Cap'n Warren's Wards

By JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

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CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

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"But you have. Not in words, perhaps, but you have told me. I know. Please go on and tell me all. If you don't," with determination, "I shall make Uncle Elisha tell me as soon as he comes. I shall."

Sylvester sighed. "Well, by George!" he repeated feelingly. "I'll tell you one thing, young woman, you're wasting your talents. You should be a member of the bar. Any one who can lead a battle scarred veteran of cross examination like myself into a trap and then spring it on him, as you have done, is gifted by Providence. I ought not to say another word on the subject," he declared emphatically. "What Captain Warren will say to me when he finds this out is unpleasant to consider. What is it you want me to tell you?"

"Everything. I want you to sit down here by me and tell me the whole story from the beginning. Please."

He hesitated a moment longer and then, his mind made up, returned to his chair, crossed his legs and began. "Here it is," he said.

"Caroline, about twenty years ago or such matter your father was a comparatively poor man—poor, I mean, compared to what he afterward became. But he was a clever man, an able business man, one who saw opportunities and grasped them. At that time he obtained a grant in South America for"—

"I know," she interrupted. "The Akrae Rubber company was formed. You told Steve and me all about that. What I want to know is"—

"Wait. I did not tell you all about it. I said that another man invested $10,000 with your father to form that company. That man, so we now know, was your uncle, Captain Elisha Warren."

"I guessed that. Of course it must have been he."

"It was. The captain had saved some money; also at that time he idolized his brother and believed in his shrewdness and capability. He invested this $10,000 on Rodgers Warren's word that the investment was likely to be a good one, that and to help the latter in business. For a few years the company did nothing. During that time your father and uncle disagreed—concerning another matter, quite unconnected with this one—and they did not see each other again while Rodgers lived. In that long period the Akrae company made millions. But Elisha supposed it to be bankrupt and worthless, because—well, to be frank, because his brother wrote him to that effect."

"You we come to the will. Your father, Caroline, was not a bad man at heart. He realized how he had defrauded the brother who had been so kind to him, and he kept promising himself to some day repay the money he had taken. To insure that he put that note with the other papers of the company. If he did repay it could be destroyed; if he did not, if he should die, it would be there to prove—what it did prove. But always in his mind was the thought of you and Steve, the children he loved. He had quarreled with his brother, it is true. He had cheated him, but restitution for that cheat he had provided. But what would become of you, left—in case he died without making restitution—penniless? He knew his brother, as I said, knew his character, respected his honesty and believed in his conscientiousness and his big heart. So he made his will, and in it, as you know, he appointed Elisha your guardian. He threw his children and their future upon the mercy and generosity of the brother he had wronged. That is his reason, as we surmise it, for making that will."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Yes, Because I Want Him."

SYLVESTER paused. Caroline did not speak for a moment; then she asked:

"And no one knew—you or my uncle or any one—of all this until last March?"

"No. Graves had, with his usual care and patience, pieced together the evidence and investigated until we were sure that a stockholder in the Akrae company existed and that all of your father's estate belonged to him. Who that stockholder was we did not know until that day of the meeting at our office. Then Captain Warren told us."

"But he did not know either?"

"Not until then. He supposed his Akrae stock worthless and had practically forgotten it. When we told him of its value, of the note and of the missing shareholder, he knew, of course. One would have thought he was the wrongdoer and not the wronged. He would have gone straight to you and asked your pardon if we would have permitted it."

"But, Mr. Sylvester, now we are coming to the part I cannot understand. Of course the estate belonged to him. I know that. It is his. But why didn't he tell Steve and me the truth then, at once?"

"Caroline, Caroline, don't you understand yet? Do you imagine for one moment that your uncle intends keeping that money?"

She stared at him in utter amazement.

"Keeping it?" she repeated. "Why not? It is his. It belongs to him."

"Caroline, I'm afraid you don't know him even yet. He was for going to you at once and destroying the note in your presence. He would have done it, but we persuaded him to wait and think it over for a day or two. He did think and then decided to wait a little longer for your sake."

"For my sake? For mine?" She passed her hand in a bewildered way across her forehead. "Mr. Sylvester, I don't seem to understand even now. If"—

"For your sake, Caroline. Remember, at that time you were engaged to Malcolm Dunn."

Her intent gaze wavered. She drew a long breath. "I see," she said slowly. "Oh—I see."

"Yes. Captain Warren is one of the best judges of character I ever met. The Dunns did not deceive him for one moment. He was certain Malcolm intended marrying you because of your money. For that matter, so was I. He knew you must see the proof with your own eyes. And he showed it to you."

"But then," she begged distractedly, "why couldn't he tell me after that? I—I am so stupid, I suppose—but, Mr. Sylvester, all this is—is"—

"He might have told you then, but he did not think it best. Caroline, your uncle has always believed in you. Even when you sent him from your home he did not blame you. He said you were deceived—that was all. But, too, he has always declared that you had been, as he expressed it, 'brought up wrong.' Your money had, in a way, warped your estimate of people and things. And there was Steve. You know, Caroline, that money and what it brought were spoiling Steve. It has never been so much of a man as during the past year, when he thought himself poor. But your uncle has planned for him as well as for you, and when he believes the time has come he"—

"Please," she interrupted falteringly—"please don't say any more. Let me think, Mr. Sylvester. You say that Uncle Elisha intends giving us all that father took from him—all of it?"

"Yes, all. He considers himself merely your guardian still and will accept only his expenses from the estate."

"It is wonderful!" she repeated brokenly. "Even though we cannot take it, it is wonderful."

"What? Cannot take it?"

"Of course not! Do you suppose that either my brother or I would take the fortune that our father stole—yes, stole—from him, after he has been living almost in poverty all these years and we in luxury—on his money? Of course we shall not take it."

"But, Caroline, I imagine you will have to take it. I understand your feelings, but I think he will compel you to take it."

"I shall not!" She sprang to her feet. "Of course I shall not! Never! Never!"

"What's that you're never goin' to take, Caroline—measles or another trip down in these parts? I hope 'taint the last, 'cause I've been cut'latin' you'd like it well enough to come again."

Caroline turned. So did Sylvester. Captain Elisha was standing in the doorway, his hand on the knob. He was smiling broadly, but as he looked at the two by the fire he ceased to smile.

"What's all this?" he asked suspiciously. "Caroline, what—Sylvester, what have you been tellin' her?"

Neither answered at once. The captain looked from one to the other.

"Sylvester!" Caroline had never seen her uncle thoroughly angry before. "Sylvester," he cried, "have you—have you dast to tell her what you shouldn't? Didn't you promise me? If you told that girl I'll—I'll"—

His niece stepped forward. "Hush, Uncle Elisha," she said. "He didn't tell me until I knew already. I guessed it. Then I asked for the whole truth, and he told me."

"The whole truth? Caroline!"

He wrung his hands.

"Yes, uncle, the whole truth. I know you now. I thought I knew you before, but I didn't—not half. I do now."

"Oh, Caroline!" He stepped toward her and then stopped, frantic and despairing. "Caroline!" he cried again. "Can you ever forgive me? You know—you must know I ain't ever meant to keep it. It's all yours. I just didn't give it to you right off because—because— Oh, Sylvester, tell her! I never meant to keep it! Tell her!"

The lawyer shook his head. "I did tell her," he said, with another shrug, "and she tells me she won't accept it."

"What?" The captain's eyes were starting from his head. "What? Won't take it? Why, it's hers—hers and Steve's! It always has been! Do you cal'late I'd rob my own brother's children? Don't talk so foolish! I won't hear such talk!"

Caroline was close to tears, but she was firm.

Captain Elisha looked at her determined face, then at the lawyer's. But he found no help there. His chin thrust forward. He nodded slowly.

"Allright! All right!" he said grimly. "Sylvester, is your shop goin' to be open tomorrer?"

"Guess not, captain," was the puzzled reply. "It's Thanksgiving. Why?"

"But Graves'll be to home, won't he? I could find him at his house?"

"I presume you could."

"All right, then. Caroline Warren, you listen to me. I'll give you till 2 o'clock to make up your mind to take the money that belongs to you. If you don't I swear to the Lord Almighty I'll take the fust train, go straight to New York, hunt up Graves, make him go down to the office and get that note your father made out turnin' all his property over to that Akrae company. I'll get that note, and I'll burn it up. Then—then you'll have to take the money, because it'll be yours. Every bit of evidence that'll hold in law is gone."

He turned, strode to the door and out of the room. A moment later they heard a scream from Miss Baker in the kitchen: "Elisha Warren, what ails you? Are you crazy?" There was no answer but the back door closed with a tremendous bang.

Half an hour after his dramatic exit Captain Elisha was pacing up and down the floor of the barn. It was an old refuge of his, a place where he was accustomed to go when matters requiring deliberation and thought oppressed him. As he turned in his stride he saw a shadow move across the sill of the big, open door. He caught his breath and stopped.

Caroline entered the barn. She came straight to him and put her hands upon the lapels of his coat. Her eyes were wet and shining.

"Caroline!" he faltered eagerly.

"You good man!" she breathed softly. "Oh, you good man!"

"Caroline!" His voice shook, but there was hope in it. "Caroline, you're goin' take the money?"

"Yes, Uncle Elisha. Mr. Sylvester has shown me that I must. He says

"You good man!" she breathed softly. "Oh, you good man!"

you will do something desperate if I refuse."

"I sartin would. And you'll take it really?"

"Yes, Uncle Elisha."

"Glory be! And—and, Caroline, you won't hold it against me, my makin' you think you was poor and makin' you live in that little place and get along on just so much, and all that? Can you forgive me for doin' that?"

"Forgive you? Can I ever thank you enough? I know I can't, but I can try all my life to prove what"—

"S-s-h-h! S-s-h! There!" with a great sigh, almost a sob, of relief, "I guess this'll be a real Thanksgivin' after all."

But a few minutes later another thought came to him.

"Caroline," he asked, "I wonder if now that things are as they are, you couldn't do somethin' else—somethin' that would please me an awful lot?"

"What is it, uncle?"

"It's somethin' perhaps I ain't got any right to ask. Title other day you told me you cared for Jim Pearson but that you sent him away 'cause you thought you had to earn a livin' for you and Steve. Now you know that you ain't got to do that. And you said you told him if you ever changed your mind you'd send for him. Don't you s'pose you could send for him now—right off—so he could get here for this big Thanksgivin' of ours? Don't you think you could, Caroline?"

"Send for him—now?" she asked in a low tone.

"Yes, now—right off—in time for to-morrow."

"He could not get here," she whispered.

"Yes, he could. If you send him a telegram with one word in it—'Come'—and sign it 'Caroline,' he'll be here on tomorrow mornin's train, or I'll eat my hat and the six of Abbie's bonnets have in. Think you could, Caroline?"

A moment, then in a whisper, "Yes, Uncle Elisha."

"Hooray! But—but," anxiously, "hold on, Caroline. Tell me truly now. You ain't doin' this just to please me? You mustn't do that, not for the world and all. You mustn't send for him on my account; only just for one reason—because you want him."

He waited for his answer. Then she looked up, blushing still, but with a smile trembling on her lips.

"Yes, Uncle Elisha," she said, "because I want him."

The clouds blew away that night, and Thanksgiving day dawned clear and cold. The gray sea was now blue. The white paint of the houses and fences glistened in the sun. The groves of pitch pine were brilliant green blotches spread like rugs here and there on the brown hills. South Denboro had thrown off its gloomy raiment and was "all dolled up for Thanksgivin'," so Captain Elisha said.

The captain and Sylvester were leaning on the fence by the gate, looking up the road and waiting for Dan and the "extr senter" to heave in sight around the bend. The hired man had harnessed early and driven to the station at least thirty minutes before train time. Captain Elisha was responsible for the early start. Steve was coming on that train. Possibly some one else was coming. The captain did not mean they should find no welcome or vehicle at the station.

The whistle had sounded ten minutes before. It was time for Dan to appear at the bend.

"I hope to thunder Jim got that telegram," observed the captain for the twentieth time at least since breakfast.

"So do I," replied his friend. "There's no reason why he shouldn't, is there?"

"No, no sensible one, but I've scared up no less than a couple of hundred of the other kind. If he shouldn't come—my, my, she'd be disappointed!"

He motioned with his head toward the window of Caroline's room.

They turned in time to catch a glimpse of the girl as she parted the curtains and looked out on the road. She saw them looking at her, smiled, blushed and disappeared. Both men smoked in silence for a moment; then the captain said:

"Say, Sylvester, this New York cruise of mine turned out pretty good, after all, didn't it?"

"Decidedly good. It was the making of your niece and nephew." Caroline realizes it now, and so will Steve."

"Hope so. It didn't do me any harm," with a chuckle. "I wouldn't have missed that little bent up the bay, nor Marm Dunn for a good deal. For a spell there we was hows abreast, and 'twas hard to tell who'd turn the mark first."

Sylvester laughed. "I'll tell you what, Captain Warren," he said. "I never saw you in better spirits. Do you know what I think? I think that for a chap who has just given away half of a good sized fortune and intends giving away the other half you're the most cheerful specimen I ever saw."

The captain laughed too. "I am, ain't I?" he said. "Well, I can say truthful what I never expected to say in my life—that since I was wuth half a million dollars. As for the rest of it, I'm like that millionaire—that— Hit! Look! There comes Dan! See him?"

"Steve!" cried the captain excitedly. "There's Steve! And—and—yes, there's somebody on the back seat. It's Jim! He's come! Hooray!"

"Wait!" Sylvester cried. "I don't want to lose the rest of that sentence. You said you were like some millionaire. Who?"

"Don't bother me!" cried Captain Elisha. "Who? Why, I was goin' to say I was like that millionaire chap who passes out in library every time he wakes up and happens to think of it. You know who I mean. Ahoy there, Jim! Ahoy, Steve!"

He was waving his hand to the passengers in the approaching vehicle.

"That's the feller. I've come to feel about the way he says he does—that 'twould be a crime for me to die rich."

THE END.

SUCCUMB TO ARCTIC TENSION

Few Explorers in High Latitudes Successfully Resist Peculiar Psychological Effects.

In a paper dealing with the University of Oxford expedition to Siberia, of which he was a member, H. U. Hall of the University of Pennsylvania referred to the striking psychological effects of long daylight and long darkness in high latitudes, the Scientific American states.

As to the former, apart from the tendency to shorten sleeping hours in order to make the greatest possible use of the long day, there seems to be a kind of stimulation of the nervous system, urging people to a feverish and purposeless activity. This is especially noticed in newcomers, but the natives are not exempt from it. On the other hand, the coming of the long winter night is followed by a kind of reaction, though no general depression of vitality is apparent.

With the cessation of work the period of sociability begins, and the circumstances favor a lapse of self-control. This is the time when "Arctic hysteria" is likely to show itself. Such, for instance, is a form of hysterical seizure for which the Tungus have a special name, in which the patient sings improvisations of his own which are likely to contain absurd exaggerations or laughable glorifications of himself.

Woman's Imagination.

When a woman arrives three minutes late at a railway station she imagines that the engineer saw her coming and pulled out just for spite.

Late Summer Silk Suits

These two design suits showed us just how adroit they could be when they managed their early spring offerings of wool. They had to be made of the shortest allowance of goods, but the designers made a virtue of necessity and the conservation of wool worked to the advantage of styles. Later they turned to several new and heavy weaves in silk as a substitute for wool and for midsummer they were able to forget all about saving materials and design suits of taffeta and satin according to their own fancy. These make the last of their offerings; for now they must begin their work for fall.

No one could ask for more than they have done this season in giving us variety in styles. In the pretty suit at the left of the picture there returns once more the banished plaited skirt, with four double box pleats, to commend it to the possessor of a slender figure. The short coat boasts side pleats below the waistline, the designer apparently determining to make the most of the privilege of using pleats again. The coat opens over a narrow white vest, the straight pieces at each side of the front having the effect of scarf ends finished with pendent, silk-covered balls.

The suit at the right is of black taffeta with a plain, moderately full skirt. Coats pointed at the bottom have proved so graceful that this feature of spring styles is retained in this model. The collar, cut in points that are embroidered, is new. The girdle at the high waistline is extended into points at each side of the back, and these are embroidered also. The sleeves are gathered into flaring cuffs, ornamented with a row of rather large silk-covered buttons.

Children's Clothes.

There are many serviceable frocks of linen of heavy weave. For some reason, some of the smart children's outfitters have put out an unusual number of linen frocks in yellow and lavender; perhaps because these colors are off the beaten track of children's equipment. We must all have grown a little weary of the incessant pink and blue conventionally selected for little girls a few years and more ago, observes a Paris fashion correspondent. It does seem a little odd to put lavender on a two-year-old, doesn't it? And yet one of the most charming frocks recently shown by a children's dressmaker of note was of white voile, with collars and cuffs of violet organdie finished with loose, coarse buttonholing.

Inexpensive Hats for Little Girls

Three little inexpensive hats for the small girl, in the picture above, demonstrate that headwear need not be fine in order to be tasteful. These shapes are well blocked and very simply trimmed with velvet or silk ribbon in narrow widths and good quality. The braids are of the cheaper kind, but they are substantial enough for the short-lived, millinery of the little miss who is apt to put their staying qualities to the test.

At the left of the group the most popular of shapes for little girls is shown, made of a heavy tuscan braid rather closely woven. It is the natural straw color. Narrow blue satin ribbon is banded about it and finished with a knot at the front, and the hat is lined with blue silk.

Very much the same shape is shown at the right, of white milan hemp. Narrow satin ribbon, gathered along one edge, is used to make a band and medallions on the crown. There are three small medallions, one at each side and one at the back, and a larger one at the front. A little blossom is posed, with a bow of the ribbon, at the base of each medallion. In this particular hat the ribbon is light blue satin and the blossom a pink wild rose.

The odd hat of fancy braid (in the natural straw color) at the center of the picture is a Chinese inspiration. The curious peak in the crown distinguishes it from other shapes and is reminiscent of coolie hats and turbans with distinguishing buttons at the top. Narrow brown velvet ribbon makes a band with ends crossing at the front, where clusters of little buds are tacked over the ribbon. It wouldn't be possible to place trimming more simply, and that is what gives childish hats their character.

Julia Bottomley

Washable Walls.

Why should children prefer to write on immaculate walls rather than on written paper? Because, first, their mother's caution them not to do it, and, second, because the walls are whiter and the writing looks better on them than it does on paper. But the time has come when the mother need fear for the white nursery walls no longer. They can indeed, be changed from a source of irritation to educational purposes by means of a finish which makes them washable. In other words all pencil, crayon and pen marks may be washed away. Consequently, the wall surface is as good a place for drawing pictures or making examples as a blackboard. Although the finish is intended primarily for the walls of the nursery, it may be used in the kitchen, living room or other part of the house where children are wont to try out artistic ability on the walls. The finish may be in any one of a number of different shades.

For Bargain Blouses.

Lawn and voiles in checks and stripes and flowery designs have been thrown on the remnant counters and are selling for almost nothing. For from 25 cents to $1 enough materia for a blouse may be picked up.