The THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

by

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CHAPTER XVIII.

—12—

Daphne scuttered for the subway as a fugitive rabbit to its burrow. But she was not a rabbit and she felt suffocated in the tunnel. She could not endure to be quiet in the presence of so many goggle eyes like aligned buttons. She left the train at the next station and walked rapidly to Fifth avenue, and up it homeward.

She walked rapidly for the comfort of the restlessness, but there was no comfortable destination ahead of her. She found Mrs. Chevvis at home with her disconsolate husband. Daphne dared not tell them just yet that she had lost her place. She would tell them when she got another one. For fear that they might ask why she was home so early, she went down to Bayard's apartment.

She wanted to tell Bayard and Leila what had happened. It was safe, she felt sure. Bayard would never attack Gerst. He would be more likely to rail at Daphne for bringing the trouble on herself.

Leila let her in at the door, but she was in a militant humor. She said, "Hello!" grimly and stepped back for Daphne to enter. Daphne found Bayard still aglow with interrupted quarrel. He said, "Hello!" with a dismal connotation.

"What do you suppose that brother of yours orders me to do now?" said Leila, whirling Daphne toward her.

"I can't imagine," said Daphne, incredulous of Bayard's ordering Leila to do anything.

"He wants me to go to Dutilh and put up a poor mouth and humiliate myself."

Bayard snatched Daphne to him and stormed: "She bought the clothes, didn't she, without consulting me? She wouldn't send 'em back as you did yours; she wore 'em out, paraded 'em before other men there in Newport while I was slaving here. And now that Dutilh insists on money that I haven't got and can't get, she won't even go explain it to him. That's all I ask her—to explain it to him and ask him to be patient so that I won't be sued. I can't stand that. I've had every other calamity but I've never been sued for debt. I ask Leila to go tell him about my hard luck and my fine prospects—play fair with him—and with me. But will she do it? No! She won't do anything for me."

Daphne was swayed by his emotion. She pleaded: "Why don't you, Leila? You have such winning ways. I'll go with you."

Leila hesitated, then answered by taking up her hat and slapping it on her head. She paused, took it off again, and went to her room, unhooking her gown as she went; she knew that in asking favors one should wear one's best appearances.

Bayard grumbled, "How are you getting along at your office?"

Daphne felt unable to intrude her own troubles on his. She shrugged her shoulders. It is a kind of white lie, the shrug.

"Hang on to your job as long as you can, old girl, for you'll have to support us all, I guess. You're the only one of us that can get a job or earn a cent. That's the advantage of being a pretty girl."

Daphne was almost moved to tell him some of the disadvantages of being a pretty girl, but she felt that the time was unfit for exploiting her own woes. She ached for some one to disclose them to, but she withheld them.

Leila came in, arrayed in her very finest. She was smiling in the contentment of beauty at its best. "When you ask credit you've got to look as if you didn't need it," she said.

They found Dutilh in a state of unusual excitement and exhaustion. There were few customers in his place and he left them to the other salespeople. He advanced on Leila and Daphne and gave a hand to each.

"Why, oh why in the name of Paul Poiret didn't you come in a week ago? The pirates have taken every decent gown I had. The sewing women are working like mad to reproduce 'em, but there's nothing left fit to show, except to Pittsburgh and Plattsburg tourists. Where did you get that awful rag you have on?"

"Here," said Leila.

"Oh, of course, I remember. It's beautiful. Sit down. I'm dead. Have a cigarette? Have a cup of tea? Oh, Miss Galvey—tea for three, please. I didn't forget either of you when I was in Paris. I have a siren gown for you, Mrs. Kip, that will break your heart with joy. You'd murder to get it. And as for you, Miss Kip—well, you'll simply be indecently demure in the one I call 'Innocence.'"

Daphne was a trifle shocked, but Leila's eyes filled with tears at the mockery of such talk. She moaned: "I didn't come to buy. I came to apologize and beg for mercy. I owe you a lot of money, and I haven't a cent."

"Who has? What of it? Nobody's paying anybody."

"But I had an urgent letter from your bookkeeper, or somebody."

"Don't mind her. She gets excited. Nobody pays me. You come in and get another gown and you'll catch a millionaire with it."

It was hard for Dutilh to keep his clients clear in his memory.

"But I can't afford it."

"And I can't afford to have my children going round in last year's rags. You do as you're told and come around next week. I'll get my money out of you some day. Trust me for that."

Leila felt a rapturous desire to kiss him and call him names of gratitude. He was generous by impulse and patient, and nobody's fool at that. The thoughts of tailors are long, long thoughts.

Daphne sat thinking, but not of clothes. The labor problem had almost defeminized her. She was studying the models as they lounged about the shop. Suddenly she spoke. "Oh, Mr. Dutilh, how much money does a model earn?"

"You mean what salary do I pay? Common clothes-horses get fifteen or sixteen dollars. Better lookers get better pay. You're worth a thousand a week at least. Want a job?"

"Yes."

His smile was quenched. He studied her across his cup. He saw the anxiety in her curiosity.

"What's the matter?" he said. "Has he run off with another girl, or do you expect to go fishing for a millionaire in my pond?"

"I need the money. I've had hard luck." Daphne said it so solemnly that he grew solemn, too.

"That's too bad! Well, I've got more girls now than I need. Nobody as beautiful as you, of course, but—I suppose I could let some one go."

"Oh, I couldn't think of that!"

"Neither could I. Well, I'll squeeze you in somewhere. But I can't pay you as much as you are worth. Would—umm—twenty dollars a week interest you?"

"It would fascinate me."

"All right, you're engaged. You can begin next Monday." He turned to Leila. "Do you want a job, too?"

"No, thank you!" Leila snapped. Her eyes were blacker than ever with rage, and her red-white cheeks curdled with shame. She could not trust herself to speak. Her brunette beauty had the threat of a storm-loaded thundercloud.

When she and Daphne had taken their departure, Leila still dared not speak to Daphne on the way home. She dared not speak to her at all.

Leila brought triumph to Bayard. She told him what Dutilh had told her of his willingness to wait for his money.

Bayard embraced Leila and hailed her as an angel. When she had taken full toll of her success, she told Bayard what Daphne had done. She told it simply, without emphasis, knowing its effect.

Leila Felt a Rapturous Desire to Kiss Him and Call Him Names of Gratitude.

"Daphne!" he roared. "You asked Dutilh for a position among his models? Great Lord of heaven, I'll telegraph father to come take you home."

"That's all right," Daphne taunted. "You'll send the message collect, and he'll never be able to pay for it, so he'll never know what he missed."

"But surely we are not such beggars that—"

"Who has any money? Who has anything left to pawn?"

"But there must be other jobs."

"Get me one."

"There must be some other way."

"Show me."

Clay Wimburn came in after dinner. His protests against Daphne's project were louder than Bayard's, with the added rancor of jealousy. But he had no substitute to offer.

She forebore to tell him of the Gerst affair. He was deep enough in the mire. He went away a little later and she returned to her cubbyhole with the Chivvises.

Those were black days for all America, suffering under the backfire from the sudden war and from the long fatigue of hard times. There were weeks of dread lest the United States be sucked into the maelstrom at a time when it was least prepared in money, arms, or spirit. Never, perhaps, in human chronicle had so many people looked with such bewildered misery on so many people locked in such multifarious carnage.

At such a time, as in an epoch of plague, there came a desperate need of a respite from woe; soldiers skylarked in trenches; war widows danced in gay colors; festivals were held in the name of charity; frivolities and vices were resorted to that good souls might renew themselves for the awful work before them.

It was in such a mood of imperative demand for cheer of some sort that Tom Duane swam back into Daphne's gloomy sky.

Daphne had come home after a morning of rebuffs. She was heartsore and footsore, in shabby boots that she could not replace. She was called to the telephone, and Duane's voice chanted in her ear with a tone of peculiarly comforting melancholy.

"That you, Miss Kip? This is me, Mr. Duane. Poor Tom Duane. Poor Tom's a-cold. I came back to town unexpectedly early. I have something important to say to you. Will you take a little ride with me in my car?"

"Why not?" she said, with a laugh. She was glad that he could not see the tears that gushed across her eyelids.

"Three cheers for you! I'll be there in a jiffy. You couldn't arrange to dine with me, could you? Or could you?"

Again she answered, "Why not?"

Duane's voice rang back: "Tip-top! You've made me happy as a box of pups. I'm half-way there already."

CHAPTER XIX.

When Duane came up to the door he greeted her with the beaming joyousness of a rising sun. He praised her and thanked her for lending him her time. The elevator that took their bodies down took her spirits up. She noted that he had not brought his big car with his chauffeur. He stowed her into a powerful roadster built for two. But she had no inclination to protest. The car caught them away and they sped through Central park with lyrical, with dithyrambic, sweep.

"The trees!—how wonderful they are!" she cried.

They had been wonderful for weeks, but she had thought them dismal.

"They're nothing to what they are in Westchester," said Duane. "We're going to have a look at them and dine up there somewhere."

"Are we?" was all she said.

And he said, "We are."

After they left the park and reentered the hard streets she found the courage to remind him: "But you said you had something important to tell me. What was it?"

"Miss Kip, you've played the very devil with me. I thought I was immune to the lover germ, but—well, I told you the truth about going abroad to shake off the—the fever—the Daphnitis that attacked me. But I couldn't get you out of my mind for long, or out of my heart at all. I'm a sick man, Miss Kip, a lovesick man."

"Mr. Duane, you mustn't—I can't allow you—really!"

"Oh, yes, you can!" he said, and sent the car ahead with a plunge. "You're going to listen to me for once. You can't help yourself. I'm not going to hurt you. I just want you to help me a little. I went up in the Berkshires and tried to get my sanity back, but I couldn't! I couldn't even play golf—or cards—or drink. People drive me crazy. I can't get interested in anything or anybody but you."

"Mr. Duane, please— You oughtn't to— I beg you. I have no right—"

"Oh, I know you're engaged to Clay Wimburn. He's a nice kid. I'm not one-two-three with him. I'm not trying to cut him out—I couldn't if I would. I like him. I'd like to help him, and your brother, too. I don't mean to be impertinent, either; but—well, the main thing is, I want to beg you to let me see you once in a while.

"I want to take you out riding and dining and dancing and—you can take Wimburn along if you've got to, but I want you to save my life somehow. And, by the Lord Harry! I think it will save yours. You don't look well, my dear—Miss Kip. It breaks my heart to see it. No, I don't believe you're getting as much fun out of life as you ought to. There isn't much fun in the world any more, but what little's left is very precious, and I want you to get all that's going. Won't you let me help you go after it? Won't you?"

They swung up to a height that commanded a vast reach of the Hudson. Between its banks it semed to be a river of wine. The western sky was like a forest of autumn leaves with the last sad red pitifully beautiful, since it must turn so soon to rust.

In a spirit of haste the fleetly spinning wheels murmured, "Why not, why not, why not, why-notwhynotwhynot?"

Before the sunset had quite relinquished the sky the moon was over the horizon—the harvest moon, huge and close and of a meditative mein. It paled and dwindled as it climbed, but its power seemed to grow.

It left Daphne more alone with Duane, a little afraid of him and of the gloaming. They emerged above the chain of Croton lakes and ran across the big dam and wound along the shore, crossing iron bridge after iron bridge, till they came to a little roadside inn whose lights had a yellow warmth.

"We're stopping here for dinner, if you don't mind," said Duane.

Daphne was a trifle ill at ease, but she was hungry, too, and the adventure was exhilarating. There were not many people at the tables, and they were of an adventurous cast as well.

When Duane had given his order he asked Daphne if she would join the rest of the diners who had left their chairs to fox-trot. She shook her head and he did not urge her.

But by the time their dinner was served and eaten the nagging, interminable music had played away nearly all her scruples.

When Duane looked at her with an appealing smile, she smiled back, nodded and rose. He leaped to his feet and took her in his arms.

Somehow, it was not mere dancing now. He had told her that he loved her. There was in his embrace an eagerness that was full of deference, but full of delight as well. After all, she was alone with him in a company that seemed not to be very respectable, and was growing less so every hour.

Her feet and all her limbs and every muscle of her reveled in the gambol,

He Could Imagine Her Pretty Head.

but her heart and mind and conscience were troubling her till she stopped short at last and said:

"I'm sorry, but I—I'd rather not dance any more—here."

Duane paused in a moment's chagrin. Then he sighed: "All right."

They retreated to their table, and he looked at her sadly, and she sadly at him. Then he seemed to like her even better than before, and he said, with a very tender smile:

"Want to go home?"

"If you don't mind."

When they came out upon the veranda of the hotel the lake was a vast charger of frosted silver among the hills. They stood admiring it for a moment and the music from the hotel seemed to come from another world. He helped her into the car and they whisked away southerly.

He returned to the road along the Hudson, and it was so beautiful in the moonglow that it seemed a pity to hurry through the wonderland at such speed. And what was she going back to that she should be in such haste?

She hinted as much to Duane, and he bettered the suggestion. Not only did he check the speed, but at one wooded cliffside with a vista of peculiar majesty he wheeled out of the road and stopped the car, shut down the chuttering engine and turned off the strenuous lights.

They sat utterly content till Duane shook off the blissful stupor. They could not stay here thus forever. They could not stay much longer. It was growing cold and late.

He did not dare to look at Daphne. He did not quite need to. He could imagine her pretty head and the drowsy, adorable eyes, the lips pursed with childish solemnity, the throat stem in the urn contour of her shoulders, the vaselike curves of her young torso. He imagined these from memory, for they now were swaddled in a thick motorcoat. But without turning his head he could see her little hands clasped idly at her knees, the little gloves turned back at the wrist. He thought that he would like to take them in his—he would like to take all of her in his arms, into his heart, into his keeping.

Yet he did not want to marry her. He did not admire marriage in its results as he saw them in other people. Like many another, he cherished wicked ideals because the everyday virtues worked out so imperfectly, so unbeautifully.

Daphne was musing almost as vaguely. On the river a yacht at anchor poised like a swan asleep. She would like to own a yacht. On the opposite side of the river along the road she could see motorcars like inquisitive crickets with gleaming eyes and feelers of light. She would like to own a motor or two.

If she were the wife of as rich a man as this man at her side, how quickly she could help her father and Bayard and the wretched victims of the massacre in Europe and so many people—yes, and even Clay, poor, dear, hopeless, helpless Clay Wimburn, to whom she had brought nothing but expense of money and heartache and torture.

Suddenly but quietly upon this current of her thoughts a thought of Duane's was launched like a skiff congenial to the tide. He spoke almost as softly as a thought, at first with a quaint shock such as a boat makes, launched.

"How often do you go to church?" he said, whimsically.

"Why—never, I'm afraid," she gasped in surprise.

"You were planning to be married in church?"

"Such funny questions! Yes, of course."

"Why?"

"Oh, it wouldn't be nice not to."

"You don't believe in divorce, then?"

"Oh yes—yes, indeed—if people don't get along together. I think it's wicked for people to live together if they don't love each other."

"It's love, then, that makes marriage sacred?"

"Yes. Yes, indeed! Of course!"

"Is it all right for two people who are not Christians to live together according to their creeds?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, the people who lived before there were any Christians—or people who never heard of Christianity—was it all right for them to marry?"

"Of course."

"It's not any one formula, then, that makes marriage all right?"

"Of course not, it's the—the—"

"The love?"

"I think so. It's hard to explain."

"Everything is, isn't it?"

"Terribly."

There was more silence. He took a cigar from his pocket, held it before her for permission. She said, "Please." He struck a match. She glanced at his face in the little limelight of the match. It was very handsome. A pearl of drowsy luster gleamed in the soft folds of his tie. The hands sheltering the match were splendid hands.

She watched the cigar fire glow and fade and the little turbulent smoke veils float into the air and die. One of them formed a wreath, a strange, frail, writhing circlet of blue filaments. It drifted past her and she put her finger into it—her ring-finger by some womanly instinct.

"Now you're married to me," said Duane.

There was a sudden movement of his hands as if to seize upon her. She recoiled a little; his hands did not pursue her. They went back to the steering wheel and clung to it fiercely. She turned from his eyes, but he gazed at her cheek, and she could feel the blood stirring there in a blush.

"If you loved me, would you marry me?" he said.

"I—I love— I'm going to marry—somebody else."

When?"

"Some day."

"If you're not happy with him, will you leave him?"

"Oh, but I'll be happy with him."

"So many people have said that! You've seen how seldom it worked. If you ceased to love him, or he you, would you leave him?"

"'If' is a large order. Maybe."

"Wouldn't it be wiser if two people who thought they loved could live together for a while before they married?"

She felt her muscles set as if she would rise and run away from such words. "Mr. Duane! I don't think it's nice even to be talking of such things. Besides, it's growing late."

"It's not so late as it would be if you married a man and found that your marriage was a ghastly mistake."

"Hadn't we better start back?"

"Please don't leave me just yet. This is very solemn to me. I've been studying you a long time, trying to get you out of my mind, and only getting you deeper in my heart. I love you."

"I don't believe it."

"I know it."

"Then you oughtn't to tell me."

"Not tell a woman you love her? Not try to save her from wrecking her life and my own?"

"How wrecking my—her life?"

"I believe that if you marry Clay Wimburn you'll be unhappy. He can't give you a home. He can't buy you clothes. He can't support you."

"That's not his fault, just now—with the hard times and the war. Please let's go home."

"To my home?"

That insolence was too appalling to answer, or even to gasp at, or protest against. It stunned her. He took advantage of her daze to explain, hurriedly:

"You're not going to be one of those silly, old-fashioned idiot girls that a man can't talk to earnestly and frankly, are you now? Of course you're not. You're not one of those poor things whose virtue consists in being insulted every time anyone appeals to their intelligence, are you? No, you're a fine, brave soul, and you want to know the truth about truth, and so do I.

"I'm a decent enough fellow at heart. I want to do the right thing and live squarely as well as the next fellow. I've got a sense of honor, too, of a sort, and I take life pretty seriously.

"I tell you, the world is all turned topsy-turvy the last few years. The old rules don't rule. They never did, but people pretended to believe in 'em. Now we're not so afraid of the truth in science or history or religion or anything. We want to know the truth and live by it.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Way Out.

If a man or a machine is unable to accomplish a task it should be turned over to a woman and a hairpin.—London Answers.

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Black River Falls, Wis.—"As Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound saved me from an operation, I cannot say enough in praise of it. I suffered from organic troubles and my side hurt me so I could hardly be up from my bed, and I was unable to do my housework. I had the best doctors in Eau Claire and they wanted me to have an operation, but Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound cured me so I did not need the operation, and I am telling all my friends about it."—Mrs. A. W. BINZER, Black River Falls, Wis.

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Military Dogs.

Dogs are used in the army in various ways. The sentinel dog accompanies an advanced sentinel; dispatch dogs carry dispatches between commanders; patrol dogs range ahead and about the patrol, looking for the enemy; ambulance dogs search the battlefield after the ambulance men have picked up all the wounded they can find; draft dogs are used to bring up munitions and food; listening dogs are highly trained animals used in the front trenches, where their keen sense of hearing enables them to detect sounds inaudible to the men. The dog in many places in Europe is a working animal, and has been readily adapted to war work.

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will quiet your cough, soothe the inflammation of a sore throat and lungs, stop irritation in the bronchial tubes, insuring a good night's rest, free from coughing and with easy expectoration in the morning. Made and sold in America for fifty-two years. A wonderful prescription, assisting Nature in building up your general health and throwing off the disease. Especially useful in lung trouble, asthma, croup, bronchitis, etc. For sale in all civilized countries.—Adv.

A New Wrinkle.

Minister (to prospective bride)—Shall I put your age down as thirty?

B—Oh, no; please put it down as twenty-four. I'm a stranger here, and who'd give me away?

Minister—Oh, your face will do that!—Cartoons Magazine.

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There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from your druggist, and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than one ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful clear complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine, as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove freckles.—Adv.

Had Him There.

He—It is said that a man's brain is bigger than a woman's.

She—Well, the same thing is true about his feet, but they are no more serviceable than a woman's.

Your Eyes Granulated Eyelids, Eyes inflamed by exposure to Sun, Dust and Wind quickly relieved by Murine Eye Remedy. No Smarting, just Eye Comfort. At Your Druggists or by mail 60c per Bottle. For Book of the Eye free write Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago.