

A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

CHAPTER XXVIII

The first thing of which Martin was conscious on opening his eyes was a blinding light. This illumination was so intense that he was forced to blink.

He looked round in wonderment. His vision, he found, was somewhat restricted, owing to his being bound to a stout wooden chair. Yet what he was able to see caused an irrepressible wave of something akin to fear to pass through him.

"This room" was white-tiled from floor to ceiling, and was lit by huge naked bulbs of electricity, the light from which caused the tiles to gleam and glisten.

What was the meaning of all that apparatus? Racks of test-tubes, most of them half full; the glass bench at which someone evidently worked; microscope on stands, apparently of tremendous power; the Bunsen burners; the white painted box, on which was the word "incubator"; the numerous glass slides stained different colors—what were these things?

In a flash of intuition Creighton realized the truth. He was in a laboratory. In this place such a workshop could only be used, he felt, for an evil purpose. At the realization that he had been brought to this room in a helpless condition, he had to summon all his manhood to prevent an unnerving fear from possessing him.

Then, suddenly, all thought of himself vanished. The door of this strange room had opened, and shuffling towards him came a man whose repulsive features had been imprinted on his memory for weeks past.

Zoab the dwarf stopped only a foot away from the prisoner.

"So—o!" he said, "you would meddle a second time!" The speaker motioned with a beautifully moulded hand towards the apparatus behind him. "There will be no third time," he added; "you came of your own free will . . . but, having come, you will serve your purpose."

There was no malice in the tone. Creighton was surprised to hear Zoab speak in a well-controlled, natural voice. Yet, notwithstanding, there was a sinister purpose hidden behind the words. Of that he felt sure.

The next moment all thought of self had again left him. The appearance of the dwarf brought to his mind the memory of one who was as beautiful as this man was hideous.

"You swine, where is Miss Steers? That is why I came here, and I am determined to know."

Swept by a tempest of rage, straining at his bonds until he was scarcely sane, Creighton was yet able to notice the amazing change in the dwarf. It was as though the man had received a galvanic shock. Repulsive before, his face now became bestial. The eyes glowed with a mad light, and froth showed on the thick animal lips.

"What is Miss Steers to you?" Zoab snarled.

It was as though Creighton had become lightheaded. Still twisting in the ropes that held him so securely, he looked straight into that unpleasant visage, and said:

"I don't mind telling you, you dog; Miss Steers is going to be my wife."

The declaration was greeted by a quick hissing intake of breath. Zoab staggered. A grey pallor spread over his face, the color ebbed from his

lips and the lids closed over his eyes, whilst a shudder caused his short misshapen body to quiver. He mastered himself after a while.

"It is important that I should know," he said to Creighton; "were you speaking the truth just now?" His tone was painfully eager.

"Of course."

Zoab made a gesture with the hands, whose shapeliness was so incongruous with the rest of his body.

"Then it is all the more necessary that you should die," he said. The tone was once again calm and matter of fact. "You may derive what consolation is possible from the knowledge that you will be lending me assistance in the greatest discovery of the last hundred years," went on the speaker. "Perhaps you are wondering at the equipment in this room? I am a bacteriologist, and this is where I conduct my research work. For some time now I have been concentrating on a new disease—something unique, which will defy the rest of the medical world. So far I have only been able to experiment on rats, it is necessary for the perfection of my discovery to inoculate a human being. You will do admirably; you are strong and young. It will be most interesting to watch the fight you put up against my new germ. Fate," continued the speaker, before Creighton could make any exclamation, "has evidently destined you to play this important part. That night in Juhl's house, when I came to your room, I remarked what a promising subject for bacteriological investigation you would make."

"You can't frighten me, you swine!" declared Creighton. The truth was, however, he was very frightened; he was sick with terror, not so much through actual fear for himself, but because he had solved the secret of this man.

The dwarf was in love with Margery Steers himself!

"I'll have you removed now," he heard Zoab say; "it is necessary for me to make certain preparations."

He pressed a bell in the wall, and two men quickly appeared. The dwarf said something to them in a low tone, and Creighton was picked up, chair and all, and carried from the laboratory.

"You, who are so beautiful—have you never loved?"

Margery Steers wondered at the tone in Zoab's voice. He had come to her a few minutes before in a state of great agitation. She had never seen him like this, and at first a wild hope surged up in her heart: Was help from the outside world near at hand? Were Zoab and the men who employed him beginning to be afraid? And were they, in consequence, thinking of abandoning their dreadful plans?

Quickly this hope died. It was something connected with herself that had caused the dwarf so much uneasiness. This she realized before he had put to her that puzzling question.

"I have always been too busy in my life to think of love," she replied. Forced to evade this difficult query, her mind as she said the words brought back a memory of a certain man who hourly she prayed might come to her rescue. It seemed a vain and preposterous wish, but she had not entirely given up all hope.

Zoab came nearer, making her that queer obeisance with

which she was now so familiar.

A great deal of the former agitation had left him. Probably he was aware that she had merely parried his direct question, but, nevertheless, he seemed confident.

"It will not be much longer now, queen of my heart," he said, "before we fly away in that giant aeroplane waiting in the courtyard. Then you, who, on your own confession, have not known love before, shall learn to understand a man's devotion." He broke off suddenly to ask another question. "That young man who was with you in Juhl's house—did he never say he loved you?"

Margery paled. The deep-sunk eyes of the dwarf were blazing. He was looking at her with such intensity that she knew there must be some deep purpose behind his remark.

"Why do you ask that?" she demanded. Then the control which she had exercised so long snapped. Could it be that her prayer had been answered? Had Martin Creighton traced her? Was he in the castle?

"Is he here?" She stepped forward and caught the dwarf's arm. "Tell me! Tell me!" she went on imploringly.

Zoab released her hand with a gentle movement of his own.

"This young man Creighton has just told me that you have promised to be his wife," he said. "Whether you love him or not, princess, you must resign yourself to his death. He is as necessary to me in one respect as you are necessary to me in another."

He turned quickly, evaded the rush which she made at him, and before Margery's numbed brain could fully take in the significance of his words, he had closed the door behind him. She heard the grating of the key in the lock, and then everything swam before her eyes.

CHAPTER XXIX

Juhl, looking through the window, saw a closed car draw up to the front door. A tall man, whose face was obscured by turned-up overcoat and heavy slouch hat, stepped on to the pavement. The watcher awaited his visitor in some trepidation.

If he had thought that The King would be less secretive than usual, he was mistaken, for when the servant opened the door it was to usher in a man whose features were entirely hidden by a black silk mask.

The caller was in his customary mood of peremptory command.

"I have little time to spare," he said, "so please give me your closest attention."

Juhl inclined his head submissively. He was only too eager to regain the unknown's goodwill, for without this, shrewd and capable as he was, he realized he was powerless.

"Anything you have to say shall receive my closest attention," he promised.

There were glasses and whisky-and-soda on a tray near at hand, but the caller waived the proffered refreshment aside.

"I do not drink," he said curtly. "Now listen, please."

Oscar Juhl put down the cigar he had been about to light.

"I have found Zoab," started The King. "He is staying at present at Wildwood Castle, on the Kentish coast, not far from Hythe. He is working under the orders of Schriener, the Jew millionaire financier. Schriener is hoping to corner the money market through the dwarf's new disease, but we shall step in before that happens."

"We must get Zoab back. For one thing, he must be punished for his treachery, and for another, he is very valuable. My information is that Schriener has twenty men guarding him at Wildwood Castle; I am placing thirty

under your orders. You are to take these men to Wildwood to-morrow night and effect an entry into the castle. This should not be difficult, because one of my own men is being employed by Schriener, naturally, the Jew does not know this. This man will meet you at midnight at the main entrance of the castle and place himself under your instructions."

"What shall we do with the men?" inquired Juhl.

"Leave them in the dungeons. If Schriener is there, bring him away—we may induce him to pay handsomely to keep this new venture of his quiet—but what you must not fail to do is to bring Zoab. There is also the girl Steers at Wildwood. The dwarf took her to console him in his exile."

During the ensuing quarter of an hour, Juhl asked what questions seemed necessary. He received short, but satisfactory, replies.

Bunny Chipstead was used to desperate situations. When, standing in that dismantled cellar of The Mount, he was commanded to throw up his hands, he started to do so unhesitatingly. But when his right arm was half raised he switched off his electric torch and swerved to one side.

His assailant was using no light himself, and owing to Bunny's maneuver the cellar now became enveloped in stygian darkness.

A shot rang out, filling the place with reverberating noise; but before the man could fire again, Chipstead, gauging the distance with a sort of extra sense, dived at the other's legs, got a firm grip, and sent him crashing to the stone floor.

The man fought with the desperation of a wild beast, but with the tables so unexpectedly turned, he was always waging a losing battle. Among the Secret Service free-lance's accomplishments in a rough-and-ready melee of this description was a knowledge of ju-jitsu. A pressure of a finger and a thumb on a certain portion of the neck . . .

Five minutes after Chipstead had been so rudely disturbed his interrupter was a helpless prisoner. His hands and feet were tied. Bunny's white evening scarf served admirably to fetter the man's ankles, whilst an ordinary silk handkerchief was sufficient to bind his wrists.

"Didn't The King tell you I was already here, you fool?" Chipstead decided on strategy.

He was partly successful, for at the mention of the master he served with such fear the other trembled.

"He said nothing of the sort. Who are you?" he stammered.

"My name's Clay Sherman," quickly replied Chipstead. "I came over from New York ten days ago to join up with The King. I'm in on this business—that's why I'm here to-night."

The other stared.

"The King said nothing to me about you," he replied, suspicion reasserting itself in his face; "my strict instructions were to lay a fuse outside this cellar and blow the whole place up. My God!" he went on, "if you're trying to double-cross The King!" The man shivered.

Chipstead had learned what he wanted. Evidently The King wished this place to be destroyed. Perhaps, after all, there was some incriminating evidence concealed in The Mount. Or, perhaps again, this man was lying.

This last question was answered in a startling fashion.

"The fuse! Oh, my God! The fuse. I'd forgotten it. Let me go!"

Bunny stiffened to attention.

"What do you mean—the fuse?" he asked.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

World Must Face the Cold Facts

By M. E. Tracy in New York World-Telegram.

Fear still grips the civilized world. It is reflected in the reluctance to curtail armaments, the general cry for relief at other people's expense, the wild scramble for safety behind tariff walls.

That explains why measures for recovery have failed. We have sobbed over our responsibilities. Instead of facing them like men we have tried to make ourselves believe that the depression wasn't real and that it could be met with hoopla.

There has been a reign of smugness since 1929, an effort to disguise or deny the realities.

The noisy ballyhoo for relief has served as a smoke screen for the ruthless grind of circumstances by which great institutions and even great governments have found themselves forced to impoverish countless multitudes.

In the last analysis, we have been striving to save systems and enterprises rather than human beings. It was enough if we could keep the latter from starving to death.

Few have had the hardihood to admit that some of the systems and enterprises might be obsolescent and dying a natural death.

Few have admitted that some of our fondest dreams and deepest convictions might be wrong.

As a general proposition it has been taken for granted that the existing order must be preserved. We have clung desperately to the gold standard, but without giving much thought to the obvious desirability of creating a common currency for all nations.

We have seen the various monetary values go up and down, and have lost billions because of it, without asking why, much less trying to correct the evil.

We have advocated disarmament and then authorized trade barriers to make it impossible.

We are never going to create a happy, secure world by throwing a man out of his home or putting him out of work and then handing him a meal ticket.

No more are we going to do it by agreeing to build fewer battleships and then raiding each other's gold reserve.

There is a moral side to all the problems we face and it demands more than specific gestures of good will. You can't have genuine co-operation unless you are willing to go down the line, or make people believe you honestly have their interest at heart unless you are ready to meet them half way in all difficulties.

Henry Ford has said that ten or a dozen rules would solve most of our problems if generally obeyed. Moses not only said the same thing but furnished a few of the rules.

We are pleased to be technical rather than straight, which counts for nine-tenths of our trouble.

We have medical ethics, legal ethics, diplomatic ethics, and so on, when there is only one genuine article. We have an elaborate ritual for convicting men of perjury, when lying is just lying. In other words, we have a code—whether as applied to governments or hoboes—so full of holes that people can live up to it without being square.

YOUR CHILDREN

By Olive Roberts Barton

©1932 BY NEA SERVICE, INC.

A couple of months ago I read an article by J. B. S. Haldane, the British biologist, called "In Defense of Luxury," in which he undertook to prove that all cell life including the human body, thrives and perfects itself under favorable surroundings. And he did prove it to a certain extent. There is much to be said for "luxury" in the large sense, that is to say, luxury meaning necessities and comforts.

Of course he did not go into the other side of it—the effects of luxury on the character and disposition. But had I been writing the article I should probably have added that comfort and freedom from worry are essential to the development of the soul and mind as well as the body. I am not one who holds to the old worn-out theory that mortification of the body brings out the best in us. Nothing makes me more weary than that trite old chestnut that trouble is always good for character.

But— I have been reminiscing over old days—looking back on this and that boy I knew at school or who lived near us, tracing as best I could the lives of those who have been successful. Many of these men have had time to prove what they were made of.

Poverty to Riches What do I see? That little boy who at forty was a millionaire, and still a young man became ambassador and senator; he came to school with his shoes patched and studied by a lamp in a little house that not only had no pretense to luxury, but at times could barely afford necessities.

Another chap with curly hair and shabby clothes who lived in a little back street is a judge. And he will go further, for his career is really just begun.

Still another boy who had to walk miles to school, whose mother was a widow—the too was shabby. Now he heads one of the biggest corporations in the country. One of his friends, also a son of a widowed mother, has become a theologian and author. This year both names were put into "Who's Who in America." All those others are in. And if there were room, I could name at least a dozen boys

Mother Explains

Boardman-Vidor Divorce

Woodbury, N. J. —(UP)—The wreck of the marriage of Eleanor Boardman, film actress, and King Vidor, movie director, is not all Miss Boardman's fault. This was the explanation given by the actress' mother, Mrs. George W. Boardman, who lives here.

"I know that Eleanor and her husband were happy," she said, "until two years ago when the first marital trouble appeared.

and girls I knew then who are in that book. Mostly children in very "modest" circumstances. And there are still many others quite as important not in "Who's Who" for after all that is not the only criterion of importance.

Luxury? I think not one of them knew luxury in its real sense, and many knew want.

Too Much Comfort? True, a few of the rich or well-to-do children achieved success but the palm goes to the poor.

You cannot contradict life. It opens its book and says to us, "Look! Poverty makes effort and succeeds, where too much luxury and comfort dry up ambition." Facts would prove me wrong to a certain extent were I to argue too strongly in defense of luxury.

Have our children had too much during those old boom times? Are these reverses today a good thing in one way for our growing-up citizens? There are two ways of looking at it, but I am inclined to think that many of our important men and women of the future may be drawn from the ranks of those children whose parents wonder today what they are going to eat tomorrow, and where the next pair of shoes will come from.

ANENT "LIVING PHILOSOPHERS"

The credos of those favored few Who've cut a swath in life. Have lots of meat for common folks— The world and eke his wife.

Here Einstein, Mencken, Nathau, Inge,

Haldane and Jeans and Krutch, Disclose their inmost hearts to us, Who don't amount to much.

Now one mid curves and quantum's moves,

And one with caustic wit, Takes life and tears it limb from limb, To make a mock of it.

Another values pleasure most

And lives but for today, And one still keeps his faith in God And points the upward way.

So if your credo's fluid still,

Just set it on to cook; No doubt it will be crystallized. By reading of this book.

—Sam Page.

Ring Nearly Costs

Owner a Finger

Porterville, Cal. —(UP)—A. T. Henderson's big signet ring, of which he was very proud, nearly cost him a finger here recently.

The ring caught in the door of his truck; he slipped; the ring held him suspended until it scraped all the skin from the finger and broke the bone.

However, the fact that King Vidor's first wife left him proves that the present situation is not altogether Eleanor's fault.

AFRICA DEVELOPS

Cape Town — The Beit Trust has set aside some \$200,000 for development of aviation in Africa. About \$50,000 of this amount is earmarked for work in Rhodesia along the Sairo-Cape Town section of the Imperial Airways. Four new emergency landing fields are to be erected along the more remote sections of the route.

Parrot Fever Traced To Carnival Company

Red Wing, Minn. —(UP)—A recent epidemic of parrot fever or psittacosis in Minnesota today had been traced to birds distributed at a concession stand of a carnival company.

The state board made an investigation of outbreaks of the disease in three towns and found the sickness directly traceable to the carnival company. There were nine cases of the fever in

love birds and canaries distributed in three Minnesota towns.

Parrot fever is classed as a highly infectious disease of parrots and love birds.

THE TABLES TURNED

Kalamazoo, Mich. — Most people get into trouble because they go hunting without a license, but it was quite different in the case of J. C. Moerman. Moerman was fined \$10 and costs for trying to take out a license before he had taken out his first naturalization papers. He was put on probation for one year by Justice Peter Koertis, and or-

dered to take immediate steps to apply for first naturalization papers.

Rockies Still Young,

Geologist Reveals

Butte, Mont. —(UP)—The Rocky Mountains are mere youngsters in age when compared to other portions of the earth's surface, a geological survey of northwestern Montana by Dr. C. H. Clapp, President of the University of Montana, has revealed. The Rockies were formed dur-

ing the late Mesozoic Age, when life had advanced to the reptilian stage, and giant dinosaurs were beginning to hold fantastic sway over the region, Dr. Clapp said.

Q. What per cent of the people in the United States in Washington's time were of English descent? H. G.

A. Hart's Formation of the Union says that in 1789 of the 3,170,000 white inhabitants of the United States probably the ancestors of eight-tenths were English. There also were about 750,000 Negroes.