

## "THE FIGHTING HOPE"

(Continued from first page)

win apples and walked like india rubber."

"Well, for my part, Mr. Craven, I'll be perfectly frank. I'm going to give up my position, too, only I don't intend to lie about it. I'm going because—"

"Because, Mrs. Mason?" The lawyer whirled around with surprise and vexation.

"Well, things don't suit me, sir."

"Then why don't you fire the cook, fire the butler, fire the whole blame outfit if they don't suit you? I know Mr. Temple would rather lose all of 'em than you."

Mrs. Mason finished the pipe rack and began nervously plying her duster among the antlers and engraved hunting scenes.

"Oh, the servants are all right," said she. "Mr. Temple has given me full authority over them. 'Tisn't the servants I complain of. Besides, a lot of them feel as I do, only they can't afford to quit."

"Eh? What's wrong then?" demanded Craven sharply. A light had fallen on the darkness of his first surprise. He was beginning to understand.

Mrs. Mason left the antlers and hunting scenes and went to the favorite guns.

"I've been strictly brought up, Mr. Craven, and somehow I feel it ain't right—it's doing violence to my conscience—to stay on under this roof."

For a second Craven studied her curiously—this sturdy New England housekeeper who for three years had made the daily routine of living in the Temple home a smooth and comfortable thing.

Her conscience—yes, that was it. She was beginning to feel that she could not live in the same place and take money from a man whom she considered had come by it unworthily. "Puritanism is as lasting in a family as sin—to the third or fourth generation," he thought to himself, the outer corners of his eyes still contracted. "I think, somehow, that sin might be easier to lop off the family tree."

"Yes," went on Mrs. Mason, "and I can't work for a man who has done wickedly as Mr. Temple has. His conduct would reflect on me. There you have it, Mr. Craven. My conscience won't let me give silent consent to his deeds by my presence."

"Oh, I say, Mrs. Mason, come, come," laughed Craven in spite of himself. "Get off old Plymouth rock just for once, that's a good soul!"

"It might be better for your new New York if it stood a bit firmer on old Plymouth rock," snapped she, "instead of Wall street quicksand." She was about leaving the room in high dudgeon when her eye chanced upon some glaring headlines in the morning's paper which, with other journals, Craven in his bustle had flung upon the floor.

"See! See that!" she said, picking it up and handing it triumphantly to the lawyer. "It's that piece in today's paper which has finally decided me to make a change. All about the Granger case and Mr. Temple's connection with it. Look!"

"Justice and high finance," read Craven half aloud in fine, sneering fashion. "The continued silence on the part of Mr. Burton Temple regarding his connection with the Granger case only confirms suspicion in the minds of the thinking public—"

"Thinking public, that's good!" ejaculated he. He bit off the end of a cigar. "Every successful man's a cur and every rich man a malefactor in that blessed thinking public's eye."

"Just read it through, please," pleaded Mrs. Mason, with clasped hands.

"When the law is so flagrantly defied it is time that the American pub-

lic made a stand. The Granger case has gone a step too far. It is one thing for a rich man to avoid punishment; it is another thing for a rich man to avoid punishment by throwing the guilt on another's shoulders. There is scarcely a man today who does not believe that Robert Granger is a scapegoat for Burton Temple."

"Why in the name of heaven must this Granger case come up again?" shouted Craven, throwing down the paper with a hot expletive. "Granger had a fair trial, was convicted, sent to prison, and now, not content with the justice of their own courts, these newspapers are trying to get him out."

"And send Mr. Temple in his place to serve his term," finished Mrs. Mason quietly, "where he deserves to be." she added in measured tones. "There, I've said it. To be silent is to acquiesce. It is sheltering evil. 'Tisn't always easy to speak out our thoughts. But I've been taught where a principle is concerned it's our duty to do so. It's like the sun—it purifies." Her chin was well up in the air.

A pause. Craven's cigar was out, and he was slow about relighting it.

"The sun purifies, yes," sighed he, "but it germinates too. Half the moral and social crimes would cease if women and men also buried the other half in silence. That hysterical desire to express it belongs to a past age, Mrs. Mason," he said sternly. "after all, we don't know much about our neighbors' lives—really any of us—so it's safer and wiser to be kind in our judgments, eh? None of us needs to resolve himself into a fraction of the day of judgement, thank God." He swallowed hard, this old stoic of a lawyer. "And, by thunder," he exploded, "if three years' knowledge of a man's daily life, with all its integrity and fineness and honesty of purpose, must go for naught then—"

The telephone bell interrupted. Mrs. Mason, close at hand, took the message.

"It's Miss Dale, Miss Graham's successor," announced she, awaiting Craven's orders.

"Have her shown up," tartly. And incisively, "Hope she'll prove as capable a secretary as Miss Graham and a fairer woman."

With this little dig he turned to the big bay window and let the air of the Hudson cool his brow, while the housekeeper stood at the door to usher in the new secretary.

"Anna, Anna!" she gasped, stepping back, confounded.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE GRANGER CASE.

**T**HE new secretary, equally astonished, put her fingers to her lips, commanding silence, and Mrs. Mason widened the distance abruptly as Craven, at the slight noise, turned from the window.

"I'm Craven, Mr. Temple's legal adviser," he said. "I suppose you are the young woman Miss Graham has recommended?"

The young woman nodded cheerfully. She looked very girlish and graceful in spite of her dignity. "I trust I'll prove worthy of Miss Graham's recommendation," said she in low contralto tones.

"Miss Graham is thoroughly alive to the difficult nature of the work here just at present. I take it for granted she must have known you well and felt convinced of your ability to give satisfaction, otherwise—" Craven opened his large Nebraskan hand with an eloquent gesture.

Just for an appreciable fraction of a second two fleeting dimples stirred in the new secretary's oval cheeks.

"Miss Graham has known me for many years. She knows I will do my duty."

"Looks as if you would, anyhow,"

agreed Craven bluntly. He turned to Mrs. Mason, who still stood, eyes wide open and chin down, the picture of prim New England astonishment. "Mr. Temple's housekeeper, Miss Dale," said he. "You two must be friends."

The elder woman pulled herself together with an effort, and with a rather awkward consciousness held out her hand in response to Anna's well poised, nonchalant greeting. The Plymouth Rock conscience and diplomacy were not working well together, and she, poor lady, was in dire straits.

"I understand I am to work here as well as in the New York office?" said Anna, turning toward Craven and adroitly keeping his attention focused away from Mrs. Mason.

"Uh-huh!" assented he. "For the next few weeks we shall be unmercifully rushed. Even ordinarily Mr. Temple carries on a large part of his business here, but this case will give him more than ever to do."

"The Granger case?" questioned the new secretary, with strange avidity.

Craven nodded.

"Well, perhaps you'll be kind enough to explain this—this Granger case to me a bit now while we have time? It will save Mr. Temple that much exertion." She spoke with pretty little staccato catches in her breath, and her eyes were like stars. "An alert and intelligent young woman," commented the lawyer to himself.

"Why, yes, Miss Dale," he responded aloud, "the case is very simple. Sit down. About a year ago Mr. Temple rose to the presidency of the Gotham Trust company. Robert Granger was cashier. Cornelius Brady, a big financier, presented a check for \$700,000. Mr. Temple did not feel justified in certifying this check, and Brady, without Temple's knowledge, went to Granger and induced him to certify it, making the trust company responsible for the money. Now, Granger had no right to do this, you understand. It was an overcertification. And the recertification of that check, coming as it did just before the panic, helped in large measure to bring on the fallure of the Gotham Trust company."

"But this Granger, did he not have a defense?" asked the young woman eagerly, watching Craven covertly from under her black lashes.

"Defense? Sure," granted he. "He had. Tried like the devil to convince the jury that Temple had given him an order."

"And there had been no order—written or verbal?"

"I said that Granger lied, Miss Dale. He had a fair trial. He was convicted and sent to Sing Sing. The jury gave a rightful verdict."

"But why, may I ask, why has this case come up again if it is all settled and done for?" She brought the tips of her little gloved hands together in a play of pretty interest.

"Well, Brady, the financier, has been doing a lot of talking, you see. Granger's conviction reflects pretty blackly on him. Then, the sensational yellow journals have taken it up—you know the way. I should advise you, Miss Dale, if you wish to become an efficient secretary to Mr. Temple, to arrive quickly at a belief in the guilt of that Granger, now justly confined in the prison yonder." He nodded across and up the river toward the grim walls of Ossining.

"I understand, Mr. Craven. I have come to do my duty, and I shall be guided only by the truth," she said, with low, even serenity. But in the palm of her right hand glove where she had clutched it fervently there was a tragic rent.

"Right. That's common sense," said he appreciatively, pulling out his watch again. "Now, Mrs. Mason will show you to your room. I must go to meet

Mr. Temple. Suppose he'll wish to see you as soon as he gets here. Head over heels with things to do. Just look at that—lordy, lordy!" He indicated the littered desk and floor, and with quick, gingery strides quit the library.

"Mrs. Mason, oh, to think of finding you here!" Just so soon as the door was closed Anna had rushed to the elder woman and was kissing her exuberantly on both cheeks. A third kiss she let fall neatly on the spick and span gray head.

"And you, Anna Shepherd! You were only fifteen when I saw you last, but I'd have recognized you anywhere. Dear, dear child, for the love of heaven what are you doing here under an assumed name? What does it mean?"

"Well, first it means that I'm not Anna Shepherd either any more. I've been married for nearly eight years, Mrs. Mason. Fancy!" She held her out at arm's length and looked smilingly down into the woman's surprised eyes.

"And I've two boys, just the finest, bonniest boys in the whole world. Really and truly they are!"

"I'm sure of it, I'm sure of it," acquiesced Mrs. Mason. "How could you help having children of that sort! You know I always had a very warm spot in my heart for you, Anna. Your mother and I—"

"Oh, I know, I know! Poor, beautiful young mother of mine!" Hastily Anna brushed away a bit of undue moisture in her lustrous eyes. "How she used to preach love and ideals to me, and how you used to preach duty and principles! Have you still that little yellowed book compiled by your great-grandmother filled with clippings concerning the duties of motherhood, the goodness of woman and the inconstancy of man? I remember the margins of the book were strewn with old recipes for the dressing of meats, the preserving of fruits, the trevying of cunning cordons, all of which struck me as ministering to at least one constancy in man—his devotion to a good dinner, eh?" Anna laughed at the recollection.

"Yes, I still have it. And speaking of good dinners, have you grown to be a good little housewife? I suppose your husband—but, by the way, you haven't yet told me your husband's name?"

A vivid crimson surged to Anna's face, her slim neck, her little ears and open brow. Then she threw back her pretty, patrician head proudly.

"My husband's name is Robert Granger."

They stared for an instant at each other, woman to woman. Then Mrs. Mason gasped:

"Robert Granger, the man!"—The young wife looked at her old friend almost sternly.

"The man who is in prison serving a term that Burton Temple should be serving. Oh, Mrs. Mason, what have I done? You must guard my confidence sacredly—you must! You will, won't you—you will?" She was white now and wide eyed with the import of it all.

"Why, yes, dear; of course—of course. But tell me, I don't understand. Why are you here?"

"I am here, Mrs. Mason, to find some evidence that will clear my husband's name and that will send the guilty man to Sing Sing in his place." The soft insistence with which she pronounced her purpose was more startling than any violence could have been.

(Continued in our next issue)

## WE GIVE AWAY

A Handsome 42-piece Dinner Set every Saturday.

CLOVERDALE MERCANTILE CO.