The Thirteenth Commandment

By RUPERT HUGHES

Copyright by Harper & Brothers

CHAPTER XXV—Continued.

—16—

"That makes no difference," Daphne stormed, already converted to the shop religion. "Customers must not find the door shut. Run open it at once. Suppose Mrs. Romilly dropped in. We'd lose her—unless this notoriety drives her away." A little blush of shame flickered in Daphne's pale cheeks a moment and went out. She sighed: "I suppose Mr. Duane has stopped that check, too—if he ever sent it. Oh, dear!"

Then a nurse knocked; brought in a card growing in a large little azalea tree. Daphne scanned it. "Mr. Thomas Varick Duane!" She peered closer at the pencilings and read aloud: "'I just learned. I'm heartbroken. Isn't there anything I can do?'"

Daphne felt as if outraged society had forgiven her.

"Isn't he a darling?" she murmured.

Mrs. Chivvis begrudged a stingy, "Well, of course—" She had the poor folks' conscientious scruples against wasting praise on the rich. "You'll want to see him, I presume."

But Daphne had had enough of evil appearance. "See him here? Never!" She glared at poor Mrs. Chivvis with a reproof that was excruciating to accept, and ordered her to go down and meet Mr. Duane and incidentally learn about the check. "Business is business," she said.

Mrs. Chivvis descended in all the confusion of a Puritan wife meeting a Cavalier beau. She came back later to say that Mr. Duane was really very nice, and spoke beautifully and had sent the check and would send another if Daphne wished it, and would make old Mrs. Romilly go on with the order, and would she like some special fruits or soups or something? He was really very nice.

Daphne eyed her with ironic horror and said, "You've been flirting with him! and me so helpless here!"

"Daph!—nee!! Kip!!!" Mrs. Chivvis screamed. The only counter-thrust she could think of was, "And what does Mr. Wimburn say?"

This sobered Daphne. Why had Clay sent no word? Everybody else in town had seen the papers. Clay read the papers. Surely he was not capable of such monstrous pique. When your worst enemy gets badly hurt you've just got to forgive—if you're human.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Leila was determined to endure everything that might be necessary to regain her beauty. She would go through any ordeal of knives or plaster casts or splints or medicines for that. She was quite grim about it. Her resolution extended to the spending of as much of Bayard's money as might be necessary on surgeons' fees and doctors' bills. If she bankrupted Bayard it would be with the tenderest motives.

Five times she went to the operating table, made that infernal journey into etherland, knowing what afteranguishes waited her, what retching and burning and bleeding. She braved death again and again, took long chances with cowering bravado. And all for Bayard's sake.

One morning when Bayard reached his office after a harrowing all-night vigil at Leila's side he was just falling asleep over the first mail when his telephone snarled. He reached for it with alarm. A voice boomed in his ear:

"Ah you thah?"

"Yes."

"Keep the line, please. Now, you ah through, sir?"

Then a growl replaced the boom, a growl that made the receiver rattle:

"Ah you thah, Mr. Kip? This is Colonel Marchmont. I dare say you remember our conversation about those damned contracts with Wetherell. A little farther discussion might not be amiss—if you could make it perfectly convenient to drop ovvah at, say, a quawtah pahst fah? —Good! I shall expect you at that ah."

Bayard pondered. What new persecution was fate preparing? As he went to the office, he bought an evening paper. A heavily headed cablegram announced that the laborers in the British munition works were striking or threatening to strike. A gleam of understanding came into Bayard's eye. When he reached the desk of Colonel Marchmont he looked unabashed into the revolver muzzle of the old war horse's one eye.

Without any preliminary courtesies or any softening of his previous tone the colonel snorted: "Those devilish contracts you made with Wetherell—The poor fellow is no longer alive—more's the pity, but— Well, I'm afraid I was a bit severe with you. I fancy we might see our way to renewing those contracts at a reasonable figure —say at a 25 per cent reduction from the terms you quoted."

Bayard smiled and shook his head. He bluffed the bluffer. "The prices we quoted included only a fair profit, colonel. Since then materials have been going up in price every minute, owing to the demand from abroad. And the home market is booming. We can sell all our product here, and more, too, than we can make."

Colonel Marchmont squirmed, but he was a soldier and loved a good counter-attack. He smiled as he squirmed. Wetherell was avenged when his successor signed new contracts at a higher price than he had made. The changing times changed everything; yesterday's exorbitance was today's bargain.

Bayard departed with a wallet full of business. He got back to his office on feet fledged with Mercurial wings. His feet were beautiful on the rug of the president's office.

Bayard felt so kindly to all the world that he hurried to the hospital

Wetherell Was Avenged When His Successor Signed New Contracts at a Higher Price Than He Had Made.

to scatter good news like flowers over Leila's couch. She was in that humor when anybody else's good fortune was an added grief to her.

"I'm no use to you now," she wailed. "I never was much. But at least I dressed and kept looking fit. And you said I was pretty. But now— Oh, Bayard, Bayard! You used to call me beautiful, and I tried to be beautiful for you. But now— To be ugly and useless both—it's too much!"

Wise pathfinders say that when you are wandering in strange country you should turn every now and then and look back at the way you came. It wears a different aspect entirely from its look as you approached, and you will need to know how it will look when you return.

From childhood on, Leila had been warned against extravagance—as Bayard had, as have we all. But only now that she was looking backward could she realize the wisdom, the intolerable truth of the adage, "Waste not, want not."

Meanwhile Daphne was having so different a history that she felt ashamed. It seemed unfair to her to get well quickly and with no blemish except a scar or two that would not show, while Leila hung between death and deformity.

But seeing Bayard alone and hearing Leila fret, she felt confirmed in her belief that she had done the wholesome thing when she joined the laboring classes. There were discouragements without cease, yet Daphne was learning what a remedy for how many troubles there is in work. It seemed to be almost panacea. It was exciting, fatiguing, alarming, but it was objective. She was on her way at last to that fifty thousand a year she had dreamed of. She was uncertain yet of earning a thousand a year, but she was on the road.

Clay Wimburn, seeking chances in the West, did not see the New York papers or any other record of Daphne's accident. When he got back to New York, his pockets full of contracts, Bayard, equally successful, greeted him enthusiastically. Then he learned of the accident and the fact that Daphne was "in trade." He was indignant at the news and wanted to see her at once.

Bayard gave him the address, and Clay wasted no time asking further questions. He made haste to the subway, fuming; left the train at the Grand Central station and climbed up to a taxicab.

Then he found Daphne.

She led him into a little shop empty of everything but the debris of removal.

"Where are we?" said Clay.

"This was my shop."

"What's the matter? Busted already?" Clay asked, with a not unflattering cheerfulness.

"Not in the least," Daphne explained. "We've expanded so fast we had to move. We sublet and moved across the street.

"You remember Mrs. Chivvis, don't you? Mrs. Chivvis, you haven't forgotten Mr. Wimburn. He's kept away so long you might have, though. Where've you been, Clay? But wait—you can tell me on the way over to the new shop."

When she led him into her new emporium the graceful fabrics displayed were all red rags to him. He was a bull in a crimson shop.

Daphne made Clay sit down and asked him if it were not all perfectly lovely. He waited until Mrs. Chivvis went on to the workroom. He had a glimpse of a number of girls and women on sewing bent. They were laughing and chattering.

He answered, "It's perfectly loathsome."

Instead of resenting this insult Daphne laughed till she fell against the counter. The worst of it was that her eyes were so tender.

"Where did you get all the capital for all this stock?" Clay demanded, with sudden suspicion.

"Oh, part of it we bought on credit and part of it on borrowed money."

"Borrowed from whom?"

"From Mr. Duane."

This was too much of too much. Clay stormed: "I'll get him!"

"Oh, no, you won't!"

"Oh, yes, I will!"

"I won't have you assaulting the best friend I've got in the world."

He groaned aloud at this, not noticing how she used the word "friend." She ran on. She had not talked to him for so long that she was a perfect chatterbox.

"He lent me five hundred dollars when I didn't know where else to get it. And it nailed our first real contract—a big commission from old Mrs. Romilly. We paid back Mr. Duane's five hundred and then—" She giggled in advance at what was coming to Clay. "And then I borrowed a thousand from him. We owe him that now."

Clay was as wroth as she had wished. He took out a little book. "Well, I'll give you a check for that amount—or more. And you can pay Duane off with interest. I won't have you owing him money."

"You won't have!" Daphne mocked "You won't have? Since when did you become senior partner here?"

"Senior partner!" Clay railed. "I'm no partner in this business! I hate this business. It makes me sick to see you in it."

"Then step out on the walk," said Daphne. "You're scaring away customers and using up the time of the firm. The boudoir is no place for you, anyway."

A young woman with a bridal eye walked in and Daphne left Clay to blunder out sheepishly. He did not see that she cast sheep's eyes after him. He was a most bewildered young man. He had made a pile of money and still he was not happy!

CHAPTER XXVII.

In the course of a few wretched days Clay picked up some of the facts about Daphne's presence in Wetherell's fatal car. He was more furious at her than ever and more incapable of hating her.

He saw Bayard often, but Bayard knew little and said less. One afternoon he invited Clay to ride with him to the hospital, whence Leila was to graduate. He warned Clay not to betray how shocked he would be at Leila's appearance, which, he said, was a wonderful improvement on what it had been.

She was, indeed, a mere shell, and Clay was not entirely successful with his compliments.

Leila sighed: "Much obliged for your good intentions. I'm a mere sack of bones, but I'm going to get well. The doctors say that if I take care of myself every minute and go to a lot of specialists and go to Bar Harbor in the hot weather and to Palm Beach in the cold and spend about a million dollars I'll be myself some day. That's not much, but it's all I've got to work for. Poor Bydie! He didn't know he was endowing a hospital when he married me."

"What do I care, honey?" Bayard cried, with perfect chivalry. "The money is rolling in and I'd rather spend it on you than on anybody else."

"The money's rolling out just as fast as it rolls in," Leila sighed. "The Lord seems to provide a new expense for every streak of luck. And that's my middle name—Expense."

She had actually learned one lesson. That was a hopeful sign.

Clay sought Daphne in her odious (to him) place of business. She asked him what she could sell him. He said he would wait till the shop closed. She raised her eyebrows impudently and gave him a chair in a corner. He sat there feeling as out of place as a strange man in a harem.

Eventually the last garrulous customer talked herself dumb; the last sewing woman went. Mrs. Chivvis pulled down the curtains in the show window and at the door and bade good night.

Then Daphne locked the door, dropped wearily into a chair, and sighed, "Well, Clay?"

"I want to know why you don't give up Tom Duane."

She shrugged her excellent shoulders again, but she did not smile. She spoke instead: "I don't ask you to give up your stenographer."

"Oh, it's like that, eh? Well, then, why won't you let me lend you money instead of Tom Duane?"

Her answer astounded him with its feminine logic: "I can borrow of Mr. Duane because I don't love him and never did and he knows it. I can't borrow of you because—"

He leaped at the implication: "Because you love me?"

"Because I used to."

"Don't you any more?" he groaned.

"How can I tell? It's been months and months since I saw the Clay Wimburn that came out to Cleveland and lured me on to New York. The only Clay Wimburn I've seen for some time has been a horribly prosperous, domineering snob who is too proud to be seen with a working woman. He wants to marry a lady. I never was one and don't want to be one. I'm a business woman and I love it."

"And you wouldn't give up your shop for me?"

"Certainly not."

He looked at her with baffled emotions. She was so delectable and so obstinate, so right-hearted and so wrong-headed. It was intolerable that she should keep a shop. He spoke after a long delay:

"May I come and see you once in a while?"

"If you want to."

"Where you living now?"

"Still at the Chivvises'."

"You ought to take better care of yourself than that. Surely you can afford a better home."

"I suppose so, but it would be lonely anywhere else. It has been safe there—since you quit calling on me. It doesn't cost me much."

"But you're making so much money."

"Not so very much—yet, but it's all my own and I made every cent of it, and—golly! how I love to watch it grow."

"You miser."

"Maybe. I guess that's the only way to save money—to make a passion out of it and get a kind of voluptuous feeling from it. But I really think that it's the fun of making it that interests me most. It certainly keeps me out of mischief and out of loneliness. Oh, there's no freedom like having a job and a little reserve in the bank. It's the only life, Clay."

"And you wouldn't give up your 'freedom,' as you call it, even for a man you loved? Couldn't you love a man enough to do that?"

"I could love a man too much to do that. For where's the love in a woman's sitting around the house all day and waiting for a man to come home and listen to the gossip of her empty brain? That isn't loving, that's loafing."

Clay was not at all persuaded. "But there's no comfort or home life in marrying a business woman."

"How do you know? You know plenty of unsuccessful wives who are not business women."

"I want a housekeeper, not a shopkeeper."

"Go get one, then, I say. If a woman can't earn enough outside to hire a housekeeper let her do her own housework. But if she can earn enough to

"It Seems to Me It Couldn't Help Being a Better and a Happier Way of Living."

hire a hundred housekeepers why should she stick to the kitchen? In my home, if I ever get one, the cook will not be the star. Besides, it enlarges life so. Instead of two living on the wages of one two will live on the earnings of two. It seems to me it couldn't help being a better and a happier way of living."

Clay blushed vigorously as he mumbled "What's your business woman going to do when the—the babies come? Or do you cut out the kiddies?"

Daphne blushed, too. "Well, I should think that the business woman could afford babies better than anybody else. She has to give up the housework, anyway, even when she's a housekeeper. I suppose she could give up her shop for a while. At least she could share the expense—or her husband could stand the bills since he escapes the pain. I tell you, if I ever had a daughter I'd make her learn her own trade if she never learned anything else. I'd never raise her to the hideous, indecent belief that the world owes her a living and she's got a right to squeeze it out of the heart's blood of some hard-working man. No, sirree! It may be old-fashioned, but it isn't decent, and it isn't even romantic. The love of two free souls, with their own careers and their own expenses, seems to me about the best kind of love there could be. Then both of them can come home evenings and their home will be a home—a fresh, sweet meeting place."

Clay breathed hard. He was silenced, but not convinced—beyond being convinced that Daphne Kip was still the one woman in the world for him, in spite of her cantankerous notions. Still, of course, a woman had to have some flaw or she would not be human. Daphne's foible was as harmless as anyone's, perhaps. So he blurted out:

"I suppose you've given up all thought of marrying me?"

She answered him with pious earnestness: "I've never given up that thought, Clay. I've been trying to make myself worthy of the happiness it would mean. I have had the trousseau all made, and paid for, a long while. That's what I came to town for originally—our trousseau. But when I saw how much sacrifice it meant for my poor old father and what a bundle of bills I'd be dumping on my poor young lover I couldn't see the good of it. So I took my vow that I wouldn't get a trousseau till I could earn the price of it myself. And now I've earned the price and I've got it. But I've lost my excuse for wearing it.

"Still, I'd probably have lost you, anyway, or ruined you if I had brought you my old ideas. Everybody always says that money is the enemy of love. I wonder if it couldn't be made the friend. It would be an interesting experiment, anyway."

"Daphne, honey, let's try the experiment."

She looked at him with a heavenly smile in her eyes, and answered, "Let's."

He moved toward her, but she dodged behind the counter. She studied him a moment, then reached below the counter. A bell rang and a drawer slid out. She took some bills from it, made a memorandum on a slip of paper, and put that in the place of the bills, closed the drawer, and leaned across the counter, murmuring:

"They say all successful businesses are begun on borrowed money. So I'll borrow this from the firm—for luck."

She put out her hand. Clay put out his. She laid three dollars on his palm and closed his fingers on them.

"What's all this?" he asked, all mystified. She explained:

"A plain gold band costs about six dollars, and that's for my half of the partnership. Women are wearing their wedding rings very light nowadays."

"I should say so!" Clay groaned, but with a smile.

She bent forward and he bent forward and their lips met. She was only a saleswoman selling a customer part of a heart for part of a heart, but to Clay the very counter was the golden bar of heaven, and Daphne the Blessed Damozel that leaned on it and made it warm.

THE END.

The Hottest City.

The city of Hyderabad, on the great Sind desert of India, has the reputation of being the hottest place in the world, having a shade temperature of 127 degrees during the summer months! Even the natives find it hot —and that is saying something.

In order to cool their houses as much as possible, the people make use of curious ventilators very much like those on shipboard, "setting" them so as to convey a breeze to the dwellers in the hot rooms below. Every residential building has several of these queer airshafts leading down to the principal living rooms, and especially to the bedrooms. Even so, it is practically impossible, during the terrible heat of summer, to get to sleep until two or three o'clock in the morning, and then one only gets a couple of hours' rest, as the rays of the Indian sun are specially strong early in the morning, and soon raise the temperature again to an unbearable extent.

Rush for Free Molasses.

When a tank car filled with 8,000 gallons of molasses was upset near Telford, Pa., and the molasses began to run out, people came by scores, on foot, in carriages and by automobiles, and salvaged some hundreds of gallons of molasses before the railroad men plugged the opening and left dozens of disappointed ones waiting to get at the outflow.

WIFE ONCE BOUGHT

Proceeding Many Centuries Ago Was Universal.

Present-Day "Marriage Portion" May Be Regarded as a Symbol of Old Custom—Some Curious Wedding Ceremonies.

Among far older civilizations than that of the Anglo-Saxon the system of wife-purchase had ceased before Britain was a real country. The Indian law-giver, Manu, strictly forbade it, and said: "A man who, through avarice, takes a gratuity, is a seller of his offspring." In the historical times of the Greeks they no longer bought wives. In Rome "coemptio" was only a symbol of the ancient custom. In the Jewish Talmud the purchase is also symbolic, as is frequently the Mohammedan "mahr." Withal, the bride price, "foster leans" and marriage gifts, when returned, were converted into dowry and became at first the bride's property. Thus marriage portions chiefly derived their origin from the habit of purchase, and dowry often became, as with the Hebrews, a religious duty. Not less than the tenth of the father's property was considered a just dowry. In Aristotle's time nearly two-fifths of all Sparta belonged from this cause to the women. Sir Henry Maine considers that the amazing thrift of the French is also owing to this custom, which probably descended to them from the marriage law of Augustus Caesar. It was only by an anachronism that Euripides made Medea lament that women were obliged to purchase husbands at a great price. And it is often as true today as when the Latin poet sang.

When marriage ceremonies first did arise it was by degrees and in many ways, and customs such as capture when superseded became by symbolism a part of the succeeding legal form or contract. To eat maize pudding from the same plate or to eat in any way together is a widely distributed marriage ceremony. In Brazil a couple may be married by drinking brandy together; in Japan by so many cups of wine; in Russia and Scandinavia it used to be one cup for both. The joining of hands among Romans and Hindus is common in many parts of the world. In Scotland it is called "hand fasting," and couples live together after. To sit on one seat while receiving friends or to have the hands of each tied together with grass, or to smear with each other's blood, or for the woman to tie a cord of her own twisting around the naked waist of the man constitutes marriage in one place or another. In Australia a woman carries fire to her lover's hut and makes a fire for him. A Loango negress cooks two dishes for him in his own hut. In Croatia the bridegroom boxes the bride's ears, and in Russia the father formerly struck his daughter gently with a new whip—for the last time—and then gave the weapon to her husband.

Hat Decorations.

A very dignified matron, the wife of one of the city's clergymen, went into a downtown store the other day to take advantage of a sale. She bought the books for which she had come and started out of the store. But a counter piled high with men's hose attracted her to a crowd of more fastidious shoppers, most of whom were examining the varicolored silk stockings on the racks above the counter. The modest parsonage woman almost blushed over their open interest.

Finally the socks were bought, several other counters visited, and then the minister's wife started to leave. At the door she met one of the parishioners. They exchanged greetings and then, with a "Please allow me," the parishioner reached up to the hat of the minister's wife and lifted from its wide brim a pair of gaudy rose silk stockings.

The racks above the bargain counter were, of course, the cause. "But no one knew it," moaned the parson's wife. "Just think how many people saw me wearing those decorations, and actually I was embarrassed over the other women just looking at them. And I—well, I was wearing them very prominently."—Indianapolis News.

Hats Off.

One day I was watching a new company drill. The officer gave the command, "Cover off in the rear rank," meaning that every man in the rear rank had to stand directly back of the man in front of him. Instead the whole rear rank took off their hats.—Exchange.

Not Likely.

First Surgeon—Here's a chap just brought in for an operation on his head.

Second Ditto—Anything serious?

First Surgeon—Serious? Should say not; he's one of these newspaper nut column artists.

Add Rigors of War.

Van Joans—I understand your daughter received military training.

DeSmythe—Indeed, she did. There were two lieutenants, a captain, a sergeant and private calling on her pretty frequently.

Almost the Same.

"The baseball player you pointed out to me is an ugly mug."

"He isn't a mug at all; he's a pitcher."