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THE DOUBLE CROSS

(Continued.)

A little later the padre went away on some errand among the Aztecs who were assembling in the patio to meet Dan Justino, whose return was momentarily expected. And, as Felipa and I started on a stroll around the garden, I said:

"Felipa dear, we are alone now. Do you still deny that you told me the stranger rode away at midnight?"

"Why, John! Senor St. John!" she exclaimed, showing displeasure that seemed real enough, though I knew she was shamming. "Why do you speak so? I said nothing to you about the departure of the stranger. How could I? He occupied the room next to mine and this morning he went away and—that's all."

"The room next to yours?" I answered. "You mean that you slept in that room yourself and—"

"John, John! Are you mad?" As she cried the words she regarded me with every appearance of fright.

"And since the stranger did not leave until this morning," I went on, "he—why on earth did you and he exchange rooms?"

"I will tolerate this no longer, senor," she said, anger flashing in her eyes.

"Apologize," she continued. Then suddenly she stood still and a smile broke over her face as she said:

"But no, John, you are not in earnest. What is this—how do you say it in English—oh yes, what is the joke?"

"Joke? It's no joke, Felipa. I talked to you in the stranger's room about the stranger—and you know that's so. And at that time she was in the adjoining room, your own room."

She gasped and interrupted me to cry:

"You say that I—that I was in the stranger's room? Senor, my father shall request that you leave the hacienda at once."

"Felipa, in the name of Heaven!—how deep does your game go?"

I then proceeded, in torrential speech, to remind her of everything we had said to each other in the stranger's room, ending with her own several statements, to wit, that she had chosen to sleep, not in her own room, but in the one supposed to be occupied by the stranger; that the person I had seen enter her room was her very own self; and that she had merely stepped into her own room a moment to get her kimono.

She listened with what, to any third person, would have seemed genuine and unbounded amazement. To me, however, she was merely acting a part. She did it well, too.

"Kimono!" she exclaimed. "Ah! I understand—at last."

She threw me an anxious look.

"John, did any one ever accuse you of sleepwalking? No! Well, you know it now for the first time. You are a somnambulist. Last night you entered my room—my very own room—in your sleep. You went to my wardrobe and out of it took my Japanese kimono and carried it out of the room. That's all the truth—all the fact—there is in your tale of woe. All the rest—you dreamed."

"Many thanks," I said, ironically, "for conceding that a Japanese kimono, an uninhabited kimono, figured in last night's entertainment. But how do you know that I carried your kimono out of your room?"

"Because, John, it is missing. I must tell you that I had a dream, a scary dream, that woke me up. I got out of bed, lighted the candle and decided that I would read awhile. I went to the wardrobe to get my kimono, but—it was gone."

"I wonder," she concluded, speaking as if with breathless interest in a sudden thought, "I wonder if you carried the kimono into the stranger's room? Let's go see."

"What was the scary dream?" I asked, pretending to give credence to her theory concerning the happenings of the night, for I perceived that any other course, in the battle with her wit, would be hopeless.

We walked towards the stranger's room.

"In my dream," she now vouchsafed, "a man came to my bedside, took my right hand in his and very gently pushed up the sleeve of my night-dress. He had pushed the sleeve up as far as the elbow, when suddenly

he dropped my hand, peered out through the window-grating, listened intently, then struck a man and—oh, John, it was terrible! With the striking of the match the man vanished and in his place I beheld a cross of fire—yes, John, a burning cross, a cross as tall as a man and with arms as far outreaching, a cross all flames that flared and flashed toward me as if fanned by a big wind and then—"

"You awoke," I said. "And now you believe that the man of your dream was myself, the sleepwalker; and that while you were blinded by the glare of the cross of fire, I took your kimono from the wardrobe and slipped out of the room with it."

"Yes, John. And, as you will find now, you must have taken it into the stranger's room. Then, while you were in there, you dreamed that I inhabited the kimono and that you prattled to me."

"Poor boy!" she added with mock sorrow, "I wonder if sleepwalking is curable?"

"But," abruptly changing her tone to one of perplexity, "where's the kimono now?"

We had entered the stranger's room. Swastika was there, making up the bed.

"Swastika," cried Felipa, "did I leave—did you find anything of mine in this room this morning?"

"No, senorita mia, nothing—of course not."

Felipa then, with furrowed brow and great pretense of being puzzled, went into her own room, while I stood at her window watching her. She opened the door of her wardrobe and—the Japanese kimono hung in its place.

Pretending to be much mystified, she came back to the corridor, saying:

"John, you are not the only sleepwalker. I'm one, too. I walked to that wardrobe in my sleep last night, and I dreamed that the kimono was missing."

"Then, Felipa, diplomatic relations between us are restored?"

"Yes, John. We've both eaten of the loco-weed. Let us—forget all this."

Loco-weed? Forget all this? The very words she had used when we met in the stranger's room in the night.

But just then a great bell in the patio jangled furiously, and she cried:

"My father is arriving. Come into the patio and see how the peons greet him."

So I had no time just then to tell her that, in using those words, "Forget all this," she had betrayed herself at last, betrayed the fact that she was playing a deep game with me—playing a game to shield her relations with the man in the mask.

(To Be Continued.)

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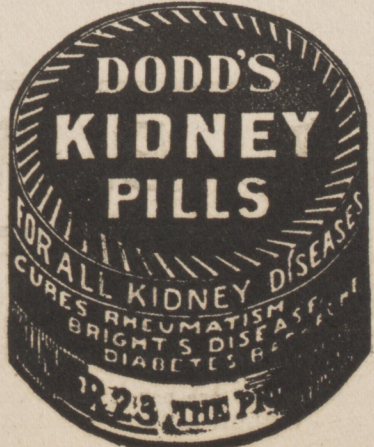
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THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE

As I told you a moment ago the present attitude of the Conservative party has been brought about by the unholy alliance of the Nationalists of Quebec and the Tory-ultra Imperialists of Toronto. I have only this to say that I am not Imperialist nor an anti-Imperialist. I am a Canadian pure and simple, a Canadian first, last and all the time. I am a British subject likewise. I was born under British institutions and I have often said and I repeat here, that the race to which I belong has found more liberty, freedom and justice under the British flag than it would have received under any other flag. (Cheers.) Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Halifax.

1897—Gen. Ignacio Andrade elected President of Venezuela.



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No. 317—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 6.15.

No. 321—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 11.15.

No. 323—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 16.20.

No. 301—Express for Loggieville, Chatham, Campbellton, Quebec, Montreal, etc., 18.30.

No. 327—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 18.40.

No. 329—Suburban for Gibson and Marysville, 22.00.

ARRIVALS.

No. 318—Suburban from Marysville 7.45.

No. 302—Express from Loggieville, Chatham Junction, 11.25.

No. 322—Suburban from Marysville 13.45.

No. 304—Mixed from Loggieville and Chatham Junction, 16.00.

No. 326—Suburban from Marysville 18.20.

No. 328—Suburban from Marysville 19.15.

No. 338—Suburban from Marysville 22.35.

CANADIAN PACIFIC

DEPARTURES.

6.20 a.m.—Express for St. John, Portland, Boston, Woodstock, etc.

9.20 a.m.—Mixed for Woodstock, and points north. Leaves St. Mary's at 9.35.

9.45 a.m.—Express for St. John and points east.

4.10 p.m.—Mixed for Woodstock, via Gibson branch. Leaves St. Mary's 4.40.

5.50 p.m.—Express for Montreal, Boston, Woodstock, St. Stephen, etc.

9.05 p.m.—Express for St. John, and points east.

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9.10 a.m.—Express from St. John and points east.

12.30 a.m.—Mixed from Woodstock, via Gibson branch, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

11.35 a.m.—Express from Montreal, Boston, etc.

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7.40 p.m.—Mixed from Woodstock and points north.

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