

The CASTLE

BY ARTHUR HENRY VASEY

CHAPTER XXI.—Continued.

"I don't remember that word to me again. I am sick of your hypocrisy. You don't deceive me, let me tell you. Your plan of cowardice is a conventional subterfuge. Every foot you step to your left is the gas with these adventures. A coward wouldn't have taken the risks you have taken. You saw the man hiding in the doorway; you saw him about to fire at a helpless girl; and you raised your hand. Am I talking plainly enough?"

I looked into Locks's eyes, glaring with rage and contempt, and I laughed aloud. It was actually a relief to have my weakness galled to the place of deliberate villainy.

"Laugh, my friend, but I am not to be deceived by a laugh."

"And now that I stand biased in my favor, I devolve it."

"I give you five minutes to make a full and complete confession. If at the end of five minutes you still refuse, I shall have recourse to the aid of the Countess Barahoff, for masquerading as Sir Mortimer Brett, and for being an accomplice in the murder of Miss Brett."

Five minutes! The time was not long. I knew Locks would keep his word; but more than ever I was stubbornly resolved to refuse taking him into my confidence.

Could I tell him my reasons for acting as I had done? Could I tell him that I had set out on the romantic quest of saving a life for the life that had been lost? Would he believe that? At least without appealing to the woman who had set me that task? To drag in her name was impossible.

The minutes passed swiftly. So this was the end of my task! Disgrace and imprisonment! I had warned Helena that might be the case. I looked across the valley at the pinnacles of the Castle of Happiness. What a fool I have been!

"Your time is almost up," said Locks grimly, looking at the watch he had placed on his knee. And Miss Brett is walking in the garden over there. Do you wish her to see you marched off to prison?"

On the contrary, it was she who must set me free! I would put her to the supreme test. Now if I accepted her as she had promised, I might yet escape from the awkward dilemma.

I rose to my feet. I called to her, "Miss Brett!"

She came to us. My manœuvre so completely astounded Locks that he stared at me speechless.

"Miss Brett," I said quietly, "Mr. Locks has taken upon himself the task of bringing me to justice. He finds me guilty of complicity in the intrigues of Madame de Varnier. He refuses to believe that I am acting in your behalf. I cannot blame him for his suspicions. The man who almost whittled against me—the surface facts. I do not even deny most of them. But he has woefully misconstrued my motives in every case. I refuse absolutely to tell him what those motives are. He has threatened me with arrest unless I make to him a full and complete confession without delay. Mr. Locks, as I have said, is acting on the behalf of your mother and yourself. Personally he has no right whatever to make any complaint against me."

"Miss Brett will be the last person to shield you from punishment when she knows the truth," interrupted Locks, bewildered at my audacity in appealing to her.

"Among other things, Miss Brett," I continued eagerly, "she accuses me of being an accomplice in your attempted murder in the stairway."

"There are facts more tangible than that," said Locks significantly.

"But I refuse to listen to them," said Helena, reassuring me with a quiet glance. "I am not so ignorant of these facts, perhaps, as you imagine, Mr. Locks. I have every confidence in you, Mr. Madison. As to causing your arrest, that is absurd."

"Thank you," I returned, with a passion of gratitude in my heart. "You will hear from me before midnight, at the end of the watch you do not. I think it would be well for you to consult Mr. Locks. He knows a great deal of which you are ignorant."

"Be sure of this, sir, I shall not wait until midnight," said Locks, with still wilder anger and chagrin.

"Mr. Locks, let us understand each other," said Helena, "I shall not wait until midnight, but I shall be waiting for your arrest, that is absurd."

"Thank you," I returned, with a passion of gratitude in my heart. "You will hear from me before midnight, at the end of the watch you do not. I think it would be well for you to consult Mr. Locks. He knows a great deal of which you are ignorant."

"Be sure of this, sir, I shall not wait until midnight," said Locks, with still wilder anger and chagrin.

"Mr. Locks, let us understand each other," said Helena, "I shall not wait until midnight, but I shall be waiting for your arrest, that is absurd."

"Thank you," I returned, with a passion of gratitude in my heart. "You will hear from me before midnight, at the end of the watch you do not. I think it would be well for you to consult Mr. Locks. He knows a great deal of which you are ignorant."

CHAPTER XXII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

but there was much to be done before then. And if she persisted in not seeing me, I wondered how I was to force my presence on her. In the meanwhile I must attempt to learn something of Captain Forbes's detention.

I lunched alone, and well. The absence of Dr. Starva was only to be expected. Even so brazen a villain as he would hesitate to meet me with unconsciousness. During the struggle in the tower, I had put myself deliberately in Starva's power by my return to the chateau. If my unconsciousness would be because my services were indispensable.

I had lighted my cigarette. Jacques was noiselessly gathering up the things. I had determined to take him into my confidence. I believed it was suspected that he was not ignorant of my leaving the chateau. He had accepted my excuse too readily. At any rate, I believed the fellow could be bribed. I demanded obediently.

"And Dr. Starva? Is he, too, confined to his room?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. Evidently he held Dr. Starva in no great consideration.

"One knows nothing of him. He is mysterious, this Dr. Starva."

I looked at the man keenly. The adjective was significant.

"Everything about this chateau is mysterious. It seems to me," I remarked cheerfully. "Last night, for instance, I could have sworn I heard the sound of one in distress."

"Is it possible, monsieur?"

"And when I retired I found a note on my pillow. I would give a hundred francs to the man who placed it there if I could find him."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

The World Is Learning How to Keep in Health

By DR. H. W. WILLY,
Chief of Government Bureau of Chemistry, and Director of Pure Food Investigations.

The health of the people of this world is growing better all the time. Fifty years ago the average length of human life was only 33 years. Now it is between 35 and 40, and nearly 40. In a couple of hundred years we ought to have increased it to 50 years.

Disease is being suppressed more and more. It is still the fashion to bring children up on the bottle. When mothers come to understand that their own milk is free from germs and that the milk used out of bottles carries cultures of diphtheria and cholera infantum the children will have two chances of living where they only have one now.

The education of the people is going forward every day, so that they are constantly increasing their armor against disease. In the end centenarians will be commoner than blackbirds.

For instance, see what has been done in eliminating typhoid, which, with tuberculosis, carries off more people than any other disease. Vienna, having a separate system of water supply for drinking purposes, has brought the typhoid death rate down to one in 100,000. Vienna gets her drinking water direct from the Alpine snows.

While the education of the people, particularly the mothers, is to be the principal factor in bringing more favorable conditions for the health of the people, the fight for legislation should be continued.

Better Eyes and a Better World

By HORACE TRAUBEL,
Literary Executor of Walt Whitman.

The world is growing better because more people in the world are getting eyes. Growing better, civilization is sight. Not saintship. Not puerile moral self-satisfaction. Not superiority. Civilization is democracy. It is the open road and the open mind. It is the equal chance. It is salvation for all, rather than security for a few.

The world is growing better because growing better is more natural to it than growing worse. The individual is beginning to be himself in social perspectives. In the commune. Realizes that he can do nothing alone. Is helpless without the crowd. No maxima of indefinite virtue will press the gage beyond. The world is going to be set forward by social rebellion. Nothing can frustrate this drift.

Man comes first. He is the unrepeatable foundation. All who would build securely must build on man. All who would build on man, all who would build on rent, interest or profit. These three made one in greed are the inherited enemy. They must be destroyed. There shall be no consequent ownership of man by man. Of any worker by a boss. Of any child by a parent. Of any wife by a husband or husband by a wife. Of any author by a publisher. Of any editor by a proprietor. Of even the lowest by the highest. Ownership will be universally abolished in order that ownership may be universally asserted. The person must give in to the mass in order that the enemy may be reborn in the spirit of the brother.

This has always been the dream of the saviors. It is now going to be the fact of the saved. Once the crowd looked outside of itself for salvation. Now it sees that it will be saved from within. It is not contradicting the isolated saviors. It is only confirming their prophecy. We are producing a world of saviors identified with a world of the saved.

The world must grow better because the existence of this devotion is an evidence that the vision of the world is improving. It is all a question of eyes. We become better by seeing better.

For the first time in history we see the progressive political forces of different countries unified in their adhesion to an international philosophy. That means the end of war. That means the end of patriotism. That means the end of classed. That means the end of superior and inferior. Of up and down. Of the master and the slave. Of the employer and the employed. That means that the social structure will celebrate service rather than sacrifice. And explains why our world is growing better.

The enfranchising spirit of this vision is being made flesh in the every day of labor and conduct. If you do not see this, you may look about you and find that the world, notwithstanding its vanities and physical glories, is a blank. If you do see this, you have your gaze fixed upon the face of revelation.



"Until Twelve To-Night," She Said.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Secret Staircase.

"We trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt more difficult to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double deed. The first

Realities of Wedded Life

By HELEN OLDFIELD.

No human being is perfect, and they who marry expecting perfection inevitably must be disappointed. Somebody has said that "marriage, like government, is a series of compromises." Not only marriage, but life together between any number of human beings, few or many, in a family or in a community, must necessarily be a continual succession of concessions, the sacrifice of individual preferences to the general good. It is a mistake to say that "For true love there is no hardship, no meanness, no shame. Its light is bright and clear enough to eliminate all darkness, its warmth such that it defies cold, its sweetness such that it banishes all bitterness of spirit." Such love as this there may be, but it is as rare as radium, and few there who find it. Love does not make all things easy; it only makes it possible to do that which is difficult and to do it willingly for the sake of the beloved. Love is of many kinds, and it sometimes happens that sincere affection is supersensitive, exacting rather than all-expecting.

There would be by far fewer matrimonial disappointments if those who marry, especially the women, would resolve to see, duty god in each other and persistently live up to that resolve. It is the part of common sense to make the best of whatever comes to us, the more when it has sense of our own choice and there are not many things, still less people, who have no best. People usually find that for which they diligently seek, and the point of view usually determines the outlook, be it dark or bright. In this jostling world each man's lot is determined mostly by his own character, its interaction with the characters of those who surround him; and the same is true, in less degree, of woman also. Temperament works itself out, and one's own thoughts and deeds make up fate for each one, barring a few accidents which we ascribe to Providence.