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NOTICE!

The Funeral of the late Charles D. D. McKinnon of Vancouver, B.C., will be held from the Clifton Presbyterian Church on Sunday, 22nd May at 2.30 P. M. The members of Prince Edward Lodge A. F. & A. M. will attend at the Lodge Room one hour previous. Please accept this notice. 3189-5-20-1i.

NOTICE TO FOX RANCHERS

Commencing May 16th, we will have a car of fox food at Horne's Siding on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays of each week.

THE HARRIS ABATTOIR CO., LIMITED.

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Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the shareholders of the Charlottetown Forum Ltd., will be held in the Board of Trade rooms, Charlottetown, Wednesday, May 25th at 8 p. m.

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The House of Dreams-Come-True

By Margaret Pedler

(Continued)

CHAPTER XXXII
THE DIVIDING SWORD

Slowly, reluctantly, Tormarin's hands loosened their clasp of Madame de Varigny's throat, and with a swift, flexible twist of the body she slipped aside and stood a few paces away from him.

Jean looked from one to the other with horrified eyes.

"Madame de Varigny?—Blaise?" he stammered. "What is it? . . . Why, you—you might have killed her, Blaise!"

He stared at her blankly. His release of the Italian woman had been in mere blind response to Jean's first imperative appeal that he should desist. But the mists of ungovernable anger had hardly yet cleared from him brain; the blood still drummed in his ears like the roar of the sea.

"Blaise"—Jean spoke imploringly. "What were you doing? Tell me—"

With an effort he seemed to recover himself.

"It's a pity you didn't let me finish it, Jean," he said harshly. "Such women are better dead."

Madame de Varigny was fingering her neck delicately where the pressure of Blaise's grip had scored red marks on the cream-white flesh. She seemed quite composed. Her smile still held its quiet triumph and her long dark eyes gleamed with the same mockery that had brought her within measurable distance of quick death.

"As Monsieur Tor-ma-rin seems to find a difficulty in explaining—permit me," she said at last. "He was angry with me because I bring him good news that his wife is still alive, that he need mourn no longer."

While she spoke her eyes, resting on Blaise's mask-like face, held an expression of malicious satisfaction.

"His wife . . . alive?" repeated Jean dazedly. "Blaise, is she mad? Nesta has been dead years—years." Then, as he made no answer, she continued rapidly, a fain note of fear vibrating in her voice: "Isn't it so? Blaise—speak! Quickly, tell her—Nesta has been dead some years!"

"He cannot tell me anything about her which I do not know already, Mees Peterson, seeing that she is my sister and has been living with me ever since her husband's cruelty drove her from his home."

"It it true, Blaise?" whispered Jean.

Belief that some substance of terrible truth lay behind the Italian's coolly uttered statements was beginning to lay hold of her.

"Blaise! Blaise"—her voice rising a little—"say it isn't true—tell her it isn't true."

He looked at her speechlessly, but the measureless pain in his eyes answered her more fully, more convincingly than any words.

"You see?" broke in Madame de Varigny triumphantly. "He cannot deny it! It was I who told him of her death and I who now tell him that that she still lives. Listen to me, mademoiselle, and I will resount you how—"

"No!" interrupted Jean proudly. "Whatever there may be for me to hear, I will hear it from Blaise—not from you."

She turned again to Tormarin.

"Tell me everything, Blaise," she said simply.

He took her outstretched hands and drew her slowly towards him. No one, reading now the calm sadness, the stern imprint of endurance on his face, could have imagined it was that of the same man who, a few moments earlier, had been swept by such a tempest of uncontrollable anger.

"Jean," he said very gently and pitifully. "I'm afraid that what Madame de Varigny says may be true. I have no proof that it is not—"

"Nor have you any proof that it is," broke in Jean swiftly. She swung round on Madame de Varigny. "Whate is your proof—where is your proof?"

The Italian smiled.

"Monsieur Tor-ma-rin will find his wife in my car. I bade the chauffeur wait with it at the lodge gate."

"Do you mean you have brought Nesta—here?" cried Blaise.

"Why not?" replied Madame de Varigny, with a return to the same exasperating complacency with which she had originally described her whole scheme of revenge. "And—here? Surely her husband's house is the proper place to which to bring his wife?"

"She cannot remain here," said Blaise with decision.

"No? For the moment that was not my idea. I brought her with me because I thought there could be no more convincing proof."

Blaise looked at her searchingly. He fancied he detected a false note in her voluble speech, and a new idea presented itself to him. Was the woman simply putting up a gigantic bluff? Or was it really Nesta, his wife waiting in the car at the lodge gates? It occurred to him as perfectly feasible that it might be merely some woman whose remarkable resemblance to the dead girl had suggested to the Countess's fertile brain the scheme that she should impersonate her.

His mind seized eagerly upon the idea, bolstering it up with Madame de Varigny's own admissions. "I made little changes in her appearance," she had said. "The colour of her hair, the way of dressing it." Probably she was relying on those "little changes," and on the blurred recollection resulting from the length of time which had elapsed since Nesta's death, to aid her in her plan of introducing as his wife a woman who closely resembled her. He felt morally sure of it, and the light of hope suddenly shone bravely.

"I believe you are deceiving me," he said quietly, "Lying—as you have lied all through the piece. I'll come and see this 'wife' you have waiting in the car for me"—grimly. He turned to Jean. "Keep up your courage, sweetheart," he said in a low voice full of infinite solicitude. "I believe the whole thing is a put-up job to separate us."

Jean smiled at him radiantly. She felt all at once very confident. In a few minutes this nightmarish story of a Nesata still alive and claiming her rights as Blaise's wife would be proved a lie.

Tormarin crossed the room and opened the door.

"Now, Madame de Varigny—will you come with me?"

The woman hesitated a moment.

"Come," insisted Blaise firmly. "Or—are you afraid, after all, to bring me face to face with my wife?"

She shook her head.

"No," she said. "I am not afraid. It is only that I am so sorry—so sorry for the little Jean."

Her eyes, soft and dark and liquid as the eyes of a deer, sought Jean's beseechingly.

"I am so sorry," she repeated. And passed, slowly,—almost unwillingly, it seemed out of the room, followed by Tormarin.

Jean raised her head from Blaise's shoulder and pushed back her hair, damp with perspiration, from her forehead. It seemed to her as though she had been down, down into some awful, limitless abyss of darkness from which she was now feebly struggling back to a painful consciousness of material things. A great sea had surged over her head, blotting out everything, and remained poised above her like a huge black arch, imprisoning her in the vast, deserted chaos in which she found herself wandering. Then—after a long time, it seemed—it had surged away again and she could distinguish Blaise's face bent above her.

"Then—then it's true?" she said stupidly. Her voice sounded tiny, to herself—a mere thread of sound.

Blaise made no answer. He only held her a little closer in his arms. She supposed he hadn't heard that thin thread of voice. She must try again.

"Is it true, Blaise? It Nesta—" But somehow the last words wouldn't come.

She felt his arm jerk against her side.

"Yes," she said badly. "It's true. Nesta is alive. I've seen her."

Jean said nothing. She knew it—had known it all the time the arched wall of sea had kept her down in that awful black waste where there had been neither warmth nor sunshine but only bitter, freezing cold and lightless space. She clung a little closer to Blaise, like a frightened, exhausted child.

"Heart's beloved . . . little dearest Jean . . ." She heard the wrung murmur of his voice above her head. Then suddenly, his arms tightening around her: "My soul!"

The sunlight still slanted in through the windows, mellow and golden. A gay shout of laughter came up from the boat on the lake. The clock on the chimneypiece struck the hour—twelve slow, maddening strokes.

Jean stared at the blank, foolish face. The hands had pointed to half past eleven when the door of the room had closed behind Blaise and Madame de Varigny. It had taken just a brief half-hour to smash up her whole world—to rob her of everything that mattered.

"I must think—I must think," she muttered.

"Belovedest"—Blaise's voice was wonderfully tender—not with the passionate tenderness of a lover but with a solicitude that was almost maternal. "Belovedest, don't try to think now. Try to rest a little, won't you?"

(To Be Continued)

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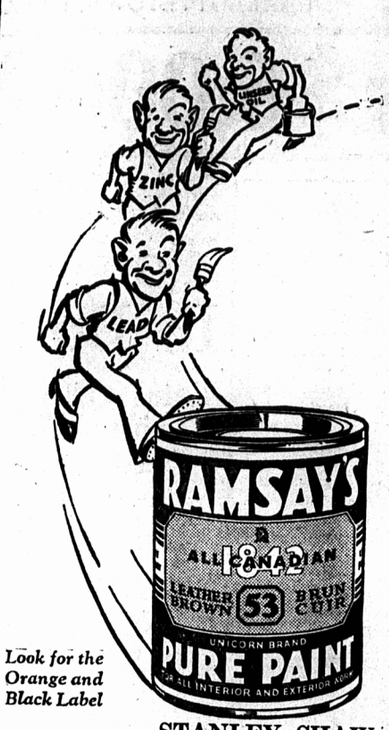

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CUMBERLAND HILL INSTITUTE

The May meeting of the Cumberland Hill Women's Institute was held at the home of Mrs. J. J. Campbell on the 12th, with six members and a number of visitors present. The meeting opened in the usual way. The roll call was answered by riddles. It was decided to hold a special meeting in the school on Wednesday the 19th to do a little business in connection with the Institute. At the close of the meeting several solos were sung by Miss Isabel Campbell and Mrs. McLaren with music accompaniment by Mrs. Jas. McLaren, which were much enjoyed by all.

Mr. Wilbur Wood also rendered some excellent numbers on his violin, while the young people danced a few quadrilles.

Bedeque

Mr. Henry Mayne, fourth year graduate in Medicine at the Dalhousie University has returned home.

A steamer, chartered by Mr Michael J. MacIvor of Kinkora was loaded in Summerside this week, carrying a consignment of 21,000 bags of potatoes shipped by Mr. McIvor; 8,000 bags shipped by the P. E. I. Potato Growers' Association and also a quantity by the Associated Shippers, Charlottetown and Simmons and McFarlane at Freetown.

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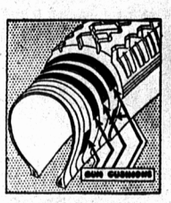

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