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HALSEY, Linn Co., Ore., Sept. 13, 1925

HIGHWAY "EFFICIENCY"

Travelers get a great deal of satisfaction out of the Oregon paved highways. The Enterprise recognizes the fact that such a through road system is a valuable asset. But there are circumstances connected with the subject that modify our rejoicing.

One of these is that the same amount of money judiciously spent on roads that would be feeders from outlying sections to the railroads would have doubled the producing population by attracting immigrants to the lands, now idle, that would have been opened. It would have doubled the agricultural and horticultural and dairy products of Oregon and started a steady stream of wealth into the state from the consuming world, and it would have doubled the assessable property and thus halved the per cent tax levies or furnished funds for building the present through systems on the pay-as-you-go plan.

We were led into our heavy road bond indebtedness by the false promise that both the through routes and the market branch roads would be financed by it, and by another false claim of which the Eugene Register thus discourses:

"The people of Deschutes county are to vote on an issue of \$130,000 of road bonds to be used in completing the Dalles-California highway south of Bend, and the Bend Bulletin naively remarks that there are people who oppose the bonds because they fear resulting increases in taxation if the issue is approved.

"Their fears, it might as well be confessed right now, will be confirmed. If the bonds carry, there will be increased taxation, and anybody who maintains otherwise is merely talking through his hat. Optimistic but addle-minded persons have been assuring us solemnly for years that improvement bonds would result in lowering taxes rather than in raising them and with monotonous regularity they have been proved to be liars of the first magnitude.

"Somebody ought to take these cheerful liars out and throw them in an irrigation ditch. Oregon and all the rest of the states have been cursed too long with the tribe that goes about arguing that we can have our cake and eat it, too."

"The people of Deschutes county ought to vote their bonds and complete their road—if they do they will never regret it."

The Portland Journal of Aug. 10th states that Washington has more miles of paved road than Oregon and has paid for those roads as they were built, without incurring any bonded indebtedness.

Those roads, too, are wider than ours and hence safer, and the pavements are thicker and will stand up better under heavy traffic.

A month or two ago the Journal had the following to say about the waste of money on some of our highways:

"In certain quarters, there is a hifalutin, holier-than-thou assumption, frequently asserted, that the Oregon highway organization was marvelously efficient; in service errorless in results, that both the members of the organization and former commissioners were near supermen, and that the highways they built are all marvels of

engineering skill, economy and efficiency.

"Who built the five-mile stretch of Tillamook road at a cost of \$102,098 which had to be rebuilt within three years at an added cost of \$118,462?"

"Who built the Rex-Tigard road in the fall of 1918, which in less than three years was so broken down that the highway department was compelled to rebuild it?"

"Who built the Hillsboro road, of which within a year S. Benson said in his letter of resignation that it was breaking to pieces so badly that it would have to be resurfaced if not regraded?"

"What about the expensive La Grande highway which went to pieces within a year?"

"Who built a Douglas county highway in the construction of which, a report by the Oregon public service commission declares, \$81,115 was wasted?"

"Who built 28 Oregon highways of which only three were completed at the original contract price, while the remaining 25 cost 10 to 115 per cent more than the original contract price?"

"Who built the Jefferson-North road of only six miles, for which the contract price was \$133,008 while the final sum paid the contractors was \$226,369?"

"Who built the Green Springs road of only 15 miles, the contract price of which was \$286,133 while the sum finally paid the contractors was \$616,708?"

In the plans for the league of nations the United States, the only powerful nation free from the jealousies and suspicions that keep every European nation's hand on the dagger hilt, was to be the balance wheel. Without it the league wobbles first one way and then another, never able to pursue a straight course. It is doing wonderfully well under the circumstances. Possibly it may survive.

Illinois seems to be a paradise for crooks and things. In Chicago two rival gangs of bootleggers have been slugging and murdering each other and the law enforcement officers sink at their crimes, while at Ferris, where massacre is legalized in a labor war, the homes of Klu Klux Klansmen are being burned with impunity.

There are a great many ways of extracting coin from people. A doctor did it with an X-ray and a pair of forceps in the case of 13-year-old Lesner Massie of Grants Pass the other day, after she had swallowed a half-dollar and it had remained overnight in her throat, "about midway of her breast bone."

Probably there are other ways more painful.

The Shedd fair and the county fair are both reported more successful than ever before, in spite of the fact that it was the busy season of the year. The busy season is the best season for a fair here. Better have a few stay away to work in the fields than have many stay away on account of rains, as they have done when the fairs were later in the season.

The county court must appoint a budget committee, whose report must by October 1 be before a tax commission of the county, appointed by the governor, which must give its approval before next year's taxes can be levied. Simplicity and economy, where are ye?

Imagination will go a long way. Henry Ford says the value of money is entirely imaginary. Yet it's very convenient to have a little of the stuff when one wants a square meal.

Nobody goes Scio's goat at county fair. The Scio goat club got first prize for boys' and girls' club work in western Oregon.

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SEED MERCHANT
All kinds of Feed
New and second grain
sacks. Sack twine.
Clover seed. Chop-
ping done to suit.
Prices right.
FLOUR
Golden Leaf.....\$2.00
White Mountain 2.15

Mrs. Mary J. Barton of Kelleyville, N. H., is 45 years old and her husband, a farmer, is 55. They have ten sons and ten daughters, all robust, and not a twin nor a triplet among them. Three of the girls are married. Their mother hasn't a gray hair and the parent couple advise others to follow their prolific example.

THE FALL SEASON
is on us and we all need clothing and shoes for winter wear, and we can supply all your needs at money-saving prices.

Boys' Shoes
Heavy school shoes for the boys, built for service and comfort, priced at
\$2.45, 2.85, 3.15

Boys' dress shoes in black and brown, all good quality and new styles, just what the boys will want, priced
\$2.75, 3.15, 3.45, 3.75

Girls' brown Pumps
and Oxfords at special prices at
\$2.10, 2.69, 2.89

Women's Shoes
Black kid one-strap pumps, military heels, price
\$4.25
Patent leather pumps, military heels,
\$4.85 and .565
Prow pumps and Oxfords, price
\$2.69 and 2.89

Men's Shoes
Brown calf dress shoes, all new styles and the very best of quality.
\$4.85, 5.25, 6.50, 7.85

Heavy work shoes in black and brown, all good solid stock, prices
\$3.25, 3.45, 4.50, 4.65

Underwear
Men's heavy cotton union suits,
\$1.45 and 1.95
Men's heavy wool mixed union suits,
\$2.85 and 3.50
Men's fine all-wool union suits,
\$5.45
Boys' heavy cotton union suits
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Suits
A large line of boys' school suits, all good quality, at
\$4.95 & 6.50
Boys' suits' two pairs pants, at
\$9.90 to 11.50

We have a wonderful line of fine **BLANKETS** in cotton, wool mixed and all wool. See them before you buy.
C. J. BREIER CO., Albany, Ore.

The Secret Adversary

By **AGATHA CHRISTIE**

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(Continued)
CHAPTER VI

Enter Sir James Peel Edgerton. Tuppence betrayed no awkwardness in her new duties. The daughters of the archdeacon were well grounded in household tasks. Mrs. Vandemeyer's cook puzzled her. She evidently went in deadly terror of her mistress. The girl thought it probable that the other woman had some hold over her. For the rest, she cooked like a chef, as Tuppence had an opportunity of judging that evening. Mrs. Vandemeyer was expecting a guest to dinner, and Tuppence accordingly laid the beautifully polished table for two. She was a little exercised in her own mind as to this visitor. It was highly possible that it might prove to be Whittington. Although she felt fairly confident that he would not recognize her, yet she would have been better pleased had the guest proved to be a total stranger.

At a few minutes past eight the front door bell rang, and Tuppence went to answer it with some inward trepidation. She was relieved to see that the visitor was the second of the two men whom Tommy had taken upon himself to follow.

He gave his name as Count Stepanov. Tuppence announced him, and Mrs. Vandemeyer rose from her seat on a low divan with a quick murmur of pleasure. He bowed low over her hand.

Tuppence returned to the kitchen. "Count Stepanov, or some such," she remarked, and affecting a frank and unvarnished curiosity: "Who's he?"

"A Russian gentleman, I believe." "Come here much?"

"Once in a while. What'd you want to know for?"

"Fancied he might be sweet on the missus, that's all," explained the girl, adding with an appearance of sulkiness: "How you do take one up!"

"I'm not quite easy in my mind about the son-of-a-bitch," explained the other. "You know something," thought Tuppence.

Whilst waiting at table, Tuppence listened closely to all that was said. She remembered that this was one of

the men Tommy was shadowing when she had last seen him. Already, although she would hardly admit it, she was becoming uneasy about her partner. Where was he? Why had no word of any kind come from him? She had arranged before leaving the Ritz to have all letters or messages sent on at once by special messenger to a small stationer's shop near at hand, where Albert was to call in frequently. True, it was only yesterday morning that she had parted from Tommy, and she told herself that any anxiety on his behalf would be absurd. Still, it was strange that he had sent no word of any kind.

But, listen as she might, the conversation presented no clue. Boris and Mrs. Vandemeyer talked on purely indifferent subjects. Tuppence brought in the coffee and liqueurs and unwillingly retired.

She cleared away and washed up with a breathless speed acquired in hospital. Then she slipped quietly back to the boudoir door. The cook, more leisurely, was still busy in the kitchen, and, if she missed the other, would only suppose her to be turning down the beds.

Alas! The conversation inside was being carried on in too low a tone to permit hearing anything of it. She dared not reopen the door, however gently. Mrs. Vandemeyer was sitting almost facing it, and Tuppence respected her mistress' lynx-eyed powers of observation.

Nevertheless, she felt she would give a good deal to overhear what was going on. Possibly, if anything unforeseen had happened, she might get news of Tommy. For some moments she reflected desperately, then her face brightened. She went quickly along the passage to Mrs. Vandemeyer's bedroom, which had long French windows leading onto a balcony that ran the length of the flat. Slipping quickly through the window, Tuppence crept noiselessly along till she reached the boudoir window. As she had thought, it stood a little ajar, and the voices within were plainly audible.

Tuppence listened attentively, but there was no mention of anything that could be twisted to apply to Tommy. Mrs. Vandemeyer and the Russian seemed to be at variance over some matter, and finally the latter exclaimed bitterly:

"You are going about everywhere with Peel Edgerton. Not only is he, perhaps, the most celebrated king's counsel in England, but his special hobby is criminology! It is madness!"

"I know that his eloquence has saved untold men from the gallows," said Mrs. Vandemeyer calmly. "What of it? I may need his assistance in that line myself some day. If so, how fortunate to have such a friend."

"You are a clever woman, Rita; but you are also a fool! Be guided by me, and give up Peel Edgerton."

"I think not."

"You refuse? There was an ugly ring in the Russian's voice."

"I do."

"Then, by heaven," snarled the Russian, "we will see—"

But Mrs. Vandemeyer also rose to

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The Voices Within Were Plainly Audible.

her feet, her eyes flashing. "You forget, Boris," she said. "I am accountable to no one. I take my orders only from—Mr. Brown."

The other threw up his hands in despair.

"You are impossible," he muttered. "Impossible! Already it may be too late. They say Peel Edgerton can smell a criminal! Perhaps even now his suspicions are aroused. He guesses—"

Mrs. Vandemeyer eyed him scornfully.

"Reassure yourself, my dear Boris. He suspects nothing. You seem to forget that I am commonly accounted a beautiful woman. I assure you that is all that interests Peel Edgerton."

"Besides, he is extremely rich. I am not one who despises money. The 'sneews of war,' you know, Boris!"

"Money—money! That is always the danger with you, Rita. I believe you would sell your soul for money. I believe—"

He paused, then in a low, sinister voice he said slowly: "Sometimes I believe you would sell—us!"

Mrs. Vandemeyer smiled and shrugged her shoulders.

"The price, at any rate, would have to be enormous," she said lightly. "It would be beyond the power of anyone but a millionaire to pay."

"Ah!" said the Russian. "You see, I was right!"

"My dear Boris, can you not take a joke?"

"Was it a joke?"

"Of course. Let us not quarrel, Boris. Touch the bell. We will have some drinks."

Tuppence beat a hasty retreat. She paused a moment to survey herself in Mrs. Vandemeyer's long glass, and be sure that nothing was amiss with her appearance. Then she answered the bell demurely.

The conversation that she had overheard, although interesting in that it proved beyond doubt the complicity of both Rita and Boris, threw very little light on the present preoccupations. The name of Jane Finn had not even been mentioned.

The following morning a few brief words with Albert informed her that nothing was waiting for her at the stationer's. It seemed incredible that Tommy, if all was well with him, should not send any word to her. A cold hand seemed to close round her heart. . . . Supposing . . . She choked her fears down bravely. It was no good worrying. But she leapt at a chance offered her by Mrs. Vandemeyer.

"What day do you usually go out, Prudence?"

"Friday's my usual day, ma'am."

"And today is Friday! But I suppose you hardly wish to go out today, as you only came yesterday."

"I was thinking of asking you if I might, ma'am."

"It makes no difference to me, as I shall not be dining at home."

Tuppence felt a sensation of relief

once she was out of the other's presence. Once again she admitted to herself that she was afraid, horribly afraid, of the beautiful woman, with the cruel eyes.

In the midst of a final desultory polishing of her silver, Tuppence was disturbed by the ringing of the front door bell, and went to answer it. This time the visitor was neither Whittington nor Boris, but a man of striking appearance.

Just a shade over average height, he nevertheless conveyed the impression of a big man. His face, clean-shaven and exquisitely mobile, was stamped with an expression of power and force far beyond the ordinary. Magnetism seemed to radiate from him.

Tuppence was undecided for the moment whether to put him down as an actor or a lawyer, but her doubts were soon solved as he gave her his name: Sir James Peel Edgerton.

Tuppence went back to her pantry thoughtfully. The great man had impressed her. She understood Boris' agitation. Peel Edgerton would not be an easy man to deceive.

In about a quarter of an hour the bell rang, and Tuppence repaired to the hall to show the visitor out. He had given her a piercing glance before. Now, as she handed him his hat and stick, she was conscious of his eyes raking her through. As she opened the door and stood aside to let him pass out, he stopped in the doorway.

"Not been doing this long, eh?" Tuppence raised her eyes, astonished. She read in his glance kindness, and something else more difficult to fathom.

He nodded as though she had answered.

"V. A. D. and hard up, I suppose? Good place here!"

"Very good, thank you, sir." "Ah, but there are plenty of good places nowadays. And a change does no harm sometimes."

"Do you mean—?" began Tuppence. But Sir James was already on the topmost stair. He looked back with his kindly, shrewd glance.

"Just a hint," he said. "That's all." Tuppence went back to the pantry more thoughtful than ever.

CHAPTER VII

Julius Tells a Story. Dressed appropriately, Tuppence duly sallied forth for her "afternoon out." Albert was in temporary abeyance, but Tuppence went herself to the stationer's to make quite sure that nothing had come for her. Satisfied on this point, she made her way to the Ritz. On inquiry she learnt that Tommy had not yet returned. It was the answer she had expected, but it was another nail in the coffin of her hopes. She inquired for Julius Herzhelmer. The reply she got was to the effect that he had returned about half an hour ago, but had gone out immediately.

Tuppence's spirits revived. It would be something to see Julius. Perhaps he could devise some plan for finding out what had become of Tommy. She wrote her note to Mr. Carter in Julius' sitting-room, and was just addressing the envelope when the door burst open.

"What the h—!" began Julius, but choked himself abruptly. "I beg your pardon, Miss Tuppence. Those fools down at the office would have it that Baresford wasn't here any longer—hadn't been here since Wednesday. Is that so?"

Tuppence nodded. "You don't know where he is?" she asked faintly.

"I? How should I know? I haven't had one darned word from him, though I wired him yesterday morning."

"I expect your wire's at the office unopened."

"But where is he?" "I don't know. I hoped you might." "I haven't had one darned word from him since we parted at the depot on Wednesday."

"What depot?" "Waterloo. Your London and Southwestern road."

"Waterloo?" frowned Tuppence. "Why, yes. Didn't he tell you?"

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