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PATTERN OF THREE

By Mary Hastings Bradley

Ada came out of her room, commencing to question, and Kay answered her so crisply that Ada retreated, startled and upset. Doris came up with the trays and Kay went restlessly away; she was on the stairs when the doorbell rang. She raced to the door telling herself that it was only William, thought William always used his key.

Dick stood there, his hat pulled low against the snow that was falling thickly now. He said abruptly, "I phoned the house. I found the key at the office."

She exulted that he had the shock of that. She said, her lips dry, "I told you I would not stay there."

He made a movement of impatience. It was as if he said, "Oh, that—that was a long time ago." Aloud he told her, "I want you to come with me."

"Now?" Her anger made her coolly deliberate. "Where?"

"To Lake Forest. Eve wants to talk to you."

Her mind repeated it dazedly and conjectures leaped up in her, deepening her inner confusion. Her lips said mechanically, "How is she?"

She stood the trip well. The Uptons are at dinner with her now."

Through Kay's tumult rang a peal of mockery: she hoped that she had ordered in enough good food to satisfy the Uptons."

She said coldly, "I don't care to see her or the Uptons."

"They'll be gone. This has to be said. Get your coat, Kay."

He added, as she turned in sudden decision toward the coat closet, "Have you the car here? The Uptons man brought me, but I told him not to wait."

"The car's in the garage here. I have the keys."

She hurried into her wraps. She took the keys out of her handbag and handed them to him as they went out of the house.

The snow was falling in large soft flakes like snow in a Christmas picture; the windows grew blurred with it and the windshield was covered except for the oblongs where the wipers worked. Kendall was absorbed in driving and in his own thoughts. She would not look at him; a freezing constraint walled her in.

He was turning east now. They crossed the tracks and branched into a winding way; he gained the entrance which had grown familiar to her these past days and stopped before the house.

Ellen appeared almost instantly. She gave Kay a look of startled recognition and to Dick's inquiry she said, "Upstairs, Mr. Kendall. Mr and Mrs Upton have gone."

"Let's go up then," he said stepping back at the foot of the stairs, but she told him, "You lead the way."

The door to Eve's room was open. A voice said, "Come in," and they entered. Eve was in bed, arranged with rosy pillows and silk sheets—the sheets that Kay had seen were on that bed—but what lay among them was a ghost.

There was rouge on the cheeks and color on the lips, but that factitious brightness mocked the face beneath it. The cheeks were sunken and the temples hollowed; the line from mouth to nose was deep, the nostrils pinched. The sharp bones of the skull seemed pushing through the white drawn skin.

The shock to Kay was intense; she was utterly unprepared for this. In all those days since Dick had gone she had been too immersed in her own hurt to give thought to Eve's actual condition. She had formed no picture of her except of her exploiting her delicacy with Dick.

CHAPTER XXX

Eve was looking up at Kay. "I want to thank you for having everything so nice for me." Her voice was not a sick voice; it had brightness in it and a touch of excitment. "Won't you sit down? And take off your coat."

Kay took it off and gave it to Dick who put it somewhere. She sat down in the chair he placed for her and he took one nearer the head of the bed. Her disturbance was so profound that she had trouble to find words. She murmured, "I expect your trip has tired you?"

"Only a little. It was enjoyable. I can't walk too much, but I like to be up each day while I can." She added astonishingly, "I thought you'd be here when I came."

Kay smiled, a white, embarrassed smile. "I didn't think you'd expect that."

Eve continued to look fixedly at her: even in the shaded light those searching eyes were ravaged. They were blue pools in the caverns of their sockets. "I wouldn't have worried you about the house, but there was no one else. You know what friends are. They have a thousand engagements."

She added, speaking very definitely, not at all pathetically, but as one anxious to get a thing out in the open and understood, "You see, I wanted to die at home. I've several more months, probably, to get through and I want to get everything I can out of them. I want to have things going on around me and not have people remembering all the time that I'm dying, though I suppose I'll trade on that. I'm trading on it now," she added, with her strained and tragic smile.

She said, "Knowing you've got to die makes everything else seem trivial. Even dying itself comes to seem unimportant. I don't mind it—yes, I mind horribly, but not as I would have years ago. Not as you would. I haven't a good deal to live for, you know. No one needs me."

She said it simply enough; it was just so, but no other way of saying it could have affected Kay Kendall so profoundly. She was pierced by it. She dared not look at Dick to see what he was feeling. She had to stiffen herself, to fight against a intolerable compunction.

"I don't wish things were different between you," said Eve distinctly. "Any other way it would have been too awful for Dick. You couldn't have waited all these years. Everything would have been too late. Now you've got the children—growing up—"

The children. Yes, the children, and all those years of love and happiness. Those things were real. Reality had to be a bulwark against pity.

"I don't want to be alone in some hospital," Eve went on. "I hate—how was it said?—'the false gayety that thrives in hospitals.' I want to be in my home—and have someone here belonging to me. And I haven't anyone unless you'll come and live here."

Kay said, "Dick?" out of a dry throat.

"Dick and you. Of course he can't come without you. I wouldn't have that. And the children. I'd really like the children," said Eve eagerly. "They'd be amusing. They're not conscious of illness. And I could be some use to you, planning for them. I shouldn't mind seeing you all together," she insisted with that faint infinitely removed smile, "When you've got a pain that's going to kill you, you don't worry about other things."

She shifted a little on her pillows. "I'd be so grateful if you could come."

Kay spoke stumblingly. "I'd like to help—to do anything. But to come here—"

Eve shifted again. Dick said instantly, "Are you in pain? Do you want anything?"

"No—just a twinge. But I'd like some aspirin. Two, you know. On the table there. I'll get a nurse—later—but now Ellen—"

Dick brought the aspirin and a glass of water. He moved quickly, lightly. Eve crunched the pellets; she sipped from the glass. Her arm was white and wasted.

Her look went out to Kay entreating her. "Im asking a good deal, I know. People will think it—queer. But if you don't mind too much—"

"I don't mind at all," said Kay. She would mind terribly. Yet she was so wrung with pity for Eve that she was past caring for any other consideration.

She would care later, she knew; she understood that she would have to suffer embarrassment and difficulty, that they would not always live in the selflessness of this high moment. But she owed this woman a debt that her soul acknowledged now. It was only by paying such indebtedness that you could live on terms of self-respect with yourself. The world could be as convulsed as it pleased at the spectacle of the second Mrs. Kendall taking care of the first Mrs. Kendall, but that had to be endured.

No lives were alike. Their three lives were like no other three. This woman had no one else; they were united in a strange entanglement, and only by being simple, by being kind and caretaking could they find their way.

It would not be easy to live in this house, to face all the complications. She would be reminded, inescapably, of the life that Dick and Eve had lived here, but what of it? They had lived it. You could not deny the past. Since Eve wanted this—

Dick was looking at her; she saw the sadness in his face and the appeal and the anxious compassion for herself. His eyes said, "This has to be done. Are you equal to it?"

She knew now why he had not been able to tell her, why he had been so inarticulate. He had had to bring her here that she might see for herself.

Incredible that he had seemed a stranger to her in the car. She seemed to feel all that was passing in his heart. She had never felt so much married to him as at that moment when she was assuming with him the obligations of his past. In the look between them was born an understanding more uniting than any child of their flesh.

Eve was sighing, "Oh, that's what I wanted!" with an accent of pitiable relief.

Dick rose. "You'll be all right for the night? Can Ellen see to you? Kay and I will be running along then—we haven't had dinner yet. Tomorrow we'll bring in the caravan."

His manner, quiet, assured, touched with everyday humor, seemed to make it all natural and unconstrained.

He got Kay's coat and held it for her. He said, "I've tried to tell her what she's in for—she hasn't seen Babs in action yet," and hearing her husband's voice, his intimate voice to her, Kay felt herself, quite simply and sensibly, equal to anything that might come to them. She knew that they were close now, forever.

(THE END)

THE EASTERN KING'S EXHIBITION ASSOCIATION Will Hold Their ANNUAL EXHIBITION In

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THURSDAY, SEPT. 13th

All Indoor Exhibits Classes 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 will be judged on Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 12th.

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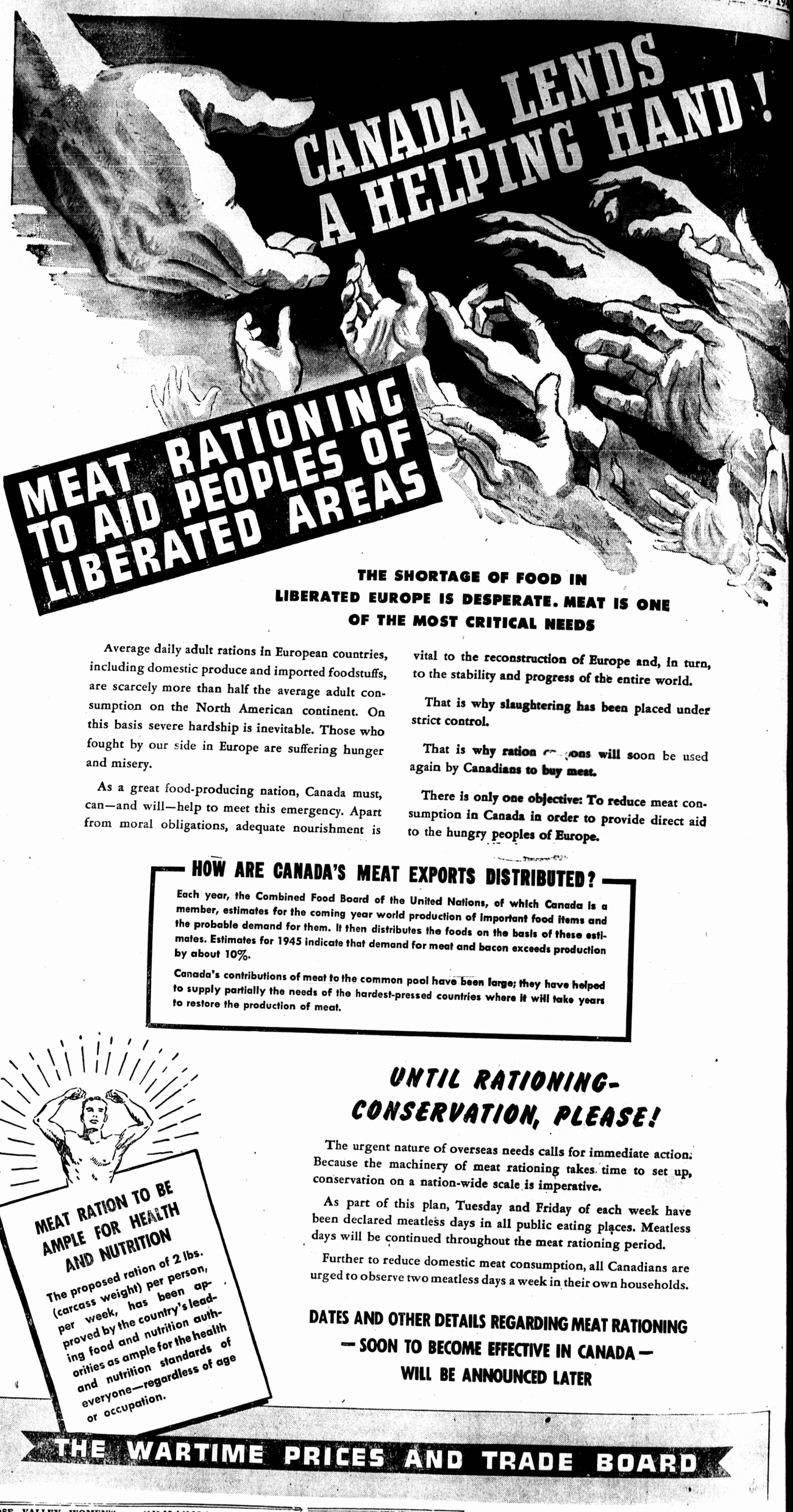

THE SHORTAGE OF FOOD IN LIBERATED EUROPE IS DESPERATE. MEAT IS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL NEEDS

Average daily adult rations in European countries, including domestic produce and imported foodstuffs, are scarcely more than half the average adult consumption on the North American continent. On this basis severe hardship is inevitable. Those who fought by our side in Europe are suffering hunger and misery.

As a great food-producing nation, Canada must, can—and will—help to meet this emergency. Apart from moral obligations, adequate nourishment is vital to the reconstruction of Europe and, in turn, to the stability and progress of the entire world.

That is why slaughtering has been placed under strict control.

That is why ration coupons will soon be used again by Canadians to buy meat.

There is only one objective: To reduce meat consumption in Canada in order to provide direct aid to the hungry peoples of Europe.

HOW ARE CANADA'S MEAT EXPORTS DISTRIBUTED?

Each year, the Combined Food Board of the United Nations, of which Canada is a member, estimates for the coming year world production of important food items and the probable demand for them. It then distributes the foods on the basis of these estimates. Estimates for 1945 indicate that demand for meat and bacon exceeds production by about 10%.

Canada's contributions of meat to the common pool have been large; they have helped to supply partially the needs of the hardest-pressed countries where it will take years to restore the production of meat.

MEAT RATION TO BE AMPLE FOR HEALTH AND NUTRITION

The proposed ration of 2 lbs. (carcass weight) per person, per week, has been approved by the country's leading food and nutrition authorities as ample for the health and nutrition standards of everyone—regardless of age or occupation.

UNTIL RATIONING—CONSERVATION, PLEASE!

The urgent nature of overseas needs calls for immediate action. Because the machinery of meat rationing takes time to set up, conservation on a nation-wide scale is imperative.

As part of this plan, Tuesday and Friday of each week have been declared meatless days in all public eating places. Meatless days will be continued throughout the meat rationing period.

Further to reduce domestic meat consumption, all Canadians are urged to observe two meatless days a week in their own households.

DATES AND OTHER DETAILS REGARDING MEAT RATIONING — SOON TO BECOME EFFECTIVE IN CANADA — WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER

THE WARTIME PRICES AND TRADE BOARD

ROSE VALLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Rose Valley W. I. held their monthly meeting on July 4th at the home of Mrs. K. H. MacKenzie. The president, Mrs. Wm. Matheson presided. Meeting opened with Institute Creed. Minutes of last meeting were read and approved. Roll call was answered by seven members and one visitor present. Correspondence was read and discussed. Plans for an ice cream festival was discussed. It was decided to hold it at Mrs. J. W. MacKenzie's.

The next meeting is to be held at the home of Mrs. Raymond Newson. Roll call to be answered with words often mispronounced. Program committee is Mrs. Wm. MacDonald and Mrs. Wm. Matheson. Meeting closed with the National Anthem. Lunch was served by hostess.

BRINGING FATHER

By George McManus