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Come to Albany July 4th

The Man From Brodney's

By Geo. B. McCutcheon

(Chapter XXX Continued)

The minutes became an hour, and yet they sat there with set faces, bursting hearts, unseeing eyes.

Below them in the shadows Bobby Browne was pacing the embankment, his wife drawn close to his side. Three men, Britt, Saunders and Bowles, were smoking their pipes on the edge of the terrace. Their words came up to the two in the gallery.

"If I have to die tomorrow," Saunders, the bridegroom, was saying, with real feeling in his voice, "I should say with all my heart that my life has been less than a week long. The rest of it was nothing. I never was happy before, and happiness is everything."

CHAPTER XXXI. THE SHIPS THAT PASS.

THE next morning was rainy. A quick, violent storm had rushed up from the sea during the night.

Chase, after a sleepless night, came down and, without waiting for his breakfast, hurried out upon the gallery overlooking the harbor. Geneva was there before him, pale, wistful, heavy eyed, standing in the shelter of a huge pillar.

"Hollingsworth," she said drearily, "do you believe he will come today?"

"He?" he asked, puzzled.

"My uncle. The yacht was to call for me not later than today."

"I remember," he said slowly. "It may come, Geneva. The day is young."

She clasped his hand convulsively, a desperate revolt in her soul.

"I almost hope that it may not come for me!" she said, her voice shaking with suppressed emotion. "It will not come. I feel it in my heart. We shall die here together, Hollingsworth. Ah, in that way I may escape the other life. No, no! What am I saying? Of course I want to leave this dreadful island—this dreadful, beautiful, hateful, happy island. Am I not too silly?" She was speaking rapidly, almost hysterically, a nervous, flickering smile on her face.

"Dear one," he said gently, "the yacht will come. If it should not come today my cruizers will forestall its mission. As sure as there is a sea those cruizers will come." She looked into

his eyes intently, as if afraid of something there. "Oh, I'm not mad!" he laughed. "You brought a cruizer to me one day. I'll bring one to you in return. We'll be quits."

"Quits?" she murmured, hurt by the word.

"Forgive me," he said, humbled.

"Hollingsworth," she said after a long, tense scrutiny of the sea, "how long will you remain on this island?"

"Perhaps until I die—if death should come soon. If not, then God knows how long."

"Listen to me," she said intensely. "For my sake you will not stay long. You will come away before they kill you. You will! Promise me. You will come—to Paris? Some day, dear heart? Promise!"

"To Paris?" he said, shaking his head sadly. "No, dearest one. Not now. Listen: I have in my bag upstairs an offer from a great American corporation. My headquarters would be in Paris. My duties would begin as soon as my contract with Sir John Brodney expires. The position is a lucrative one; it presents unlimited opportunities. I am a comparatively poor man. The letter was forwarded to me by Sir John. I have a year in which to decide."

"And you—you will decline?" she asked.

"Yes, I shall go back to America, where there are no princesses of royal blood. Paris is no place for the disappointed, castoff lover. I can't go there. I love you too much. I'd go on loving you, and you, good as you are, would go on loving me. There is no telling what would come of it. It will be hard for me to—stay away from Paris—desperately hard. Sometimes I feel that I will not be strong enough to do it, Geneva."

"But Paris is huge, Hollingsworth," she argued insistently, an eager, compelling light in her eyes. "We would be as far apart as if the ocean were between us."

"Ah, but would we?" he demanded.

"It is almost unheard of for an American to gain entree to our—to the set in which—well, you understand," she said, blushing painfully in the consciousness that she was touching his pride. He smiled sadly.

"My dear, you will do me the honor to remember that I am not trying to get into your set. I am trying to induce you to come into mine. You won't be tempted, so that's the end of it. Beasily day, isn't it?" He uttered the trite commonplace as if no other thought than that of the weather had been in his mind. "By the way," he resumed, with a most genial smile, "for some queer, unmasculine reason I took it into my head last night to worry about the bride's trousseau. How are you going to manage it if you are unable to leave the island until—well, say June?"

She returned his smile with one as sweetly detached as his had been, catching his spirit. "So good of you to worry," she said, a defiant red in her cheeks. "You forget that I have a postponed trousseau at home. A few stitches here and there, an alteration or two, some smart summer gowns and hats—Oh, it will be so simple! What is it? What do you see?"

He was looking eagerly, intently toward the long, low headland beyond the town of Ararat.

"The smoke! See? Close inshore too! By heaven, Geneva, there's a steamer off there. She's a small one or she wouldn't run in so close. It—it may be the yacht! Wait! We'll soon see. She'll pass the point in a few minutes."

Already the citizens of the town were rushing to the pier. Even before the vessel turned the point the watchers at the chateau witnessed a most amazing performance on the dock. Half a hundred natives dropped down as if stricken, scattering themselves along the narrow pier.

The people were simulating death! They were posing as the victims of the plague that infested the land! As he was explaining the ruse to his mystified companion the nose of the vessel came out from behind the tree covered point.

An instant later they were sending wild cries of joy through the chateau, and people were rushing toward them from all quarters.

The trim white thing that glided across the harbor, graceful as a bird, was the marquis' yacht!

It is needless to describe the joyous gale that swept the chateau into a maelstrom of emotions.

They saw the tug put out to meet the small boat; they witnessed the same old maneuvers; they sustained a chill of surprise and despair when the bright white and blue boat from the yacht came to a stop at the command from the tug.

There was an hour of parleying. The beleaguered ones signaled with despairing energy. The flag, limp in the damp air above the chateau, shot up and down in pitiful eagerness.

But the small boat edged away from close proximity to the tug and the nearby dock. They spoke each other at long and ever widening range. At last the yacht's boat turned and fled toward the trim white hull.

Almost before the startled, dazed people on the balcony could grasp the full and horrible truth the yacht had lifted anchor and was slowly headed out to sea.

Chase looked grimly about him into the questioning, stricken faces of his companions. He drew his hand across his moist forehead.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said seriously and without the faintest intent to jest, "we are supposed to be dead!"

There was a single shriek from the bride of Thomas Saunders. No sound left the dry lips of the other watchers, who stood as if petrified and kept their eyes glued upon the disappearing yacht.

"They have left me here to die!" came from the stiffened lips of the Princess Geneva. "They have deserted me! God in heaven!"

"Look!" cried Chase, pointing to the dock. Half a dozen glasses were turned in that direction.

The dying and the dead were leaping about in the wildest exhibition of gleeful triumph.

The yacht slipped into the unreachable horizon, the feathery cloud from its stack lying over against the leaden sky, shaped like a finger that pointed mockingly the way to safety.

White faced and despairing, the watchers turned away and dragged themselves into the splendid halls of the building they had now come to regard as their tomb.

All day long the islanders rejoiced. Their shouts could be plainly heard by the besieged. Their rides cracked sarcastic greetings from the forest. Bullets whistled gay accompaniments to the ceaseless song: "Allah is great! Allah is good!"

No man in the despised house of Taswell Skaggs slept that night. The guard was doubled at all points open to attack. At 2 in the morning Depingham, Browne and Chase came up from the walls for coffee and an hour's rest. They were wet and cold. They had heard Rasula's minions shouting derisively all night long: "Where is the warship? Where is the warship?"

"It will come. I am positive," said Chase, insistent in spite of his defection. They drank their coffee in silence. He knew that the others, including the native who served them, were regarding him with the pity that one extends to the vainglorious braggart who goes down with flying colors.

He went out upon the west gallery and, utterly fagged, threw himself into an unexposed chair and stared through tired eyes into the inscrutable night that hid the sea from view—the faithless, moaning, jeering sea!

When he aroused himself with a start the gray, drizzly dawn was upon him. He had slept.

To be Continued)

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