. It is the waking that takes the time and trouble. The public would have been content to smile amusedly at Kitty Lascelles and approve of her personal charms, and have dozed off again. Kitty Lascelles had tickled, but this article was of a kind that stabbed into human feelings deeply.

Clive Palliser realized that. It had pierced his outer hide and got home; but to admit himself wrong at the dictation of a newspaper, change his policy and bend the knee!

He glanced at the clock; but it was too early to be put in telephonic communication with his solicitors. An extraordinary meeting of the directors must be called, but they were puppets and would take their tone from him. The question of a libel action could only be decided after legal advice, and could not be settled offhand.

He stepped up to his secretary, picked up some papers dealing with another company in which he was interested, and dictated in his usually calm, coherent, businesslike manner. There was no clue to the fact that the affairs of Kiosks, Limited, were occupying his thoughts. He was blessed with a dual brain.

He ceased, with his usual punctuality, at the hands of the clock pointed to half-past six, the breakfast hour. He was crossing to the door, after a laconic instruction to his secretary, when Mr. Dietrich Schneiderkopf tumbled into rather than entered the room.

"You have seen the Daily Dial?" he cried hoarsely, gesticulating almost deliriously with his gaped-out hands. "I know who wrote it—I find out—I was right, Mr. Clive! I was right!"

His foreign accent and his mispronunciations always became exaggerated under stress.

"I tell you I think out I see a Miss Summers—was I come to Eidon—I was right! I have found out—she is a Daily Dial spy. She was a Miss Summers at the Strand branch of ze Kiosks. She is also a Miss Ware—Miss Joscelyn Ware—she is the Daily Dial's lady commissioner. It was Joscelyn Ware who wrote those 'London by Night' articles. I haf trace it all—I haf work it out. But Mein Gott!"

And Mr. Dietrich Schneiderkopf slavered a little round the corners of his loose, working lips. He was in great terror. It might be that Kiosks, Limited, would require a scapegoat, and fix upon the manager for the part.

"What?" said Clive Palliser.

"I haf trace her, Mr. Clive. Miss Summers, of the Strand—Joscelyn Ware of the Daily Dial—and the cottage, Eidon. So! And dot is not all. The women vill shriek-shriek me dead, but dey vill, unless—and de public vill cheer—and break de windows. De depts will open all right, because de sheeps of women vill not haf de time beforehand to put their heads together, and talk about de paper. But ven dey haf done that, dere vill be trouble, so much trouble! Ach! Donnerwetter und blitz!"

Clive had turned his back. He was standing over against one of the windows. His face was invisible, but his attitude somehow suggested that he was not paying the slightest attention to Mr. Dietrich Schneiderkopf, of Polish, German, Semitic extraction, who had just said:

"Ach, Mr. Clive, something must be done at once!"

Schneiderkopf crossed to the figure at the window, and laid a tentative, appealing hand on the man's shoulder.

Clive turned.

"Get out—go!"

Schneiderkopf shriveled up into himself in a remarkable way that seemed to reduce his bulk generally.

"Ach!" he whimpered, clasping his hands together like a man praying. "I haf been true to de mistress of de company and you, Mr. Clive! You will not jay de blame of dis on me. Dot cursed woman spy!"

He broke off into a scream. Clive Palliser seemed to have gone mad suddenly. He had gripped Schneiderkopf by the throat and was shaking him. His private secretary was on his feet, rubbing his eyes.

"Don't soil her name with your tongue!"

Clive almost spat the words into Schneiderkopf's athen face. Courage was not part of the manager's cosmopolitan heritage.

"Go!"

Schneiderkopf went to—put it mildly—like a grassed lightning and—to mix metaphors—with a dog's tail between his legs. Clive indicated the door to his astonished secretary. He had himself in hand again—to the outward eye.

"I want to be alone," he said.

As the door closed, he crossed to a table and slowly picked up the Daily Dial.

His face grew quite expressionless, but in his heart love, hate, humiliation, bitterness, incision all blended, mixed themselves up into a kind of whirlpool.

A woman had dealt him the hardest blow of his life so far. It would not have been so hard but for the revelation of the previous night.

The actual business of Kiosks, Limited—Clive Palliser vs. the Daily Dial—were forgotten.

A blow over the heart is the best kind of blow.

(CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.)