



Copyright, 1927, by E. Phillips Oppenheim

INSTALMENT XXII.

The service of dinner had drawn to an end and the waiters had left the room. Coffee and liqueurs were upon the table and every one was smoking. Conversation became more intimate. Pritchard had squared his chair round to the table. He was the chairman of the branch and there were matters later on for official discussion.

"They've got nervous already in Downing Street," he observed, as he began to arrange his papers. "I told the Prime Minister myself yesterday that if he really thought of appointing a commission to discuss the mining question, we might come together, but nationalization must be one of the subjects to be discussed."

There was a knock at the door. Pritchard looked up with a frown. "Who's that?" he demanded.

"A young gentleman is waiting downstairs, sir," he announced. "Said it was most important. They've sent him on here from Westminster."

Pritchard tore open the envelope and read the note. His frown deepened.

"Send him up," he directed.

"Who is it?" Malakoff inquired.

"It's the bank clerk from South Audley street," Pritchard explained. "He's been to see Caldwell—been waiting there for hours—and Caldwell has sent him on here. I shouldn't be surprised if he had brought the book. If he

has, that's the end of our anxieties."

A frightened-looking young man with flaxen hair and pince-nez was ushered into the room. Pritchard greeted him brusquely.

"What's the trouble?" he asked. "Sit down and tell us about it."

The young man appeared out of breath. He accepted the chair, however, and glanced a little doubtfully around.

"You can speak out," Pritchard assured him. "What's the trouble? Have you brought the packet?"

"I haven't had a chance," the newcomer explained nervously. "I doubt whether I ever shall have. There's something wrong down at the bank. I'm not sure that they haven't tumbled to it."

"What do you mean?" Pritchard asked sharply.

The young man wiped the perspiration from his forehead. A month ago he had been exactly according to pattern—a respectable plodding young man, well established in suburban social circles, an embryo golfer, one of the M. C.'s of the fortnightly subscription dances held at the Balham Institute. There was a girl, the chance of a rise next month, the management of a small branch always among the possibilities. All gone. A moment's subtle temptation, and now everything drifting away, the ground crumbling beneath his feet, all that snug but happy future fading into the clouds.

"I'd got the real packet in the next compartment to the dummy

one," he recounted. "I didn't have a chance to get away with it before closing time. During the last few days Hubbard—that's our manager—seems to have had the jumps. He won't allow any one down in the vaults alone. He always sends two of us. I've tried all I could to break loose, but not a chance."

"I tried yesterday when Hubbard went out to lunch, but Grewcock—that's his deputy—came scowling up to me and asked what the devil I wanted breaking rules. Of course I had an excuse for wanting to do down, but it didn't help me."

"Yesterday they sent me down to the city. When I came back I found there'd been no end of a fuss. Someone from Scotland Yard had been with the boss. I heard them saying that it was the Chief Commissioner himself, and that he'd brought some one from the home office. While they were there, Hubbard visited the vaults himself. Just before closing time I had to go down to sort out some deeds. Mr. Grewcock went with me. The dummy packet which was in the compartment labeled 'Miss Brown' had gone."

"And what about the real one?" Pritchard demanded, his voice shaking with anxiety.

"That was there all right," the clerk replied. "I could see it through the wire doors. I put it in an empty compartment under 'C' instead of 'B'."

"Why couldn't you bring it?" Pritchard exclaimed.

"How could I?" the young man asked, almost piteously. "Grewcock never let me out of his sight. It would have given the whole show away if I'd opened the other compartment. Besides, I'd nowhere to hide it. I did try to stay behind, but I hadn't a chance. Grewcock never took his eyes off me. Usually it is I who look up there. This afternoon he did it himself. I can't think why they're so suspicious, but there's something—I swear there's something wrong there."

"Were you at the bank until closing time?" Pritchard demanded.

"An hour after. I'm behind with my work. I can't settle down with this infernal business hanging about. That didn't make any difference though. The keys of the vault had gone already."

"The packet is still there then," Pritchard reflected. "There's no doubt about that."

"It's still there," the other agreed. "But don't you see? By this time the people who've got the dummy packet will have found out. I shan't dare to go to the bank in the morning. I wish to God I'd never come into this."

"Oh, shut up!" Pritchard exclaimed brutally. "You've got a couple of thousand pounds in cash—more than you'd have ever earned there if you'd slaved over your desk until doomsday. You can be off when you like, and there's no charge against you, either. You haven't stolen anything—you've just broken trust. You'd better clear out, if you can't get the packet. If we'd had a man on the job—"

The young clerk rose to his feet.

"I never promised to do more than a trace of spirit," he declared, with a trace of spirit. "I didn't mean to do as much. I came here to tell you how things were of my own accord. I wasn't obliged to."

"That's right," Pritchard agreed in a milder tone. "Have a drink and a cigar."

The young man drank a whisky and soda greedily.

"Then we may take it as an absolute certainty," Malakoff intervened, with a meaning glance at Bretskopf, "that the original packet is in the safe in South Audley street and will be there until opening time tomorrow morning."

"An absolute certainty," the other assented. "No one went down to the vaults again after Grewcock and I came out, and when I left the bank the keys had gone and the watchman was on duty."

Pritchard nodded.

"Well, we know where we are, at any rate, then," he said. "We won't detain you any longer. If you'd like a letter to some friends on the Continent—that is, if you want a job of any sort—"

"No!" the young man interrupted. "No more of this sort of business for me!"

He hastened off, Pritchard sat with his under lip thrust out, thinking deeply. Difficulties made a stronger man of him. From across the table Bretskopf, with folded arms, watched him steadily, a triumphant gleam of anticipation already shining in his eyes.

At a few minutes after 9 o'clock on the following morning, Miss Brown, who had just finished clearing up after her simple breakfast, was surprised to hear a tap at her door. She answered the summons and found a young man standing, hat in hand, upon the threshold, whom at first she scarcely recognized.

"I hope you haven't forgotten me, Miss Brown?" he said. "My name is Greatson—Eric Greatson, you know. I am Abel Deane's secretary. We danced at the Cosmopolitan one night."

"I remember you now," Miss Brown admitted. "But—"

"Of course, I know I'm intruding, coming at this hour of the morning," he interrupted eagerly, "but I want just one word with you, please. It is most important."

She allowed him to pass into the room a little ungraciously. Although she had only been up an hour, her bed was already made, the window had been opened, and the room itself was the picture of neatness. Nevertheless, Miss Brown had strict ideas with regard to the reception of visitors.

"It must be only one word, then," she insisted. "Neither my

friend nor I receives visitors here. What is it you want, please?"

He fidgeted with his hat. Miss Brown stood before him, cold and inhospitable. Knowing what a feeble explanation he must offer, he realized how hopeless his task was likely to prove.

"Miss Brown," he began, "I am compelled to remind you of something I know you don't wish to discuss. You have become involved in a matter which you do not understand in the least. It isn't your affair. You have been forced and cajoled into taking unfair risks in life."

Miss Brown's manner was as frigid as the wind that was whistling down the entry into the street outside.

"It appears to me," she said, "that you are interfering in a matter which is entirely my own concern. Please do not proceed any further."

"But I've got to," he persisted. "I can assure you I hate my errand. I wouldn't have come if there wasn't a grave reason for it. Some one—you, I believe—is going to a bank in South Audley street this morning to fetch away a packet which has been deposited there. I don't want you to go. I am here to stop your going if I can."

Miss Brown's blue eyes were large now with astonishment. She forgot for a moment to be angry. She looked at her visitor incredulously.

"You are here to stop my going to the bank about my own business this morning?" she repeated. "Have you suddenly taken leave of your senses, Mr. Greatson?"

"I daresay I have, to some extent," he groaned, "or I should have let things take their own course. I've been awake most of the night wondering what to do. I hoped that perhaps you might listen to me if you realized that I was in earnest. Do you believe that I am in earnest, Miss Brown?"

"I dare say you are," she admitted, "but that doesn't make any difference. I shall not tell you whether I am going to the bank or not. I will only tell you this in the hope of getting rid of you at once: If I have already planned to do nothing that you could say would stop me. Do you want me to add that I resent interference from strangers? If I take advice it's from friends."

He looked at her with a pathetic little frown of the brows.

"You are making me feel," he remarked, "that there is nothing left for me to do but to go down on all fours and crawl out."

"Then, why don't you do it?" she asked.

"Because I want, if I can, to convince you that mine isn't just idle interest," he said, earnestly. "Serious harm is likely to happen to you if you go down to the bank this morning on the errand you are contemplating."

"And how do you know this?" she demanded. "How do you even come to know that I was thinking of going to the bank?"

"I learned it by accident, because I went down to a meeting of one of the subcommittees of our party with a message from Mr. Deane last night," he explained.

"The chief wanted Frankland down at the House, and I had to go there to fetch him. What was going on at the committee meeting I cannot tell you in detail. I am breaking confidence enough as it is when I beg you, as you value your life, not to leave this room until after 10 this morning. It isn't your affair. It's a cowardly thing to expose you, who are not concerned in any way, to a very real danger."

"I suppose you mean," she said, icily, "that some of your friends and associates are planning some sort of brutality to prevent my carrying out my duty?"

"It isn't your duty," he protested. "It's not your concern. And, as for my associates, I am not responsible for what they do. We have a cause to fight, and it must be fought in the way our chiefs decide."

"Are your friends, then," she asked, "proposing to waylay me? They have assaulted me once before, you know. A nice sort of way to conduct a campaign which is supposed to be in the cause of humanity!"

"Don't gibe, please," he begged. "Well, you can set your mind at rest," she assured him, "I am not going to the bank alone."

He shook his head.

To Be Continued Tomorrow

Ten Years Ago in Prince Rupert

November 28, 1923

A well known local youth was committed for trial by Magistrate McMordie in city police court this morning on a charge of shooting with intent. He has been released on \$2,000 bail pending trial in County Court.

The hospital board is considering instituting a drive for funds. The deficit so far this year is \$6,500.

The annual bazaar of the Ladies' Aid of First Presbyterian Church yesterday afternoon was a great success. Convener were: tea room, Mrs. S. Massey; home cooking, Mrs. D. McD. Hunter; jumble table, Mrs. Joe Greer; plain sewing, Mrs. T. M. Spencer; fancy work, Mrs. David Thomson. In the evening, there was a musical program.

Advertise in the Daily News.

"TRY A NIP TONIGHT"

Grant's
BEST PROCURABLE
Scotch Whisky

BOTTLED & GUARANTEED BY
William Grant & Sons Ltd
PRODUCE OF SCOTLAND

The Original Label—look for it at the Vendor's and insist on GRANT'S "BEST PROCURABLE"

This advertisement is not published or displayed by the Liquor Control Board or by the Government of British Columbia.

Victor Records

Orthophonic

Moanin' Low
from the Musical Comedy "The Little Show"
Fox Trot Leo Reisman and His Orchestra 22047

Little by Little
Fox Trot Bernie Cummins and His Orchestra 22088
Vocal Johnny Marvin 22076

Singin' in the Rain
from the motion picture "Hollywood Revue of 1929"
Fox Trot Gus Arnheim and His Orchestra 22012
Vocal Johnny Marvin 22057
Organ Jesse Crawford 22066

I Lift Up My Finger and Say Tweet! Tweet!
(England's comedy-dance sensation)
Fox Trot Jack Hylton and His Orchestra 22067
Johnny Marvin

Perhaps
Fox Trot Rudy Vallée and His Connecticut Yankees 22118

Am I Blue?
from the motion picture "On With the Show"
Fox Trot Nat Shilkret and The Victor Orchestra 22004

All the latest Red Real records by famous Victor Artists

of Canada, Limited
VE-22

VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE

RECORDS VICTROLAS AND ORTHOPHONIC **McRae Bros.** VICTOR RADIO RECEIVERS

C-L-A-R-?

Sure! Clark's Tomato Soup!

JUST as sure as I can knock a ball farther than any kid in this street... this is CLARK'S TOMATO SOUP!

Some people say it's better to be late than never, but gee! when we are having Clark's Tomato Soup it's not much use being late... you may never get any!

Mother says she couldn't make better tomato soup herself... sister always brings Albert (that's her beau) home when we are having it and Pop, he says very little other than ask if there is any more.

All the goodness of big, red-ripe tomatoes. Nothing taken away—nothing added other than tasteful seasoning. It couldn't be anything but just delicious, wholesome soup. Your whole family will enjoy it!

CLARK'S SOUPS

Made in Canada

W. CLARK, LIMITED. Establishments at MONTREAL, P.Q., ST. REMI, P.Q., and HARROW, ONT.

FOR COUGHS, COLDS, BRONCHITIS & INFLUENZA

Take PEPS Tablets

PEPS

25c. box contains 35 silver-jacketed Peps.

KEEP HENNESSY BRANDY HANDY

BOTTLED AT COGNAC, FRANCE

This advertisement is not published or displayed by the Liquor Control Board or by the Government of British Columbia.

Daily News Want Ads. Bring Quick Returns