

THE SEARCH

By Grace Livingston Hill-Lutz

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They ate a simple little breakfast, good coffee, toast and fried eggs. Ruth wondered why it tasted so good amid such primitive surroundings; yet everything was so clean and tidy, though coarse and plain. When they went to pay their bill the proprietor said their beds would be only 25 cents apiece because they had had no pillow. If they had had a pillow he would have had to charge them 50 cents. The food was fabulously cheap. They looked around and wondered how it could be done. It was obvious that no tips would be received, and that money was no consideration. In fact, the man told them his orders were merely to pay expenses. He gave them a parting word of good cheer, and promised to try and make them more comfortable if they wanted to return that night, and so they started out for camp. Ruth was silent and thoughtful. She was wishing she had had the boldness to ask this quaint Christian man some of the questions that troubled her. He looked as if he knew God, and she felt as if he might be able to make some things plain to her. But her life had been so hedged about by conventionalities that it seemed an impossible thing to her to open her lips on the subject to any living being—unless it might be to John Cameron. It was queer how they two had grown together in the last few months. Why could they not have known one another before?

Then there came a vision of what her aunt might have thought, and possible objections that might have come up if they had been intimate friends earlier. In fact, that, too, seemed practically to have been an impossibility. How had the war torn away the veil from foolish laws of social rank and station! Never again could she submit to much of the system that had been the foundation of her life so far. Somehow she must find a way to tear her spirit free from things that were not real. The thought of the social activities that would face her at home under the guise of patriotism turned her soul sick with loathing. When she went back home after her was gone she would find a way to do something real in the world that would make for righteousness and peace somehow. Knitting and dancing with lonesome soldiers did not satisfy her.

That was a wonderful day and they made the most of every hour, realizing that it would probably be the last day they had together for many a long month or year.

In the morning they stepped into the great auditorium and attended a Y. M. C. A. service for an hour, but their hearts were so full, and they all felt so keenly that this day was to be the real farewell, and they could not spare a moment of it, that presently they slipped away to the quiet of the woods once more, for it was hard to listen to the music and keep the tears back. Mrs. Cameron especially found it impossible to keep her composure.

Sunday afternoon she went into the Hostess' House to lie down in the rest room for a few minutes, and sent the two young people off for a walk by themselves.

Cameron took Ruth to the log in the woods and showed her his little Testament and the covenant he had signed. Then they opened their hearts together about the eternal things of life; shyly, at first, and then with the assurance that sympathy brings. Cameron told her that he was trying to find God, and Ruth told him about their experiences the night before. She also shyly promised that she would pray for him, although she had seldom until lately done very much real praying for herself.

It was a beautiful hour where-in they travelled miles in their friendship; an hour in which their souls came close while they sat on the log under the trees with long silences in the intervals of their talk.

It was whispered at the barracks that evening at five when Cameron went back for "Retreat" that this was the last night. They would move in the morning surely, perhaps before. He hurried back to the Hostess' House where he had left his guests to order the supper for all, feeling that he must make the

most of every minute. Passing the officers' headquarters he heard the raucous laugh of Wainwright, and caught a glimpse of his fat head and neck through a window. His heart sank! Wainwright was back! Then he had been sent for, and they must be going that night.

He fled to the Hostess' House and was silent and distraught as he ate his supper. Suppose Wainwright should come in while they were there and see Ruth and spoil those last few minutes together! The thought was unbearable.

Nobody wanted much supper and they wandered outside in the soft evening air. There was a hushed sorrow over everything. Even the roughest soldiers were not ashamed of tears. Little faded mothers clung to big burly sons, and their sons smoothed their gray hair awkwardly and were not ashamed. A pair of lovers sat at the foot of a tree hand in hand and no one looked at them, except in sympathy. There were partings everywhere. A few wives with little children in their arms were writing down hurried directions and receiving a bit of money, but most desolate of all was the row of lads lined up near the station whose friends were gone, or had not come at all, and who had to stand and endure the woe of others.

"Couldn't we walk out of camp?" asked Ruth suddenly. "Must we go on that awful trolley? Last night everybody was weeping. I wanted to weep, too. It is only a few steps from the end of camp to our quarters. Or is it too far for you, Mrs. Cameron?"

"Nothing is too far tonight so I may be with my boy one hour longer."

"Then we must start at once," said Cameron, "there is barely time to reach the outskirts before the hour when all visitors must be out of camp. It is over three miles, mother."

"I can walk it if Ruth can," said the mother smiling bravely. He drew an arm of each within his own and started off, glad to be out of Wainwright's neighborhood, gladder still to have a little longer with those he loved.

Out through the deserted streets they passed, where empty barracks were being prepared for the next draft men; past the tank headquarters and the colored barracks, the storehouses and more barracks just emptied that afternoon into troop trains; out beyond the great laundry and on up the cinder road to the top of the hill and the end of the way.

There at last, in sight of the military police pacing back and forth at the entrance to camp, with the twinkling lights of the village beyond, and the long wooded road winding back to camp, they paused to say good-bye. The cinder path and the woods at its edge made a blot of greenish black against a brilliant stormy sky. The sun was setting like a ball of fire behind the trees, and some strange freak of its rays formed a golden cross resting back against the clouds, its base buried among the woods, its cross bar rising brilliant against the black of a thunder cloud.

"Look!" said Ruth, "it is an omen!" They looked and a great wonder and awe came upon them. The Cross!

Cameron looked back and then down at her and smiled.

"It will lead you safely home," she said softly and laid her hand in his. He held her fingers close for an instant and his eyes dared some of the things his lips would never have spoken now even if they two had been alone.

The military police stepped up: "You don't have to stay out here to say good-bye. You can come into the station right here and sit down. Or if your friends are going to the village you may go with them, comrade. I can trust you to come back right away."

"I thank you!" Cameron said. "That is the kindest thing that has happened to me at this camp. I wish I could avail myself of it, but I have barely time to get back to the barracks within the hour given me. Perhaps—" and he glanced anxiously across the road toward the village. "Could you just keep an eye out that my ladies reach the Salvation

Army Hut all right?"

"Sure!" said the big soldier, "I'll go myself. I'm just going off duty and I'll see them safe to the door."

He stepped a little away and gave an order to his men, and so they said good-bye and watched Cameron go down the road into the sunset with the golden cross blazing above him as he walked lower and lower down the hill into the shadow of the dark woods and the thunder cloud. But brightly the cross shone above him as long as they could see, and just before he stepped into the darkness where the road turned he paused, waved his hat, and so passed on out of their sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

The first night on the water was one of unspeakable horror to Cameron. They had scarcely begun to feel the roll of the waves before Captain Wurtz manifested his true nature. At 6 o'clock and broad daylight, he ordered the men below, had them locked in, and all the port holes closed!

The place was packed, the heat was unbearable, the motion increasing all the time, and the air soon became intolerable. In vain the men protested, and begged for air. Their requests were all denied. The captain trusted no man. He treated them as if they were hounds. Wainwright stood by the captain's side, smoking the inevitable cigaret, his eyes narrowly watching Cameron, when the order was given; but no onlooker could have told from Cameron's well trained face whether he had heard or not. Well he knew where those orders had originated, and instantly he saw a series of like torments. Wainwright had things in his own hands for this voyage. Wurtz was his devoted slave. For Wainwright had money, and used it freely with his captain, and Wainwright well knew how to think up tortures. It was really the only thing in which he was clever. And here again was an instance of practice making perfect, for Wainwright had done little else since his kindergarten days than to think up trials for those who would not bow to his peevish will. He seemed to be gifted in finding out exactly what would be the finest kind of torture for any given soul who happened to be his victim. He had the mind of Nero and the spirit of a mean little beast. The wonder, the great miracle was, that he had not in some way discovered that Ruth had been visiting the camp, and taken his revenge before she left. This was the first thought that came to Cameron when he found himself shut into the murky atmosphere. The next thought was that perhaps he had discovered it and this was the result. He felt himself the Jonah for the company, and as the dreadful hours went by would fain have cast himself into the sea if there had been a possible way of escape.

It was not an American transport on which they were sailing, and the captain was not responsible for the food, but he might have refused to allow such meals to be served to his men if he had cared. He did not care, that was the whole trouble. He ate and drank, principally drank, and did whatever Wainwright suggested. When a protest came up to him he turned it down with a laugh, and said: "Oh, that's good enough for a buck private," and went on with his dirty jokes.

The supper that first night was abominable, some unpleasant kind of meat cooked with cabbage, and though they tried to eat it, many of them could not keep it down. The ship rolled and the men grew sick. The atmosphere became fetid. Each moment seemed more impossible than the last. There was no room to move, neither could one get out and away. After supper the men lay down in the only place there was to lie, two men on the tables, two men on the benches each side, two men on the floor between, and so on all over the cabin, packed like eggs in a box.

They sent a message to their captain begging for air, but he only laughed, and sent word back they would have air enough before they got through with this war.

The night wore on and Cameron lay on his scant piece of floor—he had given his bench to a sicker man than himself—and tried to sleep. But sleep did not visit his eyelids. He was thinking, thinking. "I'm going to find God! I'm going to search for Him with all my heart, and somehow I'm going to find Him before I'm done. I may never come home, but I'll find God,

anyhow! It's the only thing that makes life bearable!"

Then would come a wave of hate for his enemy and wipe out all other thoughts, and he would wrestle in his heart with the desire to kill Wainwright—yes, and the captain, too. As some poor wretch near him would writhe and groan in agony his rage would boil up anew, his fists would clench, and he would half rise to go to the door and overpower that guard! If only he could get up to where the officers were enjoying themselves! Oh, to bring them down here and bind them in this loathsome atmosphere, feed them with this food, stifle them in the dark with closed port holes! His brain was fertile with thoughts of revenge. Then suddenly across his memory would flash the words: "If with all your heart ye seek Him," and he would reach out in longing: Oh, if he could find God, surely God would stop a thing like this! Did God have no power in His own earth!

Slowly, painfully, the days dragged by, each worse than the last. In the mornings the men must go on deck whether they were sick or not, and must stay there all day, no matter what the weather. If they were wet they must dry out by the heat of their bodies. There was no possibility of getting at their kit bags, it was so crowded. No man was allowed to open one. All they had was the little they carried in their packs. How they lived through it was a wonder, but live they did. Perhaps the worst torture of all was the great round cork life preserver in the form of a cushioned ring which they were obliged to wear night and day. A man could never lie down comfortably with it on, and if from sheer exhaustion he fell asleep he awoke with his back aching tortures. The meat and cabbage was varied twice by steamed fish served in its scales, tails, fins, heads, and entrails complete. All that they got which was really eatable was a small bun served in the morning, and boiled potatoes occasionally.

Nevertheless, these hardships would have been as nothing to Cameron if they had not represented to him hate, pure and simple. He felt, and perhaps justly, that if Wainwright had not wished to make him suffer, these things would surely have been mitigated.

The day came at last when they stood on the deck and watched the strange foreign shore draw nearer. Cameron, stern and silent, stood apart from the rest. For the moment his anger toward Wainwright was forgotten, though he could hear the swaggering tones from the deck above, and the noisome laughter of Wurtz in response. Cameron was looking into the face of the future, wondering what it would mean for him. Out there was the strange country. What did it hold for him? Was God there? How he wanted God to go with him and help him face the future!

There was much delay in landing, and getting ready to move. The men were weak from sickness and long fasting. They tottered as they stood, but they had to stand—unless they dropped. They turned wan faces toward one another and tried to smile. Their fine American pep was gone, hopelessly, yet they grinned feebly now and then and got off a weak little joke or two. For the most part they glared when the officers came by—especially two—those two. The wrath toward them had been brewing long and deep as each man lay weltering through those unbearable nights. Hardship they could bear, and pain, and sickness—but tyranny never!

Someone had written a letter. It was not the first. There had been others on ship board protesting against their treatment. But this letter was a warning to that captain and lieutenant. If they ever led these men into battle they would be killed before the battle began. It was signed by the company. It had been a unanimous vote. Now as they stood staring leadenly at the strange sights about them, listening to the new jargon of the shore, noting the quaint head-dresses and wooden sabots of the people with a fine scorn of indifference, they thought of that letter in hard phrases of rage. And bitterest of all were the thoughts of John Cameron as he stood in his place awaiting orders.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

A Real Emergency.
From London Opinion.
The Wife (learning to drive)—Oh, take the wheel—quickly, darling—there's a lampost coming!

FORD TO CLOSE DOWN.

IT IS estimated that between 500,000 and 1,000,000 workmen will be out of jobs or on part time if Henry Ford closes his three big motor plants in Detroit and his assembling plants throughout the country. After September 16 Ford employs to the number of 105,000 will be idle, while industries supplying the Ford company with various parts and raw materials will have to slow down and turn off men.

That Mr. Ford is not bluffing seems indicated by his sending out sheafs of telegrams cancelling orders for raw and semi-finished materials. The action followed notification by the steel trust that the price of steel on \$1.40 bars would be increased at once to \$1.60 and that the price would go up to \$2 in the near future. Mr. Ford's reply was that he wanted no steel, and he explains his startling move in these words:

I am going to shut down because I will not pay graft to get coal, nor will I pay an excessive price for coal. I could get coal if I were willing to pay graft. Coal is offered to me every day at an excessive price. I had a chance to buy 60,000 tons yesterday at \$6.00 a ton. Four dollars and a half a ton is a good price for coal and that is all I will pay.

I will not be a party to profiteering. That is why I am going to shut down until coal and steel profiteering are over. Tolerate such conditions and they will continue indefinitely. There is no good reason why such conditions should exist at all. It is all a conspiracy to fleece the public. I believe both strikes—the railway and the coal strikes—are conspiracies between Wall street and the labor unions. I do not mean that union working men as a class are conspiring, but I do mean that their leaders are. I believe labor union leaders are working in close co-operation with the railways and mine owners.

I hated to do this, but it had to be done. I would have preferred to keep going. I like to see men employed and happy. But there is a price that I will not pay to keep going, and that is graft. I will not pay graft to get coal.

Mr. Ford has tried to surmount the difficulties. His plants are going at top speed, turning out 5,200 cars a day with orders for 5,300. He has tried to get coal from his own mines, but because a 200-mile gap between his railroad and the mines is bridged by a rail line he does not own, it is impossible for him to haul coal from the mines—"due to orders from New York," he says. He has experimented with oil burners, trying them out under furnaces in his machine shops. Evidently they were not satisfactory.

Of course, Mr. Ford could easily pass the increased costs of fuel and steel on to the public. His own profits would not be injured. However, he makes it a matter of principle not to be a party to the robbery of the public. That, by the way, is why so many "captains of industry" hate him and belittle him. He does not have to stoop to the sharp practices they indulge in, in order to be a success. He makes others look like "small potatoes," and it hurts their conceit.

Once before, Mr. Ford took this step. That was after the war when he likewise closed the doors of his plants and announced an indefinite suspension. Firms that dealt with him were hard hit by the cancellation of his orders, and prices dropped. Then Mr. Ford re-opened.

If this country had just a few men with the courage of Henry Ford the cliques of railway-mine-steel bankers would not be able to skin the hide off the public whenever they decide that the time is opportune to put on a "squeeze." If other large manufacturers would follow Mr. Ford's example, in less than a week the profiteers would surrender.

Social Supremacy.

From the Los Angeles Times.

The local society was to meet that afternoon. Mrs. Jenkins, short and very plump, dressed in a hurry and came panting downstairs.

"Jane, run up to my room and get my blue ribbon rosette, the society's badge," she directed her maid. "I have forgotten it. You will know it, Jane—blue ribbon and gold lettering."

"Yesum, I know it," said Jane. Jane could not read, but she knew a blue ribbon when she saw it, and therefore had no trouble in finding it, and fastened it on the dress of her mistress.

Mrs. Jenkins was too busy greeting her friends or giving close attention to the speakers at the meeting to note that when they shook hands with her they smiled strangely.

When she reached home she went directly to the dining room, where the other members of the family were at dinner.

"For heaven's sake, mother!" exclaimed her son. "That blue ribbon—have you been wearing that at the meeting?"

The gold lettering read: "Carville Poultry Show, First Prize, Bantam."

The public wants the lid taken off the secret agreement between Secretary Fall and Harry F. Sinclair for the exploitation of the national oil reserves at Teapot Dome. If it is true that the secretary has lost the nation \$24,000,000 by this action, congress should request the president to ask for Mr. Fall's resignation. Why, Mr. Harding named Fall as a member of his cabinet, and put him in charge of the public domain, is hard to understand.

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An Imitative Pet.

"Well, you have the house all to yourself while Mrs. Peckton is away."

"Not quite," said Mr. Peckton. "I share the premises with Mrs. Peckton's poodle, who was left in my care. I'm afraid the intelligent animal has modeled its behavior on that of its mistress."

"How so?"

"When I try to make myself comfortable with a cigar and a newspaper it eyes me with marked disfavor."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

An Interested Onlooker.

"Have you seen Zeke Dawdle lately?"

"No," said Squire Witherbee, "but Zeke's making his headquarters down where they're putting up a new store."

"Is Zeke working at last?"

"No, it ain't that serious. Zeke's kinder superintendent' th' job, along with several other gents whose wives run boardin' houses. If th' workmen were to lay a brick or raise a girder without Zeke seein' it done it would spoil his day."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

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