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Cheerfully yours,

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GEN. STOEESSEL ON TRIAL.

Russian Commander at Port Arthur Pleads Not Guilty to a Serious Charge.

St. Petersburg, Dec. 10.—Before a brilliant assemblage of his old comrades in arms, Lieut. Gen. Stoessel was Tuesday placed on trial to answer with his life and reputation for the loss of Port Arthur on the first of January, 1905, and in firm tones and with confident manner the general pleaded not guilty to the charge of needlessly surrendering the fortress and thereby humiliating the Russian army.

The trial took place in the auditorium of the Army and Navy club. The room resembled more a social gathering of officers of high rank than the scene of a court-martial. Among the judges, spectators and witnesses were Gen. Kuropatkin, Gen. Linévitch, Gen. Rennenkampf, Vice Admiral Wiren and scores of other prominent leaders in the Russo-Japanese war. There were also present 200 officers and soldiers who had been at Port Arthur and who Tuesday were clad in their full dress uniforms blazing with stars and decorations.

Gen. Stoessel was alone in civil attire and this made him conspicuous. He wore proudly around his neck the cordon of the military order of St. George, which was conferred upon him by the emperor during the siege, and on his breast was pinned the cross of George III, awarded for conspicuous bravery in frontier fighting. This same coveted decoration was worn by many of the witnesses and spectators. Empty sleeves and crutches, especially among the men who had been at Port Arthur showed that many of them had seen hard service during the war.

The other accused officers, Generals Fock, Reiss and Smirnov, came to the court clad in their uniforms. Gen. Smirnov, who is a bitter enemy of Gen. Stoessel, ostentatiously seated himself as far away as possible from the central figure of the proceedings.

St. Joseph May Fall in Line.

St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 10.—At the organization of the Philadelphia club of the Third Street Presbyterian church Monday night, the pastor of the church, the Rev. A. L. Hall-Quest, proposed closing all the theaters in St. Joseph next Sunday. No attempt has heretofore been made to interfere with theater performances on Sunday. W. K. James, president of the board of police commissioners, was one of the principal speakers at the meeting, and took a strong stand in favor of the Sunday closing question.

Railroad Officer on Trial.

New York, Dec. 10.—Alfred H. Smith, vice-president and general manager of the New York Central railroad, was placed on trial Monday before Justice Kellogg, in the supreme court on a charge of manslaughter in the second degree, growing out of the wreck of the Brewster express at Woodlawn last February, in which 24 persons lost their lives and 67 were injured. Gross negligence was charged in the indictment.

Attorney Kellogg Improved.

New York, Dec. 10.—Frank Kellogg of St. Paul, Minn., prosecutor in the case of the government against the Standard Oil company, who became ill Monday in the course of his speech before the Minnesota Society, was much improved Tuesday. Mr. Kellogg's indisposition was the temporary result of an acute attack of indigestion. He was so much better that he planned to leave for Washington Wednesday with further evidence taken on the Standard Oil litigation.

Cotton Crop Estimate.

Washington, Dec. 10.—The crop reporting board of the bureau of statistics of the department of agriculture from the reports of the correspondents and agents Tuesday issued a report estimating that the total production of cotton in the United States for the years 1907-08 will amount to 5,581,968,000 pounds (not including linters), equivalent to 11,678,000 bales of 500 pounds gross weight.

Receiver for Lumber Company.

Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 10.—A telegram received here by the R. G. Run Mercantile company announces that W. R. Bradford of Shreveport, La., was Tuesday appointed receiver for the Vernon Lumber company, capital \$100,000, which has a plant at Hart, Ia., and offices at Shreveport and Kansas City. At the local offices of the company no facts regarding the receivership could be learned.

To Spend Holidays at Home.

Washington, Dec. 10.—Only two members of the Kansas delegation will return home for the holidays—Senator Long and Congressman Anthony. Long has a senatorial contest on tap and he wants to go out and see about his fences. Anthony is to be given a big reception by his home people at Leavenworth on December 27.

Formally Elected Senators.

Guthrie, Ok., Dec. 10.—The legislature voted for United States senators Tuesday afternoon with the following result: Senate, Gore and Owens, (dem.) 29; Jones and Douglas (rep.) 4. House, Gore and Owens, 89; Jones and Douglas, 11.

The President Grant Calls.

Flymouth, Dec. 10.—The steamer President Grant, with Secretary Taft and the members of his party on board, left here at 8:10 Tuesday morning for New York.

HIS MUTE PLEADERS

By DORA HASTINGS

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The time was morning, the scene a farm-house kitchen; the actors, two people, man and woman. The woman, Amy by name, was small in stature, light in frame and quick in motion; her face was plain, its white, healthy color marred by freckles, its mouth over-generous. Her eyes, too, were large, with such honesty and sincerity in their depths of gray, they furnished the owner a certificate of character wherever she carried them. She had come into the kitchen, holding in one hand a cake, at which she glanced with something of the same fondness which an artist shows for a masterpiece. As she had entered the kitchen, she had stopped suddenly by the door, her large, bright eyes taking in quickly the details of the scene before her, while her face assumed an expression of such dismay, as brought a broad smile upon her companion's merry face. She hurriedly placed her cake upon the table, then shrank back at her first glimpse of its greasy spots and kettle crock; her eyes roved to the floor and mopboard, where they seemed to transfix the dust with their steely glance. There was an unwashed frying-pan on the hearth. She looked at it with eyes of pity; then turned, with the same expression, toward her companion. She made a quick, restive motion with her hand. "Wouldn't you," she said, falteringly, "like to have me—have me sweep a little for you, now I'm here? I like to sweep and clean, just as another woman likes to sing and play the piano."

"No," he said, laughing; "I think it is enough for one woman to clean out the cracks in her own floor with a hair-pin. I couldn't think of consenting to such waste of strength in my behalf."

She turned, with just a touch of vexation in her cheek.

"Good morning," she said abruptly, as she started across the piazza toward her own home. She hurried on, as if some important duty waited her coming. As she clicked the latch of the gate, she turned toward the house which she had just left. He was still standing there by the door; his face, which had been but a minute before, mirth-illumined, had become suddenly grave. She saw it, and its reflection fell upon her own. Yes, she knew it was lonely over there. She went on slowly into the house. The room which she entered partook of her own character; it was small, dull in color, and spotlessly kept. Her mother, diminutive like herself, sat by the fire busily knitting, the lines of her withered, sharply-chiselled face showing clear above the white kerchief at her throat. She had the same gray eyes and the same grave earnestness.

"Well, what did he say to the cake, Amy?" asked the mother, looking over her spectacles at her daughter as she entered.

"He said he was obliged," replied Amy, drawing a chair up to the fire. "You ought to see the kitchen," she went on; "dirt and dust in heaps everywhere. You can't hardly see the table for the grease and crock," looking piteously at her mother; "and all the rest is just as bad. There is a frying-pan there that I shall remember as long as I live."

"What can we do?" asked the mother earnestly, laying aside her knitting, as if that impeded the course of thought; "what's to be done?"

"I don't know," said Amy, despairingly. "He wouldn't let me clean. I asked him again."

"I've thought sometimes," remarked the older woman, "that perhaps he don't like it—your not wanting to marry him; sort o' resents it, maybe."

"There'd be no sense in that," said Amy, with a show of energy and surprise. "You might as well blame me for liking pickles. My mind is set naturally on living single. I can't help it."

"He hasn't asked you lately, has he?" said the mother, when they were launched safely on the steady stream of work. Amy shook her head.

"Maybe he's getting tired of it," remarked the mother.

"I don't know," said Amy, a little crossly. "He says he asks me once a year; but that's his way joking about things that are no joke. It's but a half dozen times."

"It's too bad," said the mother, summing up the situation; "but what's to be done?"

That question presented itself often to the two women, as they sat around their own well-kept hearth, and thought of the kitchen in the house opposite. From time to time Amy ventured over with a cake and took note of the increase of dust.

"It's piling up on the mopboard," she said to her mother, who was ever an eager and sympathetic listener. "He scratches around with a broom sometimes; but he never hits the mopboard."

The frying-pan, too, appeared occasionally in its unwashed, unkempt condition; it had the forlorn air of one who had seen better days.

The winter wore away at last. When the spring had fairly come, the mother gladly came out of her winter prison house, and stepped briskly about the door-yard, drawing on the accumulated wisdom of years, as she

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offered suggestions about the sowing of seeds and the preparation of the soil. One morning, when John had gone away, she and Amy with an air of stealth such as would be natural to a soldier reconnoitering the enemy, went unobserved to their neighbor's house, crossed the piazza, and took one long look at the begrimed and dust-weighted kitchen. A deeper shade of gravity rested on the mother's face when she came away. They were silent, returning, but as soon as they reached their own home they chattered like magpies over the details of that unfortunate kitchen.

"I wish," said the mother, pathetically; "that I had never seen it, for I shall carry the memory of it with me all my days."

Yet the place had a kind of fascination. They stole over again and again to get a glimpse of it.

It was a fine moonlight winter evening. John and Amy had come home from church together. She had stepped a little beyond him, and had gone into her own little yard and closed the gate. How he hated the click of that gate! He was talking on, with the manifest purpose of keeping her there a minute. "Yes," he said, "it's been an open winter. I like snow, myself, plenty of it. I'd like to tunnel through the drifts once more. I'm growing old, I guess; nothing seems so good as it used to, not even the snow; that's colder and not so white. Everything is different but you, Amy; you never change."

"I think I grow old, too," said Amy. "No you don't; you're just the same girl you were 15 years ago. It takes something besides time to make people grow old. I'm getting gray myself." He laughed without apparent cause and pushed away the snow with his foot. "Amy," he said, merrily, as if he was about to tell an amusing story, "I haven't bothered you with that old annual question of mine this year, have I? I suppose it wouldn't be of any use, anyhow, would it?"

He was looking at her wistfully. They say that sometimes the mind works rapidly in the emergencies of life. There came to Amy a vision of that kitchen. A frying-pan, mute yet pleading, was on the hearth; a kettle, with rusty countenance, was asking for help; the dust on the mopboard flashed on her sight; she felt that it was making an appeal. At that minute it was borne in upon her that she had been appointed to a mission; she was to be an apostle of cleansing to that neglected board. She looked up, her eyes meeting his fairly, without a



"I Suppose It Wouldn't Be Any Use, Anyhow, Would It?"

shadow of hesitation or doubt. "I don't know," she said, simply. "I think perhaps there might."

"Are you sure?" he said.

"I—I'm afraid so," she faltered.

He placed his hand upon the latch of the gate. She saw the motion and glanced quickly up at him, then turned and ran swiftly into the house.

John stood a minute as if he were a little dazed by the sudden coming of his happiness; then he went slowly

across to his house. There was a new light in his face, and a smile on his lips, and his home did not seem half so lonely, for he could already see, in fancy, a morsel of gray-gowned womanhood, flitting about those rooms. He sat till late that night, trying to realize his fortune, wondering how Amy had come to know her own heart, for he felt sure that, unaware, she had been fond of him all these years. He never knew how the dust on the mopboard had pleaded his cause, nor how his kettle had been gifted with a more persuasive voice than his, nor felt for them the affection that otherwise he might have regarded as their due.

It was not many months before the dust tasted water; the frying-pan once more learned the use of scouring sand; the table was freed from its burden of earth, and the whole kitchen was washed and re-washed, till it shone and shone again. The only hindrance to the good work was the frequent presence of a masculine giant, who picked up the small housewife, and held her up till her eyes were on a level with his own, "mussed" her hair, took, as he said, "the starch look out of her mouth," and otherwise conducted himself "like a great boy." Still, she bore it with a better grace than one might have expected from such a prim little woman, and in after years, when she and her mother sit about their spotless hearth in the house once across the way, she has almost forgotten the influence of the dust, and fancies that it was solely a heart impulse that brought her to her new home.

To Sew with Double Thread.

Here is a simple way to straighten out knots when sewing with double thread. Cut a length of thread from the spool, double it, twist the two cut ends together and thread them through the eye of the needle. Pass the needle point first through the loop of the doubled thread, forming a tiny knot at the eye of the needle. This serves to keep the thread straight and is flat enough to pass easily through the finest fabric. With this arrangement one can work button holes and do any work requiring a doubled thread with never a knotty problem.

Dampening Clothes.

Use hot water to dampen the clothes that are to be ironed and you will find it a great deal more satisfactory than cold. It dampens the clothes more evenly and makes them easier to iron. If the water is too hot to put the hands in use a whisk broom to sprinkle it with. Many laundresses prefer the whisk broom, as they claim that it is less likely to make the clothes too wet. The clothes may be ironed two hours later with good results.

Rubber for the Umbrella Jar.

Cut a piece of your old rubber mat, and place it in the bottom of the umbrella jar. Umbrellas and canes are frequently the means of breaking these receptacles when dropped into them without proper care, and the rubber will help to prevent this. If you have not a piece of an old rubber mat to use, procure a piece of soft sheet rubber, such as is used for packing by steam fitters and plumbers.

Sweet Potatoes, Mexican Style.

Boil them until tender, peel and cut in halves longwise. Put one tablespoonful of butter and two of minced onion into a saucepan and brown. Add one heaping tablespoonful each of green and red peppers, minced, two tablespoonfuls of tomato catsup, one of vinegar, and a teaspoonful of brown sugar. Stir well and pour over the potatoes.—Vogue.

Sauce for Duck.

Extract the juice from a quantity of sorrel leaves, add a glass of sherry, some mashed gooseberries, a little sugar. Two tablespoons butter. Boil up once and serve.

Currant Sauce.

Boil one ounce of currants in a pint of water for five minutes, add a cup of bread crumbs, six cloves, a glass of wine and a bit of butter, stir till smooth. Serve with venison.