

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

of
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CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"You darling!" he declared with emotion. "Wait—till I get my—breath. Man's got—no business courting—when he ain't in training."

Lydia laughed aloud. Impossible to resent the extravagances of this irrepressible boy! "I'm in no hurry," she countered, a hint of malice making piquant her demureness.

"I got you!" said Peter, breathing heavily.

Suddenly Lydia realized that Peter was the cheerfulness she had ever known. She'd be sorry to lose him, with his high spirits and honest, outspoken friendliness.

But she was bound to lose him; and not him alone, but all her new-found friends. This night had demonstrated indisputably in her understanding that Craven's mode of life could never be hers. They lived and thought on different planes. Downing street's secret agent must of necessity have his secrets and guard them jealously; but love and loyalty could not endure in an atmosphere of petty deception, useless, persistent fibbing, feigned emotion intrinsic selfishness.

She meant to leave him without delay. Come morning, and she would strike out for herself. And that involved forfeiture not only of her father, but of his friends that now were hers. It would be impossible to keep on terms of equality and companionship with those amiable creatures of exalted irresponsibility, and spend her days—behind a counter! She felt very forlorn, lonely, young and inexperienced.

She turned at length from unseeing contemplation of Central park's dismal perspectives, to look curiously at Peter, who forthwith grinned gracelessly. "What do you want—madman?"

"Just to talk to you," he replied frankly. "You keep to yourself so much—I get lonesome and desperate. Think what it must mean not to see you in over twelve hours to a man of my mercurial temperament! Honest, I was feeling awful low when you showed up just now. In another hour I'd've been taking things seriously—the same as you."

"What makes you say that?"

"Because you show it."

"Do I, really?" she pleaded anxiously.

"Not so's anybody'd notice it but me. You'll have to learn that you can hide nothing from me. Consider what a swell time you'll have when we're married."

"No—don't joke, please. I—I am not very happy tonight."

"You aren't?" Peter sat up at attention, serious for once at least.

"It's nothing—don't ask me, please. I'm just a bit low-spirited."

"Nothing doing!" declared Peter firmly. "Dissimulation isn't your long suit. I know!" He nodded with immense gravity. "You're fretting about that cussed necklace." He drew a long breath and lied magnificently. "You see, we were talking it over when you came in: Quoin calling Betty down for making Craven try to smuggle, and Betty fighting back like a good one—the whole story coming out. I don't care if Tad is your father, he hadn't any right to put a raw deal like that over on you. Now, Peter wound up defensively, "turn loose the heavy artillery! I've spoken my mind when it was none of my business, and it's up to me to take the count without a whimper."

Lydia was silent, her face averted. "No," she said presently, "I'm not angry with you. Why should I be? I myself don't think it was right. It's pleasant to know somebody sympathizes, when everybody else seems to think it nothing at all."

"Not my way of looking at it," Peter insisted. "Listen to me now! Why not marry me and chuck the whole game—Betty, Tad, Quoin, the whole outfit? Think how good it would be to know you don't have to care what they think! Just say 'Peter, you're on!' and we're off—winter in Egypt—everything like that. You see? Not a bit of use fretting about people when life makes itself so easy."

"Please don't, Peter. It makes you seem—unsympathetic, after all."

"Don't you believe it. I'm so full of sympathy for you that it hurts me. Please won't you marry me?"

"I can't listen to you if you will go on this way!" she cried, half distracted. "I'm not thinking of marrying anybody."

"I know. It's just as good a line as it ever was, and you read it to perfection. But it loses force with repetition, my dear. Don't forget that this is another scene—several chapters farther on—and no other fellow has turned up to make it difficult for you to decide. I know, 'cause I've been watching."

"Please be—kind—if you can't be serious."

"But I am serious."

"Ah, but you promised me you never were and never would be!" She tried to laugh; but not very successfully.

"That just goes to show how little I knew myself. The diagram is, of course, I never wanted to be serious before I fell in love with you. Don't you understand that, really? I love you, Lydia!"

The girl sighed and looked away, troubled, a strange, sweet fluttering in her bosom. And Peter was searching her shadowed face with eyes she dared not meet lest they surprise her agitation and wrest a victory from it. Her lips grew tremulous, her eyes dim.

"I love you," he repeated gently. "Oh, believe me, heart of my heart!" His hand closed firmly over her own.

"But," she protested in a voice scarcely more than a whisper, he had to bend very near to hear, "but Peter—"

"Dearest?"

"It's the first time you—you ever told me that."

"God forgive me!" cried the young man devoutly. "I never thought, I thought you knew all the time!"

CHAPTER XV.

"Peter!" The cry was smothered. "Silly boy! Can't you see the cab is turning? Do let me go!"

"Only into a side street. I say, where are we bound anyway?"

"It doesn't matter—only to deliver a note and get an answer."

"Who to—and from? Grammar's nothing to me, anyway."

"I sha'n't tell you if you don't stop. Well, a friend—nobody you know. If you don't let me go, I'll—"

"What will you do?"

"If you'll let me go, I'll tell you something."

Curiosity triumphed. Lydia extricated herself.

"What is it?"

"There—I'm all mused and rumped. You're frightfully inconsiderate."

"May's well get used to it. You've got a long, rumpled, mussed lifetime before you. What were you going to say?"

"Promise not to be silly again, if I tell you?"

"I say, that ain't sporting of you. You promised—"

"Very well. No—wait. Is my hat straight? We're turning again—stop—"



"Wait—Till I Get My Breath— Man's Got No Business Courting—When He Ain't in Training."

ping. Look out and see if it's the right number."

"Ninety-eight."

"That's right."

"Now what are you going to do?"

"Get out, deliver the note, get the answer, and—come back to you, Peter."

"Nothing could be fairer than that. Only you don't get out till you tell me what you promised to."

"Very well. But you'll have to get out first. Not a word while you're in this cab. Now, Peter, please!"

"Oh, all right."

Peter backed out and offered his hand. He closed strong fingers round hers.

"No, you don't—not till you keep your word!"

"Then—listen, Peter!" her voice was low, but clear and very sweet. "It doesn't make an ounce of difference to me about—those others so long as it's only me you love now and always will!"

With this Lydia ran up the steps, leaving Peter dazed with the memory of her face at parting.

And indeed the wits of the young man were reeling, drunken with the fragrance of his beloved. It was some moments before he began to recover. Interim, he stood bareheaded in the drizzle, blinking fatuously at an electric arc on the corner of Park avenue. Then suddenly he remembered what misgivings had sent him headlong from the Margrave to overhaul this taxi of ten thousand Elysian delights. But when he did remember it was too late. His dearest had already been engulfed by the front doors of that ill-omened house.

Ill-omened, at all events, he must consider it in the light of what Quoin had hinted. And yet, surveying the residence, one began to doubt—

An eminently respectable quarter, Seventy-sixth street, between Madison and Park avenues, a block as sedate as any in town, dedicated to the homes of solid, decent, law-abiding bodies who, to be sure, wouldn't suffer association with any establishment of the least questionable character.

Since the cab had stopped not a sound had disturbed the quiet save the



"Miss Craven Asked Me to Give You This, Mr. Traft."

semioccasional rumbling of surface cars on the one hand or snoring of motors on the other.

And number 98 itself was a residence of a type and caste to allay distrust at a glance—an elderly, well-to-do sort, with brownstone front, well groomed; nothing in this ensemble the least ominous or threatening.

Inclining to question old Quoin's ever-ready inference, Peter climbed back into the cab, and for five minutes hugged himself in private ecstasy.

Everything was for all the best in the best of all possible worlds. He needed only to crowd things a bit, rush the wedding through before Lydia realized that people were onto Craven, keep her if possible ignorant forever of old Tad's disgrace— That could be fixed, no doubt. Fortunately Betty wasn't vindictive. Quoin's commission from her had been merely to scare Craven silly and run him out of town. And that, of course, would keep things dark; for Craven would never dare return.

Of course, if he ever found out his daughter didn't know, and her husband didn't want her to know, he would likely try on a little blackmailing, just to keep body and soul together. But Peter wouldn't mind that—not in moderation. Anyway, he'd always liked old Tad; and to think of him in want, who had been so refulgent a figure in the life of town, would be keen discomfort for his prospective son-in-law. Peter dared say old Tad could do with a tidy bit of blackmail—something adequate and regular. And he, for one, would never begrudge it.

But when five minutes had elapsed Peter began to fidget. That's a long time to wait for a girl you're crazy about, who has just owned up she's crazy about you!

He consulted his watch: ten minutes past eleven. Lydia had come to the Margrave about a quarter of: they couldn't have been more than a quarter of an hour coming up town. Peter became convinced that he had waited ten minutes, not five.

Things began to look dubious. He hopped out and up the steps of 98.

The outer door was fastened; but a steady pressure on the push-button brought a shadow to skulk suspiciously behind lace-screened inner doors. One edge of the curtains was pulled aside a trifle, he was inspected narrowly, and then the shadow materialized into a woman who came forth and unlatched the outer doors. Even to Peter's captious scrutiny she looked a very nice sort, altogether an apparition to abash suspicion.

"Yes?" she inquired in a pleasant

"Yes," the discomfited young man replied intelligently. "That is to say— I—ah—"

"Perhaps you've mistaken the house?"

"No—I mean to say—Miss Craven—I brought her here—was to wait to see her home, you know—waited so long— began to wonder—"

"I see," said the woman quietly, a flicker of amusement in the eyes that Peter rather liked. "If you don't mind waiting another minute, I'll ask her."

Singularly enough, Peter thought, she didn't ask him to step in out of the weather. On the other hand, she was considerate not to keep him waiting long; though the message she finally brought him proved distasteful enough. "Miss Craven asked me to give you this, Mr. Traft."

"Thanks," said Peter, graciously accepting the proffered envelope.

It wasn't sealed. Unceremoniously he lifted the flap and withdrew the inclosure, a square, white, heavy correspondence card with the address stamped in black letters. Below a stub pen had been used with disastrous effect:

"Dear Mr. Traft—Please don't wait for me. I can't tell how long I may be detained. Sincerely,

"LYDIA CRAVEN."

Dear Mr. Traft, nonplussed, accepted dismissal with what grace he could muster. "Oh—ah—thanks," he said blankly. "Awfully good of you—"

"Good evening, Mr. Traft."

"Good evening."

The door closed. Peter grunted disgust and went slowly down the steps. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

PERSONALITY IS BIG FACTOR

That Quality Which Enables Man to Sell 20 Cents' Worth of Paper Gold Mines for \$20,000.

Personality is that quality of human nature which enables a man to sell 20 cents' worth of paper gold mines to another man for \$20,000 and then have his customer grieve for fear he has received too much for his money. Personality is the greatest factor in the business world today, and if an employee has proportionately \$1.25 worth of it to the boss' \$1 worth, that employee will own the business within ten years. For this reason the boss should analyze the applicant for traces of personality rather than submit him to the handwriting test which is an obsolete accomplishment in these days of typewriting machines.

There can be no crowd of people without an epidemic of personality breaking out, and when it manifests itself in more than one section there is a conflict. All persons do not possess personality. If they did it would remain in hiding and have no incentive to reveal itself.

Personality in a soldier is that which inspires his fellows to rush with him headlong into the jaws of death on the battlefield; it is the quality which makes men aid its possessor to overthrow empires; it is the quintessence of the mystery of life itself which, when placed in men of noble minds, is moving this old world onward to the millennium.—Indianapolis Star.

No Use Wasting Time.

They were dining off fowl in a restaurant. "You see," he explained, as he showed her the wishbone, "you take hold here. Then we must both make a wish and pull, and when it breaks, the one who has the biggest part of it will have his or her wish granted."

"But I don't know what to wish for," she protested.

"Oh, you can think of something," he said.

"No, I can't," she replied. "I can't think of anything I want very much."

"Well, I'll wish for you?" he exclaimed.

"Will you, really?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well, then, there's no use fooling with the old wishbone," she interrupted with a glad smile; "you can have me."

War Reduces Insanity.

War as a palliative of insanity is a theory unfamiliar to most people, but we have no reason to doubt the conclusions of Doctor Oswald of Glasgow Lunatic asylum on the matter, says the London Globe. One phase of the subject is instructive and significant. This is "the removal of the powerful effect of poverty on the mind, and its replacement by the higher standard of living and remunerative employment." Poverty and unemployment are thus by medical testimony fore fertile causes of insanity than war. This is a lesson to be borne in mind when the war is over.

The First Umbrella.

The first umbrella in America first appeared on the streets of Baltimore, where it created a great sensation. This importation from India was quickly taken up in Philadelphia and New York.

At present the fastest motion picture camera takes pictures at the rate of 2,000 a second.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

QUEER TEA PARTY.

"Quack, quack," said Mrs. Duck. "Cluck, cluck," said Mrs. Hen.

"Gobble, gobble, gobble," said Miss Turkey. "Grunt, grunt," said Mrs. Pig, as she welcomed all her Guests to the Pig Pen, for she was to give a Tea Party. And strangely enough the Pig Pen looked quite clean for a change. Some of the little Pigs had gathered some Straw and Grass and made a delightful Room—as the Animals called it—where they could have their afternoon Tea.



"You're Wrong," grunted Mrs. Pig. "I've got some delicious Pig Weed," said Mrs. Pig.

"And what, pray tell, is Pig Weed," asked Mrs. Hen.

"Oh, I know," gobbled Miss Turkey. "And do you really know," said Mrs. Pig. "How very wise of you. What is Pig Weed?"

"Don't you know yourself?" asked Miss Turkey.

"Of course, I do," said Mrs. Pig. "I'm just seeing if you do."

"Well," said Miss Turkey, as all the Animals stopped quite still, and watched her, waiting for her answer, "Pig Weed is a Weed—"

"We could all have said that much," interrupted Mrs. Duck.

"Please wait until I finish Speaking," Miss Turkey said crossly.

"Wait until she finishes Speaking," said all the other Animals, and Mrs. Duck wobbled around a little bit, settled herself once more in a comfortable place, and kept quiet.

"It is called Pig Weed," said Miss Turkey, "because its Roots are pink and very much the color of a Pig." And she said this in such a loud voice that a great many of the other Animals around came near to hear what was going on.

"You're wrong!" grunted Mrs. Pig. "And all the Animals grunted, quacked, gobbled and clucked.

"You're wrong!"

"None of the rest of you know," said Miss Turkey proudly. "I don't see why you should all chime in and say that I'm wrong."

"I didn't mean to have a Quarrel today," said Mrs. Pig. "So before I go farther I had better tell you that Pig Weed is called Pig Weed because Pigs eat it and like it. Reason enough, eh?"

And all the Animals said, "Yes, reason enough!"

Even Miss Turkey gobbled approvingly now, and said, "Reason enough!"

"But I don't like Pig Weed," clucked Mrs. Hen.

"Neither do I," quacked Mrs. Duck. "Then why did you all get so excited about it?" demanded Miss Turkey.

The Animals shook their heads, and said, "We don't know why we got excited. But now we're hungry."

"Well," said Mrs. Pig. "I have other sorts of Food besides Pig Weed. I got that really, because I was pretty certain none of my Guests would like it."

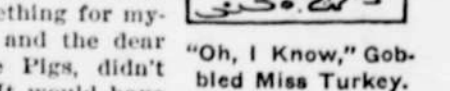
"You got a kind of Food you didn't think your Guests would like?" said Mr. Rooster, who had just arrived.

"I never heard of such a thing. Cock-a-doodle-do, the idea of getting something she knew we wouldn't like!"

"Of course," squealed Mrs. Pig. "I had to have something for myself and the dear little Pigs, didn't I? It would have been awful to have had it all eaten up before we got a chance to have any. And now," she continued, "there is plenty of Water in the Trough in the Corner, and some Grain and Bread Crumbs, and Husks of Corn on the Straw in the Pig Pen Tea Room."

This she said with a great deal of dignity, and then she added, "But I shall offer a Prize to the one who gets the most Grain. Ready, set, go, try for the grain!" And as all the Animals hurried off to get something to eat at this very queer Party, they could hear Mrs. Pig keep grunting and squealing to her own children, "Hurry, Pigs, get there first! Don't let the other Animals take it away from you until you've all had enough!"

"Well, of all the queer Tea Parties," said Mrs. Duck as she wobbled away, and Mrs. Pig hadn't even the time to say Good-bye to her Guests for she was sitting in a corner of the Pen eating the Pig Weed she knew her Guests would not eat!



"Oh, I Know," Gobbled Miss Turkey.