The Goddess

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The Serial Beautiful

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INTRODUCING

EARLE WILLIAMS - - - Tommy Barclay
ANITA STEWART - - - - - The Goddess

WRITTEN BY GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

(One of the most notable figures in American Literature)

Dramatized into a Photo-Play by

CHAS. W. GODDARD

Author of "The Perils of Pauline" "The Exploits of Elaine"

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Synopsis of Previous Chapter.

After the tragic death of John Amesbury, his prostrated wife, one of America's greatest beauties, dies. At her death Prof. Stilliter, an agent of the interests, kidnaps the beautiful three-year-old baby girl and brings her up in a paradise where she sees no man, but thinks she is taught by angels, who instruct her for her mission to reform the world. At the age of eighteen she is suddenly thrust into the world where agents of the interests are ready to pretend to find her.

Fifteen years later, while in the Adirondacks, Tommy is the first to meet Celestia as she comes from her paradise, neither recognizes the other.

Tommy rescues Celestia from Stilliter. They hide in the mountains. Later Stilliter gets Celestia back, and taking her to New York places her in Belleview Hospital, where her sanity is proven. Returning to get her, he finds she has left with Tommy, who loses her in New York, but finds her next day living with the Douglas family. He follows Celestia to a factory where she addresses the workers. A fire breaks out and Tommy saves her.

Mr. Barclay reads the account and sends for Tommy. After a long interview Barclay is unable to change Tommy's views. Barclay and Stilliter send for Celestia. She comes to Barclay's office at their request, and before an assemblage of prominent men which Barclay has brought together, makes her first speech in which their policies are strongly brought out.

Celestia attends a fashionable ball at Barclay's home. She at once becomes the center of attraction. Society accepts her message in a manner that greatly pleases the Triumvirate.

Tommy goes to the Pennsylvania mines with Carson and Cracowitz, after Mr. Barclay had refused to see them. Arriving at the mines Tommy prevents an outbreak among the miners, but fails in bringing about a state of peace. Instead he gets in trouble, which would have resulted in his being lynched, only for the timely arrival of Celestia, who saves him.

10TH INSTALLMENT

Although Kehr had been instructed to give Celestia every chance to settle the strike, and to hinder her in nothing, he was still determined to bring about his own kind of a settlement if possible. Close-fisted and narrow he was nevertheless a man with beliefs and principles for which he was not only willing to sacrifice his fortune, but his life if necessary. To Kehr a man who agreed to work certain hours for certain wages and then went back on his agreement was no more to be considered or treated with than a mad-dog. To his finger tips he was capitalistic and believed in property. At his finger tips he had innumerable examples of contented laborers who had become affluent, and of discontented laborers who had finished up in jail.

"Once," he would say, "labor did the most work possible for the least possible pay. Then labor did a fair amount of work for a fair amount of pay, but nowadays labor wishes to do the least amount of work possible (and the worst kind of work), and to receive therefore so much pay that there can be no return on the capital which employs labor. Where are we drifting to If an eight hour a day and a raise, why not six with a raise? Why not four? Two! None? My men want to breakfast in bed and receive their pay envelopes at the same time. I wasn't like that. I went to work for wages that a dog could hardly have lived on. But I saved, and waited, and I worked as hard as I could without complaining. And now look at me!

"Any healthy-minded, able-bodied young American can get rich in less than no time, if he will work as hard as he can, save a portion of what he earns, and keep his ears closed to the fools and devils who preach laziness and discontent."

Conditions at Bitumen had come to such a pass that Kehr could see no possibility of compromise. The country was suffering from what amounted to a coal famine, and the fault lay, so Kehr honestly felt, with a group of two-legged animals who didn't know enough to come in out of the rain.

All over the country, so Kehr honestly thought, labor was rearing its head like that of a venomous snake. Already it had bitten many innocent people, and some were dead and some were ruined for life. Now you don't argue with a venomous snake. You either kill it or you run from it. Kehr was not the kind of man who runs from anything. He had a big stick, and if he possibly could, he was going to hit labor one good crack over the head. Anyway, his plans were all inorder. He had goaded the strike leaders until they were ready to order an attack on his stockade, and he was grimly ready and even eager for that attack to begin. Tommy had thwarted him once. Now they had sent Celestia to thwart him again.

Still he received her with politeness, and told her that he was glad she had come.

"I'm glad you've come, young lady, because I know your theories, and I'm glad to have the chance of showing you how impractical they are in the face of an actual condition. You want labor and capital to be friends and to work hand in hand. Can a gunman be friends with a Bishop?"

"Why yes," said Celestia, "when they get to they understand each other. But a day will come when there won't be any gun men."

"Nor any walking delegates, nor any fools who spend more than they can earn and then begin to holler murder and set off dynamite. Now you just sit down in that chair, and I'll tell you in a nutshell, the history of the last few years that has led up to the present situation. To begin with I was a day laborer myself in these coal fields—"

Celestia raised her hand in protest.

"Don't tell me your side of the quarrel," she said; "tell me theirs. When your heart is very hard against a man, the best way to soften it is to say all the favorable things you can think of about him. I'd like you to tell me all the good things you can think of about Gunsdorf and then I shall go to him and ask him to tell me all the good things he can think of about you."

"From neither of us," said Kehr grimly; "will you hear any good of the other."

"Then," said Celestia, smiling gently; "I shall have to do the talking for you both."

"You can change me into a breakfast-food as easily as you can change Gunsdorf into a human being."

"Some day you and Gunsdorf will shake hands and you'll both admit that you were both wrong."

"You admit that he's wrong?"

"Yes, Mr. Kehr, and you too."

She rose and smiled upon him.

"I am to come and go as I please?"

"If you go among those devils over there in the town I won't be responsible for the consequences."

"But I've been among them already. They were going to hang a man, but they listened to reason."

"What man?"

A vision of Mrs. Gunsdorf's face floated through Celestia's mind, and caused her eyes to narrow a little, and look quite stoney.

"A man of no importance," she said lightly. "But I shan't go back to the town tonight. What is the pass word?"

He told her.

"I shall talk with some of your men tonight. And to-morrow I hope you will have a change of heart."

She smiled so sweetly at him, that his crabbed old heart actually warmed toward her, and then she set out alone in the electric-lighted darkness to explore the strong place which capital had set up against rebellious labor.

Kehr must have had a military ancestor from whom he had inherited a talent for making defensive warfare as nasty as possible. From the outside his stockade surrounding several acres of ground presented no great obstacle to an attack in force. It was not as high as it might have been, nor as thick or strong. The tops of the logs of which it had been built were not even pointed. It did not seem to have been pierced with a sufficiency of holes for rifles. Indeed Mr. Kehr's stockade was not so much a defense as a temptation. His real defenses began just inside. For twenty feet the ground was pitted like a sieve, in each pit a pointed stake had been planted, upright. Within this ring of mischance were vicious entanglements of barbed wire.

In Mr. Kehr's plan of defense the stockade would be surrendered after a mere show of resistance, the strikers swarming over the top would become entangled among the staked pits and the barbed wire, like flies in a spider's web, and then Kehr could make them sorry that they had ever been born. He had two machine guns placed on an eminence from which they could sweep the whole inner ring of the stockade. He had plenty of rifles, plenty of ammunition, and what was more important he had plenty of men which could be relied on to shoot down their fellow men.

If by any chance the stockade and the entanglements were carried, the assailants would be confronted by an inner stockade, higher and stronger, built around a spring and well stocked with provisions. But the attack, Kehr felt, if it ever did come to a head would end bloodily and ingloriously in the barbed wire. Labor would have had a much needed lesson, and whatever the consequences to himself, he would not have lived in vain.

Four feet from the top of the main stockade on the inner side was a shelf-like walk of heavy planks, from which sentries could look out upon the world beyond.

Celestia's first act of exploration was to climb a ladder which gave access to this narrow way and start along it. Almost instantly the white apparition was challenged by a sentry.

Celestia gave the pass-word, and made the man tell her what his hours and duties were.

"Do you really mean," she said, "that if you saw a man out there, and asked him his business, and got no answer, that you would try to shoot him?"

"If I saw him in this light," said the sentry, "he'd be so near that I wouldn't have to try. I couldn't miss him."

"And he might be a deaf man who didn't hear your challenge. I don't think you'd shoot him would you? Wouldn't you just shoot somewhere near him to frighten him?"

She looked the man steadily in the face.

"Wouldn't you?"

"I got no business talking to anyone, when I'm on duty."

"Wouldn't you?"

The man made a snuffling noise.

"If I hear you fire," said Celestia, "I shall know that you didn't shoot to kill, shan't I?"

The sentry, an alert young fellow to begin with seemed now to have fallen into a kind of trance.

"I guess," he said, "I'd do anything you said, if you looked at me while you said it."

Celestia smiled and passed on. She made the whole tour of the stockade, instilling merciful feelings into the heart of each sentry that she met. At last, just as the moon was rising and flooding the world with light, she came back to the first sentry. It was easy to see that he was glad she had come back. He drew a long breath and his eyes brightened.

"Why," she asked, "have almost all the trees been cut down?"

"So's we can see the strikers a long way before they get to us."

"Then why have they left that one big grove, so near the stockade? They could take shelter in that, and if they had a small cannon—"

"But they haven't."

"They ought to have, oughtn't they? If it's to be a fair fight. But there won't be any fight, will there? Still you haven't told me why all the trees have been cut down except that one grove—see it's got a fine old stone wall around it. If I were the Captain of the strikers—"

"It was left standing especial," said the sentry, "by Mr. Kehr's orders. And he knows why it's been left, even if nobody else does. I'm dead certain of one thing. Anybody who thinks he's safe in that grove will be making a great big mistake."

"But why? A bullet can't go through a stone wall or a big tree."

"Do you know what a blast is?"

"I think so."

"Well, suppose the strikers occupied that grove in numbers and began to fire on us. Suppose just then every tree in the grove blew to pieces and fell on 'em, and the stone wall sailed up in the air and fell on 'em, and the earth they stood on opened up and swallowed 'em, and shuts its mouth on 'em afterward and wouldn't let 'em out?"

"Is that what it's for?"

"I don't know, ma'am. You asked me what it's for, and I don't know. I'm only telling you what it might be for. What it would be for, if I was old man Kehr."

"How would he make it all blow up?" asked Celestia.

"By electricity. He'd have a switch somewhere that connected up all the detonators in the grove."

"What is a switch?"

The sentry explained as well as he could, and after wishing him good night, Celestia went slowly away, deeply pondering. Once, twice and again before descending from the platform she paused to look thoughtfully at the grove, and she could not but feel that the sentries guess as to why it had not been razed to the ground was probably correct. If so, where should she look for the switch which was to detonate the dynamite? In some building, of course, guarded day and night. It would not be a building in which men ate or slept, but one that was either empty, or only used for storage purposes or rarely visited.

While she pondered on this, she heard herself sharply challenged, and found herself face to face with a black-bearded man who stood with his back to a sheet-iron door in the side of a small sheet-iron house, that had no windows.

Celestia gave the word for the night and asked the man what he was guarding.

He shook his head.

"But I want to go in and see for myself," said Celestia. "Mr. Kehr told me that I could go wherever I liked."

"Door locked," said the man simply, "and Mr. Kehr don't want anyone fooling round this building."

"Haven't you got the key "

His eyes were beginning to feel the magic of her eyes, and his ears of her voice.

"I have not."

"But you know where it is?"

"What if I do?"

"Why you'd tell me and I could get it and open this door."

The man tried to laugh roughly and failed.

"Where is it?" she asked.

There was a short battle of eyes, and Celestia as usual conquered.

"Mr. Kehr said you could go where you liked?"

Celestia simply nodded and continued to look the man in the eyes. He hesitated a moment, and then leaned over and lifted a large flat stone. Under the stone, a bright nickel-plated key shone in the moonlight.

"Thank you," said Celestia. And she took the key and opened the iron door of the little iron house and went in.

"For God's sake," said the man, all trembling now at what he had done, "don't touch anything. Only look!"

"Then," said Celestia, "come and show me what there is to see. It's all dark in here."

The man followed her hastily into the building and struck a match.

"That there!" he said in a whisper; "that's a switch. That's all there is to see. Now come out. Please do."

The match had gone out. Celestia followed the sentry into the open air, and while he relocked the door, and rehid the key, she thanked him very graciously as if he had done her some small gracious favor. Well, she had seen the switch and just before the match went out, she had read these words painted on a rectangle of white cardboard:

"Don't touch. Dynamite."

"And what," she said sweetly, "are your orders about that switch? What will be the occasion of setting off the dynamite?"

The sentry affected not to hear.

"You have to tell me," said Celestia.

After a moment's silence, he said:

"I'm only to close the circuit only on a direct order from Mr. Kehr. I don't know why I'm to close it. Or what will happen if I do."

"When you do," said Celestia, "lots of poor wives will be left without husbands, and lots of poor babies will be left without fathers."

The sentry shuddered.

"So you won't obey that order, will you "

"An order is an order, ma'am."

"I am giving you an order."

"I take my orders from Mr. Kehr."

"The order I am giving you is from God. Look at me."

He looked at her, and after a time, whether the order came to him from God or not, he knew that he must obey it.

Celestia strolled away in the moonlight. "Soon," she thought, "I shall have arranged that there shall be no defense; I must also arrange that there shall be no attack. No wonder they sent me—so many human beings don't seem to be human."

Then she lifted her sweet voice, and called for Freddie the Ferret, but he did not answer to his name. He had gotten himself left behind in the town, and she was worried about him. But not very much. She thought that he might have followed her and been let into the stockade. But this couldn't be so, or he would have answered. At least he had nothing to fear from the sentries. She had told them about him, and they would pass on the word, and anyway they weren't going to shoot to kill. Furthermore Freddie had a delightful faculty of landing on his feet.

Since returning from the town she had not seen Stilliter. She wondered what he was doing and why she couldn't like him.

If Celestia had had a square deal from Kehr she might have reduced the hostile feelings of the strikers and the strike breakers to nothing and brought about peace in Bitumen. But it was written that while she slept soundly in the little house which had been set aside for her use, Kehr who never slept in times of danger, went on a midnight tour of inspection, and made certain discoveries which filled him with anger and anxiety. The very first sentry whom he talked to made a damaging confession.

"Seen nothing to-night?" Kehr asked.

"Only the lady, sir."

"What lady?"

"The lady in white."

"Oh."

"Yes, sir."

The sentry gave the appearance of one who wishes to speak, but is afraid.

"Well, what is it?"

"After talking with her, sir, I think I ought to be relieved. My orders is to shoot to kill. After talking with her, sir, I couldn't do it."

"You wouldn't obey my orders?"

"I couldn't, sir."

"When you have been relieved, you will report yourself at the guard house. You are a prisoner."

"Yes, sir."

Kehr returned to his headquarters and gave orders that all the men then on sentry duty should be relieved, and sent to him. From all he obtained similar confessions to that made by the first sentry. One by one he interviewed every man in his command, and found, to his great relief that only those on duty at the time when Celestia had made her tour of inspection had been tampered with. These he had locked up. Then he sent for Professor Stilliter.

"She's made a fine beginning," he said. "Give her time and she'd corrupt every man in the post. After that if we were attacked it would be a massacre—of us. Old man Barclay's off his nut. I am willing to give her a free rein to settle this strike, according to orders, but I won't have her jeopardizing my life, or the lives of those under me."

"To-morrow," said Stilliter, "she will go among the strikers and pull their teeth. Give her rope—she'll settle all this turmoil out of hand and make everybody love each other."

"To-morrow," said Kehr, "she will find herself locked in her house."

"I shall consider it my duty to break down the door and let her out."

"Her house will be guarded and you will approach it at your peril."

"I have orders from Barclay—so have you."

"His orders would be different if he was on the spot."

"They would be the same. Restrain Celestia by force, and take the consequences."

"This place," said Kehr, "is under martial law. I shall probably send her away tomorrow. In the meanwhile don't you attempt to interfere."

"I'll telegraph Barclay."

"You will not. You will go to your room and stay there till you are told you may come out."

Celestia challenges the sentry and opens the door

Stilliter turned angrily on his heel, opened the door of Kehr's office and found himself confronted by two men with rifles.

"Escort Professor Stilliter to his room," said Kehr, "and see that he doesn't leave it without orders from me."

Early the next morning Gunsdorf, Carson, Cracowitz and Tommy Barclay arrived before the gate of the stockade under the protection of a white flag, and were admitted presently, after being blindfolded, to a parley with Kehr.

"Barclay," Gunsdorf explained, "comes on a private matter. He wants to thank the lady who saved his life yesterday. If that isn't possible he wishes permission to go back to his friends in town."

"You others have come on business. Well, I'll listen to you once more—if I can. Barclay may see the lady."

Tommy was blindfolded once more, and escorted to Celestia's house. He was pushed in, told to take off the bandage over his eyes, and heard the door lock behind him.

He found himself in a plain little sitting room about twelve feet square. Two doors opened from it, but both at the moment were closed. Of Celestia there was neither sight nor sound. Tommy seated himself in a plain chair, and waited. Half an hour passed. Then he began to call to her, at first softly and then more loudly:

"Celestia—oh Celestia—where are you? It's Tommy."

Presently he heard himself answered in a sleepy voice.

"What is it? I've just waked up."

"Don't trouble then—later will do. I came to thank you for yesterday, and to ask why you wouldn't speak to me. I couldn't sleep. I had to come."

"I'll come in a little while," said Celestia. "Do you mind waiting?"

After what seemed an eternity to Tommy she came.

"Oh, Celestia," he said, "you hurt me so. Why wouldn't you speak to me?"

"I don't quite know," she said hesitatingly, "but I will now. Only I don't want to be thanked. I want to forget all about that. We can talk as we go. I am going to talk to the strikers this morning. Already some of the men here feel more peaceful. The main thing is that there mustn't be any blood shed until I have had a chance to make everybody see everything in a true light. You stopped one attack on the stockade. That was fine!"

"It was common sense."

"It was fine! Shall we start now?"

"Have you had breakfast?"

"Some of the strikers will give me a cup of coffee. That's all I need."

She smiled radiantly upon him, and went to the door of the house.

"It's locked."

"Yes, I know."

Celestia raised her voice.

"You! without there! Open the door!"

A stern voice answered her:

"Orders are to keep the door locked and shoot anybody who tries to leave the house."

"That doesn't apply to me."

"It applies to you, and to the other prisoner."

"Come round to the window. We can talk better there."

"Orders are not to talk with the prisoners or to look at them, unless they try to come out. Then the orders are to shoot at sight."

"Yes, but just come to the window a moment. I don't think you understand."

There was no answer. She turned swiftly to Tommy:

"What does it mean?"

"This, I think," said Tommy; "Kehr wants the stockade attacked. He is afraid I will prevent the attack, and that you will prevent the defense. So he's locked us both up. Gunsdorf and a committee of strikers are with him now. They will make certain unreasonable demands. He will refuse. When they return to the town the attack will begin. And if they don't return to the town by eleven o'clock, the attack will begin."

Celestia pondered this for a few minutes. Then she said:

"We'll need all our strength. Have you had breakfast?"

"I couldn't eat till I'd seen you and you'd spoken to me."

Celestia laughed and once more approached the door.

"How about breakfast?" she called.

"Orders are to supply breakfast on demand."

"Can you make it breakfast for two?"

"Certainly."

Ten minutes later the door was opened, a steaming tray was slid along the floor through the opening, and the door was once more closed and locked.

Almost in silence for they were both very hungry, Celestia and Tommy ate a hearty breakfast.

Once again as at the Octagon fire, Celestia and Tommy found themselves in agreement. Each was bent upon saving life.

Celestia knew of the fighting temper the strikers were in, and told Tommy of Kehr's preparations for making the defense of the stockade a shambles of those who should attack it. She told him, too, how she had made a beginning of softening hearts, but seeing that she had been locked up she feared that the softened hearts had owned up to Kehr and been put where they could do no mercy.

"But Tommy," she said, "they wouldn't be such fools as to attack in broad day, would they?"

"They are very strong numerically, and very weak in the head. Their cause is just enough, but they always present it to notice in unjust ways. Their every passion seems to them an argument. Labor is its own worst enemy. What labor needs is friends, friends of education and experience, dispassionate men and women with no axe to grind. If they succeed in rushing this stockade and massacring everybody in it, what earthly good will it do them? None. And they don't see it. They think capital will be so frightened that it will simply curl up its toes and yield to their every demand. Why Celestia there are men in that town so ignorant—you wouldn't believe it! There are grown men over there who think that all the forces of American capital are impounded in this stockade, and that if these forces are scotched Capital will no longer have anyone to take up the glove for it. Gunsdorf's a wise old fellow. But he's not in this game because he loves labor, but because he loves Gunsdorf. Carson is a fanatic—an honest fanatic. Cracowitz is an out and out anarchist. It's a pity, because fundamentally theirs is the side of justice. I wish I could hear what they are saying to old man Kehr. I'm afraid it won't be a soothing interview for anyone."

"They came with you?"

Tommy nodded.

"I begged them not to come, but Gunsdorf would do it. I think—"

"What?"

"I think that if there is an attack on the stockade Gunsdorf doesn't want to be mixed up in it—technically. I think he intends to make Kehr so angry that Kehr will throw him and his companions into the lock-up, white flag and all. Gunsdorf's not returning at the given time, eleven o'clock will be the signal for the attack; and good Lord how the poor fools will be slaughtered."

"If you could get to them, and tell them about Gunsdorf?"

"They might not believe me, but if I could get to them I'd certainly try it."

"He has no right to lock us up," said Celestia. "I wonder how many men are guarding this house?"

It was only a matter of moments to ascertain that there were but two. The house being one of a row that had windows only at the front and the back.

"We might get away over the roofs," Tommy suggested.

They ascended to the second floor, and found a ladder which led to a trap door in the roof. But Tommy found it impossible to open this. It was either nailed down, or held by some weight too heavy for him to budge.

They returned to the parlor and sat for a while in deep thought. Whatever Celestia's thoughts may have been they succeeded in bringing into her eyes a harsh cold look, and when she spoke at last it was no longer in the same easy friendly voice.

"I've got an idea," she said, "but I don't like it. That woman put it into my head."

"What woman?"

"You know."

"Mrs. Gunsdorf?"

Celestia nodded.

"That man out in front," she said, "is a human being. If he heard a woman screaming for help, he would try to help her, wouldn't he?"

"Celestia!"

"Oh you mustn't be frightened," said Celestia coldly. "You will be hiding behind that door. When he rushes in to save me you will have to seize him and keep him quiet until we can get away. But you mustn't hurt him."

"Suppose the other sentry comes too?"

"He won't hear. I'll only scream—in moderation."

Tommy laughed aloud, and Celestia forgetting about the Gunsdorf woman laughed too.

"We must get out of the stockade somehow," said Celestia.

"How will we keep him quiet, after we've gone?"

"You must hold him so that he has to look at me. When men look at me, they have to do what I say."

"I know that," said Tommy, "all except me."

"All except you."

"I suppose," said he, "it's because I love you so."

"Love! I begged you to marry me and you wouldn't."

"Oh Celestia, how could I? I haven't a cent in the world."

"What does money matter! But this isn't the time to argue about love. This is the time to think about saving life."

The sentry who guarded the front of the house heard a sound of shades being drawn and found that the room to the left of the front door, had as it were closed its eyes. For a moment the sentry smiled cynically. Then remembering the one glimpse he had had of Celestia, and her wonderful look of candor and innocence, the smile faded from his face, and its place was taken by an expression of anxiety. Just at that moment the door knob was turned violently this way and that, and as suddenly was still again. Then the sentry heard a voice—a woman's voice—a half choked voice, full of fear and horror that half moaned and half said: "D-o-n't! D-o-n't!"

Then there was a sound of a heavy body being dragged away from the door.

The sentry didn't hesitate a moment. He unlocked the door, flung it open and leaped into the hallway. He was in time to see Celestia's heels bump over the threshold of the parlor door as Tommy, half laughing and half ashamed dragged her in from the hall.

The sentry leaped to the rescue of those heels and their beautiful owner.

The situation with which he found himself confronted in the parlor was not, however, in the least what he expected.

Against the opposite wall stood the female prisoner—laughing. The male prisoner was nowhere to be seen.

The gallant sentry's lower jaw dropped and hung loosely.

Celestia stopped laughing and came a step forward, looking the sentry squarely in the eyes. He had been warned not to look at her, but he couldn't help himself.

"I hope you are not going to shoot anybody with that gun."

"No, ma'am."

"Then put it down."

He did so.

"Come here!"

He approached close to her.

"Will you do me a favor?"

"Yes, ma'am." He had to say it.

"Promise?"

"I promise."

"I want you to wait in this room in the most comfortable chair and not leave it for an hour. Will you do that?"

The man was completely hypnotized. He moved languidly to the easiest chair, seated himself, closed one leg over the other and began to rock slowly backwards and forwards.

"Come, Tommy," said Celestia.

They closed the parlor door after them and slipped cautiously out of the house.

But there was no need of caution.

The platform along the stockade was lined with Kehr's men, and the attention of these was engaged with matters outside the stockade and beyond.

"By George!" exclaimed Tommy. "They must be expecting an attack."

They ran across the open space to the main gate of the stockade, and were halted by a sentry. Fortunately the pass word of the night before had not been changed. Celestia gave it, and asked the man to open the gate. He had orders to let no one leave the stockade.

"What, no one!"

He found himself looking into a pair of profound eyes, that somehow or other seemed to muddle his brain.

"You must open it—for me!"

He hesitated, then turned slowly, and began to fumble with the somewhat complicated fastenings of the gate. A few moments later Tommy and Celestia were in the open.

About two hundred yards distant was the grove surrounded by a stone wall which Kehr had not razed with the rest of the timber. It was swarming with men.

Celestia turned the color of ashes. And without a word she darted toward the grove as fast as she could run followed by Tommy. As they ran Tommy took out his handkerchief and waved it above his head as a flag of truce.

Cries to stop reached them from the top of the stockade, but they ran on.

"Shall I bring them down, sir?"

"No," said Kehr. "Damn them!"

His face was convulsed with rage and disappointment. He saw Celestia spring to the top of the stone wall and begin to speak to the men who swarmed in the grove. And his fury knew no bounds. But mingled with it was a cold streak of caution. He had but to make a certain signal with his arm, and the men in that grove, and Celestia and Tommy and the stone wall and the grove itself would fly heavenward in one awful discharge of dynamite; but that signal he dared not give.

Tommy and Celestia were safe in the shadow of Gordon Barclay's protecting wings.

"Listen to me," Celestia was crying, "and believe me. You've got to believe me. You think you are sheltered here. The whole grove is mined. One spark of electricity and you will all be blown to pieces."

The men hesitated, and looked at her in wonder. Tommy came to her aid.

"Do you think Kehr would leave this cover for your benefit? It's a trap. If you've got any sense at all, you'll get out before you are blown out."

Kehr, watching from the stockade, saw his victims beginning to escape. They left the grove in twos and threes, sullenly but not slowly. Celestia still standing on the top of the wall had turned and faced the stockade, her hands on her hips.

So standing the sun shone full upon her, and she gleamed with a brightness and glory that seemed hardly to belong to this earth.

Even Kehr was moved. True courage always moved him. And in his flinty heart was a certain sense of relief. It would have been horrible to blow so many men to pieces—dogs and fools though he honestly thought them.

(To be continued.)