

Prince Charlie.

By BURFORD DELANNOY.

(Continued.)

Was it to be nothing but insult from him? Could she not—was it not possible to—pay him back somehow? What had she done that she should single her out for annoyance. What—ever it might be, when was she to feel free from his cowardly attacks?

If only he were open about the matter, but he was not. Then came remembrance of the time of Gracie's convalescence; how he had ever treated her with uniform courtesy. She remembered, and sighed. The crown of sorrow is the remembrance of happier days.

The mandible feet of Time continued their never-ending progress. It was not a period in which Mrs. Seton-Carr was at ease; the amount of patience in which she possessed her soul could have been easily balanced on a needle point.

The steamer bringing the quartette reached England. The four passengers kept together; travelled down to Wivernsea in the same carriage. Reached it early in Christmas week.

Dick's reluctance to allow Masters to go to his old lodgings was manifest. There were many spare rooms at Ivy Cottage, he said, so why not go there? In his opinion it was simply idiotic to pig in at digs. But Masters had ideas of his own; at that moment they did not fit in with his friend's.

The Chantrelles went on with Dick to Ivy Cottage. It was arranged that Masters should turn up there in the evening for dinner.

He had been a trifle reluctant to accept that invitation at Dick's hand, at did so. He could have kicked himself, later, for doing so. As for Dick, the nearer they drew to the point where separation must come, the more full of admiration and real affection he became. He rested uneasily whenever his friend was out of his sight.

Masters impatiently ticked off the hours till the arrival of dinner-time. He wanted so to see the woman he loved. Wanted a quiet ten minutes, that he might pour out his heart to her. He was willing to ask her forgiveness on his knees—had she not knelt to him? Had a heart-aching, a tongue-itching, to tell her that she was the one woman in the world for him.

Things are not always disposed as man proposes; he did not tell her that. The quiet ten minutes did not come. When he entered Ivy Cottage before dinner it was with a light heart; the happiest man in Wivernsea. He left it after, with a heart of the most miserable of men.

Beneath the surface, the dinner party was not a success; yet it cannot be said to have flagged. Almost every one was in good spirits, in too good spirits, apparently, to trouble about the quiet man who sat next to Dick.

Dick was thunderstruck at his friend's reticence. Thought at first that he must be, ridiculous as it seemed, suffering from shyness. Mrs. Seton-Carr thought she was getting a little of her own back! She got more; more than all.

Common decency prevented her cutting Masters dead. But, as nearly as was consistent with common politeness, that was what happened. As fuel to fire was the open and violent flirtation of the hostess with Percy Chantrelle.

Exultant as she was of her success, flushed as was her cheek with triumph—she feared that she almost overdid it. But the pulsations of Percy's heart, were accelerated, beat fast with hope; so did his sister's.

It was impossible to avoid seeing Mrs. Seton-Carr's flushed excitement. Masters noted too the soft glances she shot across the table Percy Chantrelle's way; noticed them with a feeling at his heart which was more than painful.

The author was in possession of more than his usual keenness. Perhaps it, out-balanced his power of cool observation. Anyway, he saw not beneath the surface. The soundness of his deductions suffered by reason thereof.

They were happy enough, the brother and sister; the only real happiness there was around the table. Mabel was playing a part; playing it well; wore her mask with success.

Her laugh rang out merrily at each of Chantrelle's jokes. But just as full as her face and voice were of mirth, so was her heart full of ache and pain.

Mrs. Seton-Carr would have given worlds just then to be able to rise from her table; she needed so greatly to go to her room for a good cry. But a Lucifer-like pride upheld her. Laugh, and the world laughs with you; weep, and you weep alone. She knew that.

The men did not remain long in animation after the retirement of the ladies. To two-thirds of the trimly dressed figures seemed flavourless. As a matter of fact, their respective elements lacked the power of combination.

The third factor, Chantrelle, was happy enough; triumph made him so. But there was no infection in his merriment. As a smoking-room raconteur he was usually a big success. But to-night his best stories fizzled out to lame and impotent conclusions.

This laugh of approval was conspicuously absent.

CHAPTER XXX.

As Faithful As A Dog.

The men left the smoking-room; there was no calumet of peace there. All Percy's efforts to be entertaining ended in—perhaps appropriately—smoke. They joined the ladies, to

find harmony and concord; music was under way.

Masters was full of thought; deep misery kind. Whatever charm music may have to soothe a savage breast, it had none for him. He was ever a failure at social functions; was conspicuously so to-night; detested them, in fact, with a whole-souled detestation.

As to Dick, the gloom which had fallen on him during dinner seemed too thick for penetration. Merry Dick belied his nickname; had no more merriment in him than has a mule at a funeral.

In the drawing-room Masters was as miserable as he had been in the dining and smoking-rooms. Turned over photographs; sought in vain for something to make him look less of a fool than he felt. At last came to the end of his endurance tether; under a plea of some work he had to post to a publisher by the early morning's mail, excused himself.

"It's a glorious night, old chap," Dick, speaking hoarsely, and getting into his greatcoat. "I'll walk home with you. We will smoke a cigar together."

Masters said good-night; shook hands. Noticed the burning heat of Mrs. Seton-Carr's, as for a moment her hand rested in his—but did not accord the true reason for it. She was even laughing with Chantrelle at the very moment she said good-night; was a natural actress; a woman.

"How quiet Mr. Masters is," The cat purred; Any speaking, as the door closed. "But I suppose, socially, authors are as dull as ditch water. Keep all their clever thoughts for their books. It is selfish of them in the extreme."

Any laughed gaily; continued in that strain. Laughter is the allotment of those who win; the Chantrelles felt justified in the belief that they were in no way losing.

Mrs. Seton-Carr professed accord in the opinion of Masters' dullness; the sea voyage had not improved him. Society was not the thing he shone in; in fact, she had found him rather depressing; was glad he left so early. Lies! Lies!—each and every one of the opinions she expressed.

The two men who had left the bungalow walked along the Parade for a time without speaking. Each was full of emotion. Dick's found vent first; he blurted out—

"I'm—I'm awfully sorry, old man. There was a faint tinge of nervous-

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ness in Masters' responding laugh; he was not a man to assimilate pity very well, even from his best friends. Throwing away the cigar, which had gone out, he lighted his pipe; the match betrayed a shaking hand.

"Thanks. . . . Cloudless night; looks like being a fine day to-morrow, doesn't it?"

The effort to change the subject proved futile; Dick spoke impulsively—

"Hang the weather! . . . You don't think I knew anything of this dear old chap—"

"No! No!"

"—Or you know I should have—"

"Yes, yes, I know."

"Mab has always professed to positively loathe Percy; tolerated him because she liked his sister. He is a bit of a boulder, you know."

"Your sister does not seem to share in that opinion of yours."

He could not quite keep the bitterness out of the way in which he said that.

"No!"

The brother admitted it; spoke just as bitterly. When they reached his lodgings Masters said—

"Come round, will you?"

"You—you won't come on to the cottage to—"

"Oh, no! No!"

"No, I didn't expect you would. I had counted on things being so different! Counted on a merry Christmas."

Dick laughed as he said, thought of a merry Christmas; the unpleasant ironic laugh of a disappointed man. Just then he was as full of disappointment as he could well hold.

"I had gone in for a certain amount of accountancy too."

Masters made the response with a little catch in his voice, which the assumed laugh could not disguise. He had stopped and was standing with his hand on Dick's shoulder.

"Do you remember that last time I held you, like this, dear boy? I was so full of joy then, so blinded by it, to what I was doing, that you accused me of squeezing you to hurting point." A sigh punctuated his speech. "I don't feel like hurting you now."

"Squeeze the life out of me, if it will be any relief to your feelings," Dick spoke gruffly. "It's your life, I shouldn't be living at all if it were not for you."

He was a good boy, was Dick, with a heart in him; a heart in the right place. It grieved him to see even the suspicion of a tear in the eye of the friend he loved so well.

His own brown eyes, looking into the author's with silent, dog-like fidelity, and sympathy. Masters was not insensible to it. It was an eloquent silence; expressed far more to him than words could have done.

"I made a mistake, Dick; that's all. I suppose all of us do; the world seems so full of them. . . . And let this be the last of it, dear old man, will you. Don't recur to it ever again, please. The sore is fresh, and—I don't mind owning to you, it hurts. Please don't let us talk about it—ever again—please."

Dick grasped the hand extended to him; held it in a long, tight grip. Put his other hand on his companion's shoulder, and was about to speak. Then felt that speech would

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be a failure; simply said gruffly—

"I'll see you in the morning, old man; I'll walk round. Good-night."

Not another word passed between them; a tight hand-grip and they parted. Masters to his rooms, Dick homeward bound—a journey he made with the blood coursing through his veins at boiling point. He had more than a little of his sister's temper.

Dick was simply furious at the manner in which Mabel had treated Masters. He dared not trust himself to more talk that night. Just looked into the drawing-room at the bungalow, professed weariness, said a hurried good-night and retired to his room.

A MORAL WAR.

Japan, According to the Rev. Dr. Brown, is Fighting for Liberty and Civilization.

(Montreal Witness.)

Dr. Arthur J. Brown, one of the secretaries of the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, preached in the American Presbyterian Church, last evening, on the 'Moral significance of the Russia-Japan war,' taking the ground that the present war was a moral war—a conflict of ideals, quite as much as it was a conflict of political and commercial interests. He showed that Japan was fighting against a power, which, if it triumphed, would enslave a third of the human race—against a nation which, if it regained ascendancy in Corea, would destroy the work which the Presbyterian Church had been able to do in that interesting country. The preacher traced the cunning work of Russia, in refusing to Japan the fruits of her victory over China, showed, how she had secured, by fraud, a hold on Corea; how she endeavored to hoodwink the other nations as to her intentions in Manchuria; and emphatically asserted that this same Russia represented the most intolerable despotism—a

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despotism, which kept the people in the deepest ignorance—a country where only twenty-five per cent. of the children, who should be educated, were being sent to school, and where the annual expenditure on education in a country of 150,000,000 was only \$12,000,000. The lowest types of humanity which Dr. Brown had seen on his eastern travels, were Russian pilgrims in Jerusalem. There was no toleration in Russia for a man who would worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. The best brains and the highest souls of Russia, were languishing in Siberian dungeons. As to Japan, that country has made more progress in fifty years, than Russia had done in five hundred. She had five million of her young people of school age, at school. And in Japan, though their religion was that of Buddha, the Japanese people showed a wide tolerance towards other religions.

In the opinion of Dr. Brown there was a peril for the world no matter which of the two nations won in the present struggle, but for the cause of Christianity, and civilization, it was of the utmost importance that Japan came out of the struggle victorious.

I. C. R. DEFICIT IS NEARLY \$1,000,000.

Minister of Railways Says Increased Wages and Improvements Largely Responsible.

Ottawa, March 2.—Hon. H. R. Emmerson delivered his statement yesterday in parliament on the Intercolonial. The showing for the year ending June 30 last was a deficit of \$900,751. Of the increase, \$506,972 was caused by the raise in wages of the engineers, firemen, trackmen, station masters, operators and mechanics. There were also large increases in repairs.

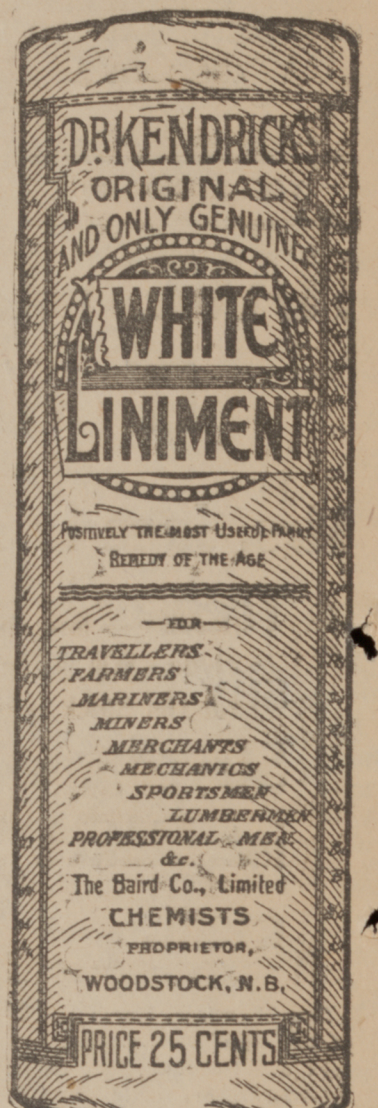
Mr. Emmerson said that the Intercolonial could not at present raise rates as a private railway could to meet increased expenditure. He quoted returns for eight years previous to 1896, with those for the eight years since, showing that the average deficits had been \$50,000 per annum less during the latter period than the former.

The wages of the staff and operating employees had increased from \$255,412 in 1895 to \$497,753 in 1902. There was better service to traveling public, more luxurious passenger cars, and improved service, etc.

Up to Dec. 31 last the earnings were \$3,621,236, a deficit of \$482,139, compared with the cost of operation. The revenue increased \$226,629 and the operating expenses \$412,572.

The minister was unable to predict anything but a large deficit for the current year. The expenses this winter were high.

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