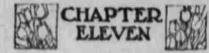
EIGHT PAGES

The Fighting

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Chance ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

(A continued story.)



park was very misty and damp and still that February morning. Far away on the wooded bridle path the dulled double gallop of horses sounded, now muffled in a hollow, now louder, jarring the rising ground, nearer, heavier, then suddenly



flushed face to ter. the sky. "Rain?" she

checked to

The dulled double galtop of horses sounded.

ranged up alongside of her. "Probably," he said, scarcely glaneguils, high in the air, hung dapping, stemming some rushing upper gale unfelt below.

On their daily rides together it was her custom to discuss practical matwas his custom to listen until pressed for a suggestion, an assent or a reply.

Sparing words-cautious, chary of self commitment and seldom offering surface character which she had come to recognize and acquiesce in. This was Quarrier as he had been developed from her hazy, preconceived idens of the man before she had finally accepted him at Shotover the autumn beodical man, exacting from others the abruptness. orderly precision which characterized usages, formal, intensely sensitive to of things." ridicule, incapable of humor.

This was Quarrier as she knew him ir had known him. Recently she had, fittle by little, become awars of in indefinable chauge in the man. For one thing, he had grown more reticent. At times, too, his reserve seemed to have something almost surly about it. Under his cold composure a hint of something concealed, watchful and very right? And Mr. Plank and Kemp Ferquiet.

moments to reallize how little they had ple?" in common and that only on the sur-

curiosity-the intellectual restlessness. the capacity for passion, the renaissance of the simpler innocence-had subsided into the laisses fairs of dull quiescence.

. Riding there, head hout, her pulses timing the slow puckag of her horse, she presently became aware, without looking up, that Quarrier was watching her. She moved alightly in her saddle to look at him and for an instant fancied that there was something furtive in his eyes. Only for an instant, for trample, as Sylhe quietly picked up the thread of convia drew bridle versation where she had dropped it, by the reservoir saying that it had been raining for the and, straightenlast ten minutes and that they might ing in her saddie, raised her as well turn their horses toward shel-

Without reason, through and through her shot a shiver of ioneliness-utter asked as Quar- loneliness and isolation. Without rearier, controlling son, because from him she expected his beautiful, nothing, required nothing, except what restive horse, he offered-the emotionless reticence of indifference, the composure of perfect formality. What did she want, ing at the sky, where, above the great then - companions? She had them rectangular lagoons, hundreds of sea Friends? She could scarcely escape from them. Intimates? She had only to choose one or a hundred attuned responsive to her every mood, every caprice. Lonely? With the men of New York crowding, shouldering. ters concerning their future, and it crushing their way to her feet? Lonty? With the women of New York struggling already for precedence in her favor?-omen significant of the days to come, of those future years. to assume the initiative-this was the diamond linked in one unbroken, triumphant glitter.

"About that Amalgamated Electric company." she began without prelude. 'Would you mind answering a question or two, Roward?"

"You could not understand it," he fore. She also knew him as a meth- said, unpleasantly disturbed by her

"As you piease. It is quite true I his own dealings. A man of education can make nothing of what the newspaand little learning, of attainments and pers are saying about it, except that little cultivation, conversant with Mr. Plank seems to be doing a number

"Injunctions and other matters," observed Quarrier.

"Is anybody going to lose any money in 11?

"Who, for example?" "Why-you, for example," she said, laughlug

"I don't expect to."

"Then it is going to turn out all rall and the major and-the other peo-Confidences she had never looked for ple interested are not going to be alin him nor desired. It appalled her at most rulned by the Intercounty peo-

"Do you think a man like Plank is

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ed, as if afraid, turning her bead to look behind-as though she could outride the phantom clinging to her stirrup, masked like youth, wearing the shadowy eyes of love!

. An hour later, fresh from her bath, luxurious in loose and filmy lace, hersmall white feet shod with slik, she lunched alone, cradled among the cushions of her couch.

Twice she strolled through the rooms leisurely, summoned by her maid to the telephone, the first time to chat with Grace Ferrall, who, it appeared, was a victim of dissipation, being still abed, and out of humor with the rainy world; the second time to answer in the negative Marion's suggestion that she motor to Lakewood with her for the week's end before they closed their house

Sauntering back again, she sipped her mlik and vichy, tasted the strawberries, tanted a hig black grape, discarded both and lay back among the cushions, her naked arms clasped behind ber head, and, dropping one knee over the other, stared at the celling.

The room was very still and dim, but the clamor in her brain unnerved her. and she sat up among the cushions, looking vacantly about her with the hine, confused eyes, the direct, unseeing gaze of a child roused by a half heard call.

her windows, the summons of the lig in her ears, patient, unconvinced: young year's rain.

She went to the window and stood among the filmy curtains, looking out into the mist. A springlike aroma penetrated the room. She opened the window a little way, and the sweet, virile odor enveloped her.

A thousand longings rose within her. Commbered wistful questions stirred her, sighing, unanswered. Every breath Sylvin ?" was drawing her backward, nearer, nearer to the source of memory. Ah. the cliff chapel in the rain! The words of a text mumbled dearly-the yearly service for those who died at sea. And she, seated there in the chapel dusk thinking of him who sat beside her and how he feared a heavier, stealthler, more secret tide crawling, purring about his feet!

Always, always at the end of everything, he! Always, reckoning step by step, backward through time, he, the source, the inception, the meaning of all

Unmoored at last, her spirit swaying. if you don't mind saring? enveloped in memories of him, she gave herself to the flood, overwhelmed as tide on tide rose, rushing over her. body, mind and soul.

heavily amid the cloudy curtains. She agreeable remark? But I'd come t moved back into the room and stood the paint brach, for, of course, W staring at space through wet lashes. The hard, dry pulse in her throat hurt | any more?" her till her under lip, freed from the tyranny of her small teeth, slipped pleasantly-then, "Does anybody want free, quivering rebellion.

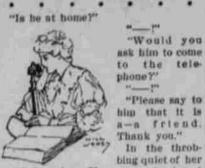
She had been walking her room to and fro, to and fro, for a long time You always were spoiled to death." before she realized that she had moved nt all.

And now impulse held the helm. blind, unreasoning desire for relief hurried into action on the wings of imnulse

No need to hunt through lists to find house on lower Fifth avenue, facing

a number she had known so long by heart, the three figures which had re-Iterated themselves so often, monoto nously insistent, slyly persuasive, repeating themselves even in her dreams, so that she awoke at times shivering with the vision in which she had listen-

ed to temptation and had called to him across the wilderness of streets and men.



"Is he at home?" room she heard the fingers of the prying rain busy at her windows, the ticking of the small French clock, very dull, very far away or was it her heart?

"Who is it?"

Her voice left her for an instant. Her dry lips made no answer, "Who is it?" he repeated in his steady, pleasant voice. "It is L"

card call. There was absolute silence, so long that it frightened her, but before she continued softly persistent against could speak again his voice was sound-"I don't recognize your volce. Who

am I spenking to?"

"Sylvin," There was no response, and she spoke

aguint "I only wanted to say good morning. It is afternoon now. Is it too late to

ay good morning? "No. I'm badly rattled. Is it you

Indeed it is. I am in my own room I-I thought"-

"Yes; I am Histenlag."

"I don't know what I did think. Is it necessary for me to telephone you a minute account of the mental proc seases which ended by my cuilling you up out of the vanty deep?

The old ring in her voice, hinting o he laughing undertone, the name trail ing sweetness of inflection-could be doubt his conses my longe ? "I know you now," he said.

"I should think you might. I should ery much illie to know how you are-

"Thank you. I seem to be all right Are you all right, Sylvin?"

"Shamefully and ourrassoundy wef What a season food Exceeded of the b She close | her eyes, leaning there in rags-mathematican't im't that a diall do. Doesn't anybody ever see you

She heard him laugh to himself un

"Everybody, of course! You know it. "Yes-to death."

"Stephen!"

"Yes?"

"Are you becoming cynical?"

"I? Why should I?" "You are! Stop It! Mercy on us!

There was a telephone at her elbow. If that is what is going on in a certain

the corner of certain streets, it's time somebody dropped in to"-

"To-what?" "To the rescue! I've a mind to do it They say you are not well, myself. either."

PAGE THREE

"Who says that?"

"Ob, the usual little ornithological cockatrice-or, rather, cantatrice. Don't ask me, because I won't tell you. I always tell you too much anyway. Don't 1?"

"Do you?"

"Of course I do. Everybody spoils you, and so do I."

"Yes-1 am rather in that way, I **HITPOORE**

"What way?"

"Oh-spolled."

"Stephen!" "Yen?"

And in a lower voice, "Please don't any such things-will you?"

"Na" "Especially to me."

"Especially to you. No, I won't, Sylvia.

And, after a hesitation, she continued swortly:

"I wonder what you were doing, all alone in that old house of yours, when I called you up?"

"I? Let me ace. Oh, I was superintending some packing."

"Are you going off somewhere?"

"I think so."

"Where?"

"I don't know, Sylvla." "I decline to be snubbed. I'm shame-

less, and I wish to be informed. Please tell me

"I'd rather not tell you."

"Very well. Goodby! But don't ring off just yet, Stephen. Do you think that some time you would care to seeany people-I mean when you begin to go out again?"

"Who, for example?"

"Why, nnyhody?"

"No; i don't think I should care to, I'm rather too busy to go about, even if 1 were inclined to."

"Are you really busy, Stephen?" "Yes-walling. That is the very hardest sort of occupation, and I'm

obliged to be on hand every minute. "But you said that you were going out of town."

"Did 1? Well, I did not say it exactly, but I am going to leave town."

"For very long?" she asked.

"Perimps, 1 can't tell yet."

"Stephen, before you go, if you are going for a very, very long while-perhaps you will-you might care to say goodby."

There was a sllence, and when his

"I do not think you would care to

see me, Sylvia. 1-they say 1 am-I

have changed-since my-since a slight

lilness. I am not over it yet, not cured

-not very well yet, and a little tired,

you see-a little shaken. I am leaving

New York to-to try once more to be

cured. I expect to be well-one way or

"Stephen, where are you going? An-

"A-it is-it requires some-some

(To be continued.)

voice sounded again it had altered.

"Do you care to have me?" "Yes, I do."

"I can't answer you."

"Is your Illness serious?"

another"

swer me!

care."

terest incident to the futfilment of sochal duties and the pursuit of pleasure. Beyond that she knew nothing of hlm, required nothing of him. What was there to know? What to require?

Now that the main line of her route through life had been surveyed and the others?" carefully laid out, what was there more for her in life than to set out upon her progress? It was her own road. Presumptive leader already. logical leader from the day she married-leader. In fact, when the ukase, her future legacy, so decreed. It was a royal road laid out for her through the gardens and pleasant places. road for her alone, and over it she had chosen to pass. What more was there to desire?

From the going of Siward all that he had aroused in her of love, of intel-



ligence, of wholesome desire and sane

face-a communion of superficial in- likely to be ruined, as you say, by Amalgamated Electric ?"

"No. But Kemp and the major"-"I think the major is out of danger," replied Quarrier, looking at her with the new, sullen narrowing of his eyes. "I am giad of that. Is Kemp-and

"Ferrall could stand it if matters go wrong. What others?"

"Why-the other owners and stockholders'

"What others? Who do you mean?" "Mr. Siward, for example." she said In an oven voice, leaning over to pat her horse's nock with her gloved hand. "Mr. Siward must take the chances we all take," observed Quarrier.

"But, Howard, it would really mean 'ulu for him if matters went badly. Wouldn't if?"

"I am not familiar with the details of Mr. Siward's investments."

"Nor am L" she said slowly. She spoke about other things. He responded in his juquissive manner. Presently she transit her horse, and quarrier wheeled his, facing a warm. the rain shuthy fullekly from the mith

This silks. Vandade beard was all wet with the recipiers. She noticed it, and embidden arose the vision of the gauroom at Shorover – Quarrier's soft beard wet with rain, the phantoms of people passing and repassing. Siward's straight figure swinging past, slibon-etted against the glare of light from the billiard room. And here she made an effort to efface the vision, shutting ber eyes as she rode there in the rain, but clearly against the closed lids she saw the phantoms passing-specters of dead hours, the wraith of an old hap-

plness manked with youth and wear-ing Siw of 5 features! She nor, herself beside him among the customs; tasted again the rose petals that her lips had stripped from the bloshous; saw once more the dawn of comething in his steady eyes; felt his arm about her, his breath-Her horse, suddenly spurred, bound-ed forward through the rain, and she rode breathless, with her lips half part** Bishop's Ready Tailored Clothes ÷ *****

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