

DOINGS OF THE VAN LOONS



It didn't take Father long to get his bearings

The AUCTION BLOCK REX BEACH

CHAPTER XXIII—Campbell Pope determines to bring Lorelei and Bob together again and calls on Adoree Demorest with his plan. With her help he succeeds.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Bob's work as a salesman continued to be so effective that Kurtz finally offered him a salaried position. But instead of accepting, Bob made a counter-proposition that caused the little man to gasp. Briefly, it was to extend the scope of the present business by laying in a stock of extravagant, high-priced shirt and necktie materials, with Bob as partner in the new venture.

But despite the excellent income he now began to make there was not a thing left in the Wharton bank account, for Bob moved his wife to a more pretentious apartment on Riverside drive and managed to increase their expenses so as to balance his earnings very nicely. It was quite a feat to adjust a fixed outlay to a varying income so that nothing whatever should remain, and he considered it a strong proof of his capacities that he succeeded.

By Christmas the haberdashery venture had shown such a profit that he began to pile up a small bank account in spite of himself; so he bought an automobile, which served to eat up any monthly profits and guarantee a deficit under the most favorable circumstances. Being thus relieved of financial uncertainty, he laid plans to wrest from Kurtz a full partnership in the tailoring business itself.

The Whartons' new home was charming, and Bob provided his wife with every luxury. Lorelei did not regret that she was prevented from going out as much as formerly—her experience at Fenelcourt had cured her of any desire to get into her husband's social set—and unconsciously she and Bob began to develop a real home life.

As time went on and evidences of prosperity showed themselves Lorelei's family forgot some of their dislike of Bob and became more companionable. Strangely enough, too, their cost of living increased in proportion to their friendliness; but Bob never questioned any amount they asked him for, and he swelled their allowance with characteristic prodigality.

Lorelei was proud of him, as she had reason to be, but she had occasion for sorrow as well. His generosity was really big; his pagan joyousness banished shadows, but he was intensely human in his failings, and in spite of his determination to stop drinking, in spite of all his earnest promises, the old appetite periodically betrayed him.

For a month, for two months at a time, he would manfully fight his desires, then without excuse, without cause, just when he was boasting loudest of his victory, he would fall. And yet drinking did not brutalize him as it does most men; he never became disgusting; liquor intoxicated him, but less in body than in spirit. His repentance followed promptly, his change was intense, and his fear of Lorelei almost ludicrous. But the girl had acquired a wider charity, a gentler patience; she grieved, she tried to help him, and his frailty endeared him to her. Love had been slow to awaken; in fact, she had not been definitely aware of its birth; but suddenly she had found it flowering in her soul, and now it flourished the more as that other interest intensified and began to dominate her.

Bob responded to all her efforts save one; she could not make him serious. On the whole, however, they were



more happy than they had ever been. One day, during the sick holiday season, Hannibal Wharton appeared at the Kurtz establishment. He appraised the elaborate surroundings with a hostile eye and stared at his son impressively.

"So! You're a seamstress now," he began, and Bob grinned. "Merkle told me you repaid his loan and had an automobile."

"That's true." "Second-hand car?" "No."

"How much do you owe?" "Nothing, except for stock." "Stock? What do you mean?" "Kurtz and I are partners in one end of this business."

"I'll be damned!" breathed Mr. Wharton. Then he inquired, curiously, "Do you like this work?"

"It's not what I prefer, still there is a margin of profit." "Hub! I should think so, at ninety dollars a suit. Well, this town is full of fools."

Bob agreed. "But we dress 'em better than they do in Pittsburgh." After a moment's consideration Hannibal said slowly: "Mother's at the Waldorf; she wants to see you. You've just about broken her heart, Bob."

"We're not going out much, but perhaps we could call on her—"

"We! I said she wants to see you."

"And not my wife?" "Certainly not. Neither do I. You don't seem to understand—"

Bob answered smoothly: "Certainly I understand; you think ninety dollars is too much for a suit. Perhaps I can show you something in scarfs of an exclusive design?"

"Don't be funny!" growled his father. "Really, dad, you'd better go. That suit of yours is a sight. Somebody may think we made it for you."

Mr. Wharton remained silent for a moment. "This attitude is impossible."



"So That's Her Game, Eh?"

and anybody but you would see it. We can't accept that woman, and we won't. She's notorious."

"No more so than I am—or you, for that matter."

"She's a grafter. She'd quit you if I paid her enough."

"How do you know?" "Her mother has been to see me half a dozen times. I've offered to pay her anything within reason, but they're holding out for something big. You come back, Bob. Let her go to her own people."

"And what's to become of the other one?" Bob was smiling faintly. "The other one? What do you mean?" "I mean there will be three in the family soon, dad; you're going to be a grandfather."

sharp, stammering incisiveness: "So that's her game, eh? I suppose she thinks she'll breed her way into the family. Well, she won't. It won't work. I was willing to compromise before—so long as there was no tangible bond between that family and mine—but they've got their blood mixed with mine; they've got a finger-hold in spite of hell, and I suppose they'll hold on. But I won't acknowledge a grandchild with scum like that in his veins. Good God! Now listen—you. Wharton's jaw was out-thrust, his gaze hard and unwavering. "No child tainted with that blood will share in one penny of my money, now or at any other time. Understand!"

"Perfectly." Bob's color had receded, but in no other way did he show his struggle for self-mastery. "My wife isn't bearing a child to spite you, and if it ever needs a grandfather we'll adopt one."

"They've pulled you down into the mud; now they've tied you there. He redly's stronger than you or I; watch your child grow up, and watch its mother's blood tell. Then remember that I tried to free you before it was too late. Well, I'm through. This settles me. Good-by, and God help you with that rotten gang." Hannibal Wharton turned and strode out of the room shaking his head and numbing.

CHAPTER XXV.

Bob had seldom been conscious of a deliberate effort to please himself, for to want a thing had always meant to have it almost before the desire had been recognized. The gratification of his impulses had become a sort of second nature to him, and one day, feeling that he owed a debt of friendliness to the world, he was impelled to liquidate it.

He did struggle half-heartedly against his first drink, but after he had taken it and after other drinks had gone the way of the first, he met a number of people whom he liked and to whom he was inspired to show his liking, and, strange to say, the more he drank the more of such friends he discovered. By late afternoon he was in a fantastically jubilant mood, and, setting Kurtz, he bore him across the way to Delmonico's.

Now, Kurtz was worldly and therefore tolerant. He had grown to like and to understand his young associate very well indeed, and something about Bob's riotous disposition to gladness awoke a response in the little tailor.

It was that expansive and expensive hour of the afternoon when business worries are dropped and before social cares are shouldered. It was cocktail time along the avenue, the hour when smiles are born and engagements broken, and as it lengthened Wharton celebrated it as in days gone by. His last regret had vanished; he was having a splendid time, when a page called him to a telephone booth.

Adoree's voice greeted him; she was speaking from his own home, and her first words almost sobered him. Something was wrong; Bob was needed quickly; Lorelei was asking for him. For more than an hour they had been vainly trying to locate him. They had succeeded in reaching the doctor, and he was there—with a nurse. Adoree's voice broke—Lorelei had fainted and so was the speaker. Bob had better leave no time.

When Bob lurched out of the booth he was white; the noisy group he had left rose in alarm at sight of his stricken face. His legs led him a crooked course-out of the cafe, bringing him into collision with chairs and tables and causing him to realize for the first time how far he had allowed himself to go. In a shaking voice he called for a taxicab, meanwhile allowing the raw air of the street to cool his head.

The terror of the unknown was upon him. But regrets were unavailing. "Something had gone wrong, and Lorelei needed him. She was calling for him and he was drunk. He would need up to her bed of pain with bleared eyes, with poisoned lips. How could he kiss her? How could he explain?"

The cab swung into the curb, and he scrambled out, then stumbled blindly up the steps and into the building where he lived.

Adoree met him at his own door. Wharton's impression was vague; he saw little more than the tragic widening of the girl's eyes as she recognized his condition.

"Am I as bad as that?" he stammered. "Do you think she'll notice it?" "Oh, Bob!" Adoree cried, in a stricken voice. "How could you—at this time?"

"You said she wanted me. I couldn't take time—"

"Yes! She has been calling for you, but I'm sorry I found you."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FARMER FEED EXPERTS.

(National Crop Improvement Service.) A farmer who has devoted his lifetime to the study of feeding generally has more success through his common sense methods than any scientific analysis can supply. If such a feeder could have on hand all of the ingredients (most by-products of cereal manufacture), which according to the market at the time would be more economical, he could, through his experience, be very successful in mixing his feeds. But the difficulty with the average man is to maintain an economical ration from the products of his own farm.

He may be an expert, if he chooses to study out a new ration every time the market changes, but he generally prefers to let someone who makes a business of mixing feeds do it for him. No doubt the majority of users of mixed feeds begin to buy it because of a shortage of forage and grain crops on the farm.

If such a man will keep books he will find that as a usual thing the use of mixed stock feed is a mere matter of arithmetic whether he could buy the ingredients cheaper than he could buy them in a so-called "balanced" ration.

MUST TASTE GOOD. (National Crop Improvement Service.) A dairy ration must, of all things, be palatable so that a cow will eat it. It must be bulky and coarse so as to avoid indigestion and sickness. It must contain a variety of foods so that the cow will not tire of it or get off her feed. It must contain enough real protein—all protein is not alike. It must contain the right amounts and kinds of mineral substances necessary to life, health and milk secretion. It must be highly digestible. Many feeds are only about fifty to sixty per cent digestible and the work of excreting so much waste matter is costly in that it uses up the energy of the food to do it.

SUCCESSFUL FEEDING. (National Crop Improvement Service.) It is most significant and probably the best argument for mixed feeds when it is considered that a large number of the most prominent and skilled men in America have discarded their own mixed feeds and rations because they have found a satisfactory brand of feed which will make as much milk at less cost and no trouble and, above all, keeps cows in perfect health.

Many agricultural schools and experimental stations use and have used for the same reason.

You can verify this by writing to any experiment station and they will give you the names of mixed brands which are best adapted to your purpose.

FIVE POUNDS OF MILK ON ONE POUND OF GRAIN. (National Crop Improvement Service.) C. H. Packard, of Delavan, Wisconsin, a progressive and practical dairyman, was not satisfied with his ration of home-grown feed. Although he mixed his ration with brains and it seemed to be theoretically correct, he thought he would try out his own mixture in comparison with a first class dairy feed. Much to his surprise he found that he could save about five lbs. of grain per cow per day and nearly 5 cents per cow. He figured his own grain at prices much below the wholesale market and bought his mixed feed at retail.

Also when his ration was figured according to Arnsby or Energy method his mixed feed proved to be the right combination to make a balanced ration with his own farm roughage.

EXPENSIVE PASTURE. (National Crop Improvement Service.) When you stop to consider that an acre of pasture will feed a cow, but that that same acre will raise ten tons of silage during the time the cow is feeding on it, it would seem that a grass cafeteria would be the most expensive way to feed your stock.

MORE FEED, MORE MILK. (National Crop Improvement Service.) Cows of a decided dairy type will return the greatest profit when fed to their full capacity.—Nebraska Experiment Station.

(National Crop Improvement Service.) Ordinarily, silage will correct the tendency to costiveness. When it is not sufficiently effective for this purpose, add enough old process oil meal to keep the droppings moderately soft, but not necessarily loose. Usually all that is needed is to increase the allowance of concentrates.

There are always two sides to every question. If the government insists on more bran in flour, bossy will have to turn to still more artificial bran.

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(National Crop Improvement Service.) It is a fair assumption that any farmer who talks against mixed feeds does not know what a mixed feed ought to be. There is no danger of any man buying a fraudulent feed. The state laws are very stringent on this point and if any man has any doubt as to the value of a feed, all he has to do is to write his State Experiment Station and get the truth.

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