

# The PRICE

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CHAPTER XXX—Continued.

"Margery," he began, when the interval of thoughtful heart-searching had done its illuminative work, "what would you say if I should tell you that your 'some day' has already come?"

She started as if he had thrust a knife into her. Then she slipped out of his arms and caught up his hand to press it against her cheek.

"I should say, 'Whatever seemeth good in the eyes of my dear lord, so let it be.'"

"But think a moment, girl; if one has done wrong, there must be atonement. That is the higher law—the highest law—and no man may evade it. Do you know what that would mean for me?"

"It is the Price, boy, dear; I don't ask you to pay it. Listen: My father and I have agreed to disagree, and he has turned over to me a lot of money that he took from—that was once my mother's brother's share in the Colorado gold claims. What is mine is yours. We can pay back the money. Will that do?"

He was shaking his head slowly. "No," he said, "I think it wouldn't do."

"I was afraid it wouldn't," she sighed, "but I had to try. Are they still gnashing their teeth at you?—the dreadful things, I mean?"

He did not answer in words, but she knew, and held her peace. At the end of the ends he sprang up suddenly and drew her to her feet.

"I can't do it, Margery, girl! I can't ask you to wait—and afterward to marry a convict! Think of it—even if Galbraith were willing to withdraw, the law wouldn't let him, and I'd get the limit; anything from seven years to fifteen or more. Oh, my God, no! I can't pay the price! I can't give you up!"

She put her arms around his neck and drew his head down and kissed him on the lips. "I'll wait . . . oh, boy, boy! I'll wait! But I can't neither push you over the edge nor hold you back. Only don't think of me; please, please don't think of me!—'Whatever seemeth good'—that is what you must think of; that is my last word: 'Whatever seemeth good.'" And she pushed him from her and fled.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Desert and the Sown.

Through streets in which the village quiet of the summer night was undisturbed save by the spattering tinkle of the lawn sprinklers in the front yards, and the low voices of the outdoor people taking the air and the moonlight on the porches, Griswold fared homeward, the blood pounding in his veins and the fine wire of life mounting headily to his brain.

After all the dubious stumblings he had come to the end of the road, to find awaiting him the great accusation and the great reward. By the unanswerable logic of results, in its effect upon others and upon himself, his deed had proved itself a crime. Right or wrong in the highest ethical fields, the accepted social order had proved itself strong enough to make its own laws and to prescribe the far-reaching penalties for their infraction. Under these laws he stood convicted. Never again, save through the gate of atonement, could he be reinstated as a soldier in the ranks of the conventionally righteous. True, the devotion of a loving woman, aided by a train of circumstances strikingly fortuitous and little short of miraculous, had averted the final price-paying in penal retribution. But the fact remained. He was a felon.

Into this gaping wound which might otherwise have slain him had been poured the wine and oil of a great love; a love so clean and pure in its own well-springs that it could perceive no wrong in its object; could measure no act of loyal devotion by any standard save that of its own greatness. This love asked nothing but what he chose to give. It would accept him either as he was, or as he ought to be. The place he should elect to occupy would be its place; his standards its standards.

Just here the reasoning angel opened a door and thrust him out upon the edge of a precipice and left him to look down into the abyss of the betrayers—the pit of those whose gift and curse it is to be the pace setters. In a flash of revelation it was shown him that with the great love had come a great responsibility. Where he should lead, Margery would follow, unshrinkingly, unquestioningly; never asking whether the path led up or down; asking only that his path might be hers. Instantly he was face to face with a fanged choice which threatened to tear his heart out and trample upon it; and again he recorded his decision, confirming it with an oath. The price was too great; the upward path too steep; the self-denial it entailed too sacrificial.

"We have but one life to live, and we'll live it together, Margery, girl."

for better or for worse," was his apostrophic declaration, made while he was turning into Shawnee street a few doors from his lodgings; and a minute later he was opening the Widow Holcomb's gate.

The house was dark and apparently deserted as to its street-facing half when he let himself in at the gate and ran quickly up the steps. The front door was open, and he remembered afterward that he had wondered how the careful widow had come to leave it so, and why the hall lamp was not lighted. From the turn at the stairhead he felt his way to the door of his study. Like the one below, it was wide open; but someone had drawn the window shades and the interior of the room was as dark as a cavern.

Once, in the novel-writing, following the lead of many worthy predecessors, Griswold had made much of the "sixth" sense; the subtle and indefinable prescience which warns its possessor of invisible danger. No such warning was vouchsafed him when he leaned across the end of the writing table, turned on the gas and held a lighted match over the chimney of the working-lamp. It was while he was still bending over the table, with both hands occupied, that he looked aside. In his own pivot chair, covering him with the mate to the weapon he had smashed and thrown away, sat the man who had opened the two doors and drawn the window shades and otherwise prepared the trap.

"You bought a couple o' these little playthings, Mr. Griswold," said the man quietly. "Keep your hands right where they are, and tell in which pocket you've got the other one."

Griswold laughed, and there was a sudden snapping of invisible bonds. He dismissed instantly the thought that Charlotte Farnham had taken him at his word; and if she had not, there was nothing to fear.

"I threw the other one away a little while ago," he said. "Reach your free hand over and feel my pockets."

Broffin acted upon the suggestion promptly.

"You ain't got it on you, anyway," he conceded; and when Griswold had dropped into the chair at the table's end: "I reckon you know what I'm here for."

"I know that you are holding that gun of mine at an exceedingly uncomfortable angle—for me," was the cool rejoinder. "I've always had a squeamish horror of being shot in the stomach."

The detective's grin was appreciative.

"You've got a good, cold nerve, anyway," he commented. "I've been puttin' it up that when the time came, you'd throw a fit o' some sort—what?"



"Put Them on," He Snapped.

Since you're clothed in your right mind, we'll get down to business. First, I'll ask you to hand over the key to that safety-deposit box you've got in Mr. Grierson's bank."

Griswold took his bunch of keys from his pocket, slipped the one that was asked for from the ring, and gave it to his captor.

"Of course I'm surrendering it under protest," he said. "You haven't yet told me who you are, or what you are holding me up for."

Broffin waved the formalities aside with a pistol-pointed gesture. "We can skip all that. I've got you dead to rights, after so long a time, and I'm goin' to take you back to New Orleans with me. The only question is, do you go easy or hard?"

"I don't go either way until you show your authority."

"I don't need any authority. You're the parlor anarchist that held up the president of the Bayou State Security bank last spring and made a get-away with a hundred thousand—what?"

"All right; you say so—prove it." Griswold had taken a cigar from the

open box on the writing-table and was calmly lighting it. There was nothing to be nervous about. "I'm waiting," he went on, placidly, when the cigar was going. "If you are an officer, you probably have a warrant, or a requisition, or something of that sort. Show it up."

"I don't need any papers to take you," was the barked-out retort. Broffin had more than once found himself confronting similar dead walls, and he knew the worth of a bold play.

"Oh, yes, you do. You accuse me of a crime; did you see me commit the crime?"

"No."

"Well, somebody did, I suppose. Bring on your witnesses. If anybody can identify me as the man you are after, I'll go with you—without the requisition. That's fair, isn't it?"

"I know you're the man, and you know it, too, d—n well!" snapped Broffin, angered into bandying words with his obstinate captive.

"That is neither here nor there; I am not affirming or denying. It is for you to prove your case, if you can. And, listen, Mr. Broffin—perhaps it will save your time and mine if I add that I happen to know that you can't prove your case."

"Why can't I?"

"Just because you can't," Griswold went on argumentatively. "I know the facts of this robbery you speak of; a great many people know them. The newspaper accounts said at the time that there were three persons who could certainly identify the robber—the president, the paying teller, and a young woman. It so happens that all three of these people are at present in Wahaska. At different times you have appealed to each of them, and in each instance you have been turned down. Isn't that true?"

Broffin glanced up, scowling.

"It's true enough that you—you and the little black-eyed girl between you—have hoodooed the whole bunch!" he rasped. "But when I get you into court, you'll find that there are others."

Griswold smiled good-naturedly. "That is a bold, bad bluff, Mr. Broffin, and nobody knows it any better than you do," he countered. "You haven't a leg to stand on. This is America, and you can't arrest me without a warrant. And if you could, what would you do with me without the support of at least one of your three witnesses? Nothing—nothing at all."

Broffin laid the pistol on the table, and put the key of the safety box beside it. Then he sat in grim silence for a full minute, toying idly with a pair of handcuffs which he had taken from his pocket.

"By the eternal grapples!" he said, at length, half to himself, "I've a good mind to do it anyway—and take the chances."

As quick as a flash Griswold thrust out his hands.

"Put them on!" he snapped. "There are a hundred lawyers in New Orleans who wouldn't ask for anything better than the chance to defend me—at your expense!"

Broffin dropped the manacles into his pocket and sat back in the swing-chair. "You win," he said shortly; and the battle was over.

For a little time no word was spoken. Griswold smoked on placidly, seemingly forgetful of the detective's presence. Yet he was the one who was the first to break the strained silence.

"You are a game fighter, Mr. Broffin," he said, "and I'm enough of a scrapper myself to be sorry for you. Try one of these smokes—you'll find them fairly good—and excuse me for a few minutes. I want to write a letter which, if you are going down town, perhaps you'll be good enough to mail for me."

He pushed the open box of cigars across to the detective, and dragged the lounging chair around to the other side of the table. There was stationery at hand, and he wrote rapidly for a few minutes, covering three pages of the manuscript sheets before he stopped. When the letter was inclosed, addressed, and stamped, he tossed it across to Broffin, face up. The detective saw the address, "Miss Margery Grierson," and, putting the letter into his pocket, got up to go.

"Just one minute more, if you please," said Griswold, and, relighting the cigar which had been suffered to go out, he went into the adjoining bedroom. When he came back, he had put on a light top coat and a soft hat, and was carrying a small handbag.

"I'm your man, Mr. Broffin," he said quietly. "I'll go with you—and plead guilty as charged."

Wahaska, the village-conscious, had its nine-days' wonder displayed for it in inch-type headlines when the Daily Wahaskan, rehearsing the story of the New Orleans bank robbery, told of the voluntary surrender of the robber, and of his deportation to the southern city to stand trial for his offense.

Some few there were who took exceptions to Editor Randolph's editorial in the same issue, commenting on the surrender, and pleading for a suspension of judgment on the ground that much might still be hoped for from a man who had retraced a broad step in the downward path by voluntarily accepting the penalty. Those who objected to the editorial were of the perverse minority. The intimation was made that the plea had been inspired—a hint basing itself upon the fact that Miss Grierson had been seen visiting the office of the Wahaskan after the departure of the detective, Matthew Broffin, with his prisoner.

The sensational incident, however, had been forgotten long before a certain evening, three weeks later, when the Grierson carriage conveyed the

consequent president of the Bayou State Security from the Grierson mansion to the south-bound train. Andrew Galbraith was not alone in the carriage, and possibly there were those in the sleeping car who mistook the dark-eyed and strikingly beautiful young woman, who took leave of him only after he was comfortably settled in his section, for his daughter. But the whispered words of leave-taking were rather those of a confidante than a kinswoman.

"I'll arrange the Raymer matter as you suggest," she said, "and if I had even a speaking acquaintance with God, I'd pray for you the longest day I live, Uncle Andrew. And about the trial: I'm going to leave it all with you! Just remember that I shall bleed little drops of blood for every day the judge gives him, and that the only way he can be helped is by a short sentence. He wouldn't take a pardon; he—he wants to pay, you know. Good-night, and good-by!" And she put her strong young arms around Andrew Galbraith's neck and kissed him, thereby convincing the family party in lower seven that she was not only the only man's daughter, but a very affectionate one, at that.

The little-changing seasons of central Louisiana had measured two complete rounds on the yearly dial of time's unremitting and unshaking clock when the best hired carriage that Baton Rouge could afford drew up before the entrance to the state's prison and waited. Precisely on the stroke of

twelve, a man for whom the prison rules had lately been relaxed sufficiently to allow his hair to grow, came out, looked about him as one dazed, and assaulted the closed door of the carriage as if he meant to tear it from its hinges.

"Oh, boy, boy!" came from the one who had waited; and then the carriage door yielded, opened, closed with a crash, and the negro driver clucked to his horses.

They were half-way to the railroad station, and she was trying to persuade him that there would be months and years in which to make up for the loveless blank, before sane speech found its opportunity. And even then there were interruptions.

"I knew you'd be here; no, they didn't tell me, but I knew it—I would have staked my life on it, Margery, girl," he said, in the first lucid interval.

"And you—you've paid the Price, haven't you, Kenneth? But, oh, boy, dear! I've paid it, too! Don't you believe me?"

There was another interruption, and because the carriage windows were open, the negro driver grinned and confided a remark to his horses. Then the transgressor began again.

"Where are you taking me, Margery?—not that it makes any manner of difference."

"We are going by train to New Orleans, and this—this—very—evening we are to be married, in Mr. Galbraith's house. And Uncle Andrew is going to give the bride away. It's all arranged."

"And after?"

"Afterward, we are going away—I don't know where. I just told old Saint Andrew to buy the tickets to anywhere he thought would be nice, and we'd go. I don't care where it is—do you? And when we get there, I'll buy you a pen and some ink and paper, and you'll go on writing the book, just as if nothing had happened. Say you will, boy, dear; please say you will! And then I'll know that—the price—wasn't—too great."

He was looking out of the carriage window when he answered her, across to the levee and beyond it to the farther shore of the great river, and his eyes were the eyes of a man who has seen of the travail of his soul and is satisfied.

"I shall never write that book, little girl. That story, and all the mistakes that were going to the making of it, lie on the other side of—the Price. But one day, please God, there shall be another and a worthier one."

"Yes—please God," she said; and the dark eyes were shining softly.

THE END.

Parrot Called Police.

A Philadelphia parrot screamed so that the police entered the house and found the mistress dead from drinking poison. "Get out!" wailed the parrot, when told what had happened.

## SCANDINAVIAN NEWS

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS IN FAR OFF NORTHWEST.

ITEMS FROM THE OLD HOME

Resume of the Most Important Events in Sweden, Norway and Denmark—Of Interest to the Scandinavians in America.

SWEDEN.

If Sweden and England come to a satisfactory understanding regarding Swedish imports and the transit of supplies to Germany, this understanding will not be reached through any Swedish concession or alteration of her demands to be treated as a neutral nation enjoying the freedom of the seas, according to a statement made by Eric de Trolle, president of the royal trade commission, former minister of foreign affairs, and at present member of the English-Swedish commission engaged in attempting to settle the trade dispute. "Sweden cannot and will not surrender to English demands restricting her commerce," said de Trolle, "in order to help England in her industrial war against Germany. If she did this, not only would Sweden suffer industrially herself, but she would become virtually an ally of England. The last consideration is the more important, since Sweden would no longer be a strictly neutral nation. If she permits the transit of supplies between England and Russia and joins in any attempt to prevent the transit of supplies to Germany, she is becoming an important base of supplies for the allies and is at the same time really entering into war against Germany. Sweden's modest desire is to be allowed to carry on her normal industry and to observe a strict neutrality—which means helping neither side in a military or industrial way, to the exclusion of the other. In this point of view she differs with the United States which is supplying England alone. Sweden does not consider that a real neutrality. Her position, from which she will not recede is an absolute neutral attitude toward all combatants. It is logical, therefore, that we should hold up supplies destined for Russia while England's stoppage of our imports of raw materials interferes with our industry and trade with Germany. We are sorry that Russia is forced to wait for her supplies, which have accumulated here, but while our ships are being held in English prize courts, we think the action entirely justifiable. There is no quarrel about the export to Germany of our own home manufactures or of the articles which are not placed on the Swedish prohibitory list—although England may think that the export is excessive. The chief obstacle is the question of the exceptions which we are bound to make, to our prohibitory export list."

There is an abundance of edible mushrooms in southern Sweden this year. But the people know so little about this kind of food that they hardly ever dare to pick anything except the most common species, the cantarelle. The city physician of Gothenburg has proposed that a mushroom bureau be established in that city in order that those who wish to sell mushrooms may have their goods inspected by an expert before they are offered for sale on the market.

A semi-official statement has been issued denying the report that Swedish ships are being sold abroad for the purpose of raising cash preparatory to Sweden's participation in the war. It is declared that no such sales are known to have been presented.

The temperance people's sick and funeral aid fund, which is managed at an office in Karlskrona and is the largest fund of its kind in Sweden, will receive a subsidy of \$42,000 from the national government this year.

So many men are out of work in Blekinge lan that it is proposed to appropriate tens of thousands of dollars for public works in order that they may get a chance to make a living.

The city council and the harbor directors of Halmstad have offered a free site for two grain elevators which the national food commission is expected to build at this place.

The city council of Gothenburg has resolved to borrow an amount not to exceed \$270,000 for buying stock in the Sweden-North America steamship company.

The city council of Halmstad has voted \$5,000 for the purchase of wood and coal, which are to be sold to poor people at cost next winter.

About 1,000 sick benefit societies have been officially registered in Sweden. Their aggregate membership exceeds 500,000.

The Swedish manufacturers of chinaware have raised the prices of their products ten per cent.

Lower flour prices are expected as soon as the mills have commenced to grind the crop of this year.

The Swedish government has prohibited the export of rubber, printers' ink and dyes.

DENMARK.

King Christian of Denmark celebrated his forty-fifth birthday September 26. The duty of congratulating his majesty fell to the American minister, Dr. Maurice F. Egan, an acting dean of the diplomatic body and the representative of a neutral power. It would have been impossible for the king to receive a minister as representing a mixed diplomatic corps.

Cases of the mouth-and-hoof disease have been detected among the wild boars in an inclosure at Ravnholt. It is supposed that one of the one hundred animals are free from the disease, and for that reason they have been carefully isolated so as to prevent them from spreading the disease.

About one hundred property owners at Skjorring agreed to buy the Skjorring mill and tear it down in order to regulate the level of the water in the river. The owner of the mill agreed to take about \$3,000 for his property. This project has been talked about for 50 years past.

Complaints come from all parts of Jylland that the foxes are multiplying at an alarming rate. This is not so strange, for the growing plantations afford them fine shelters and protection. There are plenty of mice in these plantations. But Mr. Reynard thinks it is more high-toned sport to help himself to the chickens of the farmers. Thus it comes to pass that the foxes are becoming a great nuisance. The farmers may soon be bound to hunt the foxes systematically.

NORWAY.

Something very close to a panic is spreading over both Norway and Sweden as a result of the alarming scarcity of provisions and the unprecedented prices which are demanded for the simplest kind of food. Norway is now on the point of following Sweden's lead in prohibiting the export of all provisions of which there is a present shortage in order that prices may be brought down within reach of the poorer classes. The advance in prices in Norway is approximately the same as in Sweden, but in some cases it has been even more marked. Herrings, which are one of the main articles of diet among the peasant population, have risen from two cents to four and one-half and five cents apiece, and the present price of oatmeal is 250 per cent higher than it was before the war. The meat shortage was temporarily relieved some time ago, as it was in Sweden, by the slaughter of a large number of cattle which there was not enough grain to feed, but prices have now advanced again, reaching the highest level ever known in Norway. It is a curious paradox, however, that as a nation Norway's economic and financial condition is better than before the war. Norway's tremendous exports, at the same time that they have drained the country of its necessary provisions for home consumption and carried masses of the people to the verge of starvation, have brought a tremendous amount of money into the country, enabled the country to pay for all its imports and left a large surplus to be used for industrial purposes and public loan. The Bank of Norway—the government's bank—had a year ago \$20,000,000 of gold in its vaults. Today it has \$40,000,000. A year ago it had issued paper money to the extent of \$5,250,000 beyond its deposits, while today with the same amount of paper currency in circulation, it has a reserve of \$3,000,000. Deposits in private banks are at present \$50,000,000 greater than a year ago on the same date. These banks had to their credit in foreign banks \$700,000 last year. This year they have \$10,000,000. The war has thus brought Norway a flood tide of prosperity, and if government action is taken to reduce present prices and provide the poorer people with food Norway will have little to lose and a great deal to gain from a long war. Norway's friendship for England and the fact that she has had less to complain of in the restriction of imports than Sweden have made her trade question a much less serious one than in her sister country. Her chief grievance against England remains the English censorship of her mail and cablegrams to America and other neutral countries. Norway is still trying to devise a more direct and speedier communication with America.

The supreme court of England has ruled that the Norwegians have no right to use the French name "sardines" for the fish that they can in Norway. The Norwegians at once agreed to use the Norwegian word, "Brisling," which has the advantage of being very simple and easy to pronounce by people using different languages. The Norwegians realize that their own name will do just as well. They even have a reason to believe that brisling will have a good market in France after the war. The legal fight for the French word cost the Norwegians a heap of money.

A touching sight was witnessed at the Christiania Eastern station the other day. It was the arrival of 14 ladies of different ages, but all dressed in the deepest mourning. They were Norwegians and Germans who had been to Germany to place wreaths on the graves of their fallen husbands and sons. The German authorities had assisted them in many ways, and finally had made arrangements for giving them a chance to return in company to Norway. Even those who did not know the ladies were deeply moved at the sight.