

UNDER PRESSURE

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By George Agnew Chamberlain

WNU Service

CHAPTER XV—Continued

“Yank off bridle and saddle and turn him loose.” Suddenly Joyce began to sob. “What are you crying about? There’s simply nothing else to do.”

“Oh, it’s not that!” cried Joyce, still weeping as she unbuckled throat latch and girth. “It’s Tornado. I’m—I’m crying about Tornado.”

“Don’t,” said Dirk, “please don’t, or you’ll have me so I can’t do a damn thing. Don’t you suppose—Hell!” Then he continued quietly, “Joyce, hold on a bit; we may both have to ride Rayo. The battery’s run down.”

“Oh!” she gasped, grief forgotten in the face of fresh disaster. Suddenly Dirk started tearing out the front cushion. “Here it is, thank God—the crank. Get in, Joyce. Take the throttle and work the choke. Hurry!”

He leaped out and in a moment was cranking with all his might. No use. Not a spark. Then he began using reason and judgment, giving Joyce time enough to do the same. They teased the motor—teased it into a first gasp of life. Then more teasing. Then a roar, so sudden, so mighty that it seemed the old car would shake itself to pieces before Joyce could shut off the throttle. The backfiring was deafening, more like a machine gun than a motor.

“Oh, Dirk!” she screamed though he was already at her side, “I can’t make it stop!”

“Who’s a fool now?” he yelled at the top of his voice. “Take your foot off the accelerator and push yourself over.”

Then he was at the wheel, backing, turning cautiously for fear of the spikes of niggerheads, but finally straightening out on the Toluca trail, shifting into second and at last into high. Joyce turned, kneeled on the seat and looked back. The riders were closer now, quite close; some of them were already dismounting, their carbines unslung, and running to kneel on the farther edge of the barranca.

“Never mind the bumps, Dirk,” she called over her shoulder, “give her gas and take everything that comes. The shooting is about to start.”

“How far off are they?” asked Dirk.

Then and there Joyce was stumped, for is there a woman alive who knows by sight the difference between a hundred yards and a half a mile? “I don’t know,” she said; “I haven’t the least idea.”

“Of course you have!” he shouted impatiently. “How far? Is it ten yards or a mile?”

“I don’t know,” said Joyce. “I’m not being stubborn; I just don’t know.” Then she cried, “Never mind—here it comes!”

The first bullet struck in line but well behind the car; it ricocheted and passed over them with a screaming whine. That was enough for Dirk, he opened the throttle wide and sent the flivver careening across the prairie, making note of the direction he would have to take to bring it back to the abandoned trail. More bullets followed but none so threatening as the first and presently there was silence. Joyce sat down and sank back, sighing her relief.

“I guess we’re safe, Dirk. Hadn’t we better nurse the tires a bit? They must be pretty soft.”

“You’re right,” said Dirk, slowing down. “How long has this soap box been parked in that gully?”

“Let me see,” said Joyce calculatingly. “Is it a year? No, it can’t be. I’ll give you a chance to figure it out for yourself, Dirk. How many days have you been at La Barranca?”

“Nine,” said Dirk promptly. “Then add three to that,” said Joyce. “It doesn’t seem possible. Twelve days, less than two weeks! I was away twelve years; I’ve been back twelve days. Somehow it doesn’t make sense.”

CHAPTER XVI

At the first crossroads they were lucky enough to get gas and the poor old flivver, faithful to the last, limped into Toluca a little before noon. Abandoning it in a side street to avoid unnecessary complications, they walked to the San Carlos and before long were feasting on crystal trout fresh from the Lerma and certain equally famed accessories. More than once they raised their eyes to look at each other across the table, then dropped them because their hearts were too full of content for words.

But the moment the meal was over Dirk said without warning, “Joyce, will you marry me? I’ve got to know.”

“Yes, Dirk. When?”

“This afternoon. As soon as we get to the city.”

“Oh? Why wait till then?” asked Joyce.

But Dirk was in no playing mood. “Because there’s no American con-

sul in Toluca,” he answered gravely.

“Does there have to be a consul?” “Either that or some authorized officer from the embassy. Any preacher in good standing can do the trick, but the presence of an American official as witness is what makes it legal at home.”

“I see,” said Joyce slowly; then she raised her eyes to his face. “Dirk, I’m yours. I’ll do whatever you want me to.”

He reached out to lay his hand on hers. “I love you, Joyce.”

“And I love you, Dirk. Is that why we must hurry so? You’d think it would make us willing to wait.” He frowned. “You haven’t told me your reason for rushing to Mexico City, but I think I guessed it.”

“To attend to General Onelia,” said Joyce, also frowning.

“I thought so,” said Dirk, “and that’s why we’re going to marry today. When you take on Onelia or the ambassador or any other small



“A Person of Your Particular Looks, Size and Adorable Build.”

ry I want a right nobody can dispute to be in the ring—to sit in your corner.”

She smiled. “Again I love you, Dirk.”

Going out in search of the finest car available, he walked on air. He was glad to be alive, glad to be relieved of the strain of driving and to sit in the back with his arm around Joyce, both of them wrapped in the same rug. Arrived in the city they drove straight to his little house and from her first glimpse of its exterior to the last long look within Joyce was conscious of pleased wonder and a steadily increasing sense of well-being. Here was a nurtured loveliness, un-purchasable in bulk, individual to the core yet with arms held wide to all devotees of good taste. She was happy in this house. Even Pablo, masking amazement, all but choking on suppressed joy at the return of his missing master, seemed of its warp and woof.

“What about a hot bath to start with?” asked Dirk.

“Splendid,” she answered quickly, then her lips drooped. “I haven’t anything to put on.”

“Don’t worry,” said Dirk. “Search the world and you couldn’t find a costume more becoming than what you’re wearing to a person of your particular looks, size and adorable build.”

“Silly-head!”

“I can furnish you a soft shirt for a blouse and by the time you’re ready for them the jodhpurs will have been brushed and pressed as sweet as a flower.” He turned to Pablo. “Pablo, this is the senorita Joyce Sewell, from whom you may take orders as coming from myself, only more so. Give her into the charge of Paulina. As for the rest, I leave it to her since she talks Spanish better than either of you.”

Dirk had not dismissed the hired car and without bothering to inform Joyce or even waiting to wash his hands he started for the embassy proper, passing the chancellery by. The great iron gate was opened by a strange porter but the man on the door was an old friend.

“Good afternoon, Antonio.”

“Buenas tardes, Don Deerke,” cried Antonio, excitedly, “buenas tardes, buenas tardes!”

“Is the ambassador at home and awake?”

“Si, senor; como no?”

“Tell him a Mr. Van Suttart would like to see him. Be sure you give the message just as I say it.”

As they entered the vast living room the ambassador himself emerged with a rush from his study, stopped and stared. “Well!” he gasped, “I’ll say you came on the run!” His eyes moved up and down. “Haven’t you changed those clothes since you left?”

Dirk glanced downward ruefully,

then looked up and grinned. “I admit it’s pretty bad, sir, especially since I come as a private citizen.”

“What do you mean? I haven’t fired you yet.”

“I was merely anticipating,” said Dirk, looking around.

“What are you hunting for?”

“Two things. A chair with a washable cover and a drink.”

“Forgive me, my boy. Sit anywhere you like; there’s nobody to kick about it since I’m a grass-widower from a week ago till the Christmas holidays. I’ll ring for your usual. Come on, now; what’s on your mind?”

“I’m here for assistance, sir. I want you to help me marry Miss Joyce Sewell of La Barranca this afternoon.”

The ambassador collapsed into the nearest chair and groaned. Then they talked—talked as only two men who possess an identical background can talk. The rapid fire of questions and answers covered not only Dirk’s absence but swept from such broad considerations as his ancestry for three generations back, down to the trifling matter of his present private income in dollars and cents with salary omitted. Yet there was no confusion. When they got through there was nothing either of them didn’t know about the inner and outer workings of Dirk Van Suttart.

“Let’s see where we stand,” said the ambassador, summing up. “You want to marry Miss Sewell. Well, she’s certainly of age as far as that operation is concerned, so stopping you by getting her stepmother to stop her is definitely out. Then you state you can’t wait even to telephone your people because of the urgency of securing Onelia’s aid, because what they say wouldn’t make any difference anyway, and finally because they’re probably in Europe.” He scowled. “The first of those three reasons is what’s bothering me—trouble heading straight this way.”

“You needn’t worry on that score,” said Dirk. “As a matter of fact, sir, Miss Sewell emphatically doesn’t want the aid of this establishment. She says she can get along a whole lot better without it. Her idea is that ever since embassies have been run for trade and to hell with the trader they’ve become mere stumbling-blocks to the pioneer—also a constant pain, an eyesore.”

“Eh?” exclaimed the ambassador, astonished; then he asked with genuine solicitude, “Are you sure she’s quite all there?”

“Quite,” said Dirk confidently. “The truth is, sir, I’m inclined to agree with her. Give her a chance and she’ll make a monkey of Onelia—which is more than we have ever been able to do.”

“Dirk—I’m calling you Dirk because I want you to think of me as sitting here in place of your father—in less than two weeks this girl has managed to do extraordinary things to your mind, so much so that I beg you not to trust it until you’ve taken advice from someone capable of judging her with impartial eyes.”

“I agree to that,” said Dirk promptly. “What about yours? Do you think they would be impartial?”

The ambassador frowned, then smiled. “All I can say is I’d try my best to make them so. When can you bring the paragon around?”

“Don’t think me impertinent, but there isn’t time for that. Besides, since she has nothing but riding clothes she might find it embarrassing.”

“I take it you’re inviting me to your house,” stated the ambassador.

“Yes, sir,” said Dirk, “and I’d be a lot more humble about it if you hadn’t waived your ambassadorship to act as my father.”

“That’s a bull’s-eye,” conceded

the ambassador. “Let’s go—the quicker the better.”

“Do you mind if I have a wash, sir?” begged Dirk. “I mightn’t have time later on.”

“Help yourself; you certainly need it and you know the way.”

Dirk washed all he could reach without undressing, then paused long enough to do some important telephoning; consequently several minutes elapsed before he found himself in the ambassadorial car and only then did he feel a first twinge of trepidation. Almost an hour had passed since he had abandoned his prospective bride without warning. How would she react to such cavalier treatment? How to the surprise he was about to spring on her? Absurd as it might appear, what Joyce thought about anything seemed to him a lot more important than what the ambassador was going to think about Joyce.

Even so he was in for a shock, for the moment Pablo opened the closed door of the living room and stood back that his master and his master’s chief might pass they crashed in upon an astonishing scene. Before them, back to the door and with hands thrust in her breeches pockets, stood Joyce in an unmistakable posture of battle. Beyond, a veritable lioness of a hatless woman not only in appearance but by virtue of her roar, paced the room from side to side. Words were tumbling out of her in an unceasing and reverberating rumble, yet Joyce’s voice, accurately pitched, could cut across it quite clearly without apparent forcing.

“It’s no use, Margarida,” she was saying. “You can yell all you like but you’re here and you’re going to stay. Try to get out and I’ll ride you down the block. That’s why I’ve kept on these clothes.”

“Joyce, please!” cried Dirk in an agonized voice; then he collected himself and faced the older woman. “Licenciada Margarida Fonseca, may I present his excellency the ambassador of the United States?” He laid his hand on Joyce’s shoulder as she turned. “Chief,” he half gulped, “this is Joyce—Joyce Sewell.”

The ambassador found himself looking into as straight and blue a pair of eyes as he had ever seen—eyes of a blue that at the moment was almost black. He took a hand cool to the touch, slender, yet amazingly firm, and the next instant a current of courage and the will to fight swept up the length of his arm straight to his heart.

“My dear,” he heard himself saying after quite a pause, “don’t you think we might all sit down?”

“Of course,” said Joyce; then hesitated, looking doubtfully toward Margarida.

At that moment Pablo appeared at the door, stood back and announced loudly: “General Sebastiano Sanchez y Robles, ex-minister of war.”

“General!” cried the ambassador, advancing with outstretched hand. “What brings you here, of all places and people?”

“I don’t know,” said the general, glancing around in a bewildered manner. “I really don’t, Excellency. I came in answer to a mysterious message from the young lady who caused us so much trouble, brought about my downfall and thus established my reputation for all time as a prophet. Is she here?”

Joyce stepped forward. “Presente, mi General.” She smiled, but almost immediately turned sober. “If I did you an injury, I’m more than willing and ready to make amends. General, I’m going to tell you a story. Frequently I shall have occasion to call upon Licenciada Margarida Fonseca for confirmation. Whenever she denies a point you may take it she means the contrary. Let her face be my star witness; I defy her lips.”

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Red, Blue and Green Lights Seen as an Aid in Growing Greenhouse Plants

In the plant world, red means go ahead, green lights mean stop. Experiments conducted at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., by W. H. Hoover, a scientist in the department of radiation, show that plants respond to colored lights by speeding up or slowing down their growth to zero.

The reason that plants exposed to green light cease to grow or slow down progress, is that they simply reflect the green through the coloring matter in their leaves, called chlorophyll. Thus, they fail to absorb the light, just as if they were growing in dense shade.

The reds, on the other hand, noticeably stimulated the process of development. Able to absorb the light, plants exposed to red and red-blue rays proved able to assimilate larger quantities of the carbon dioxide essential to their development and so speeded up to a corresponding rate of growth.

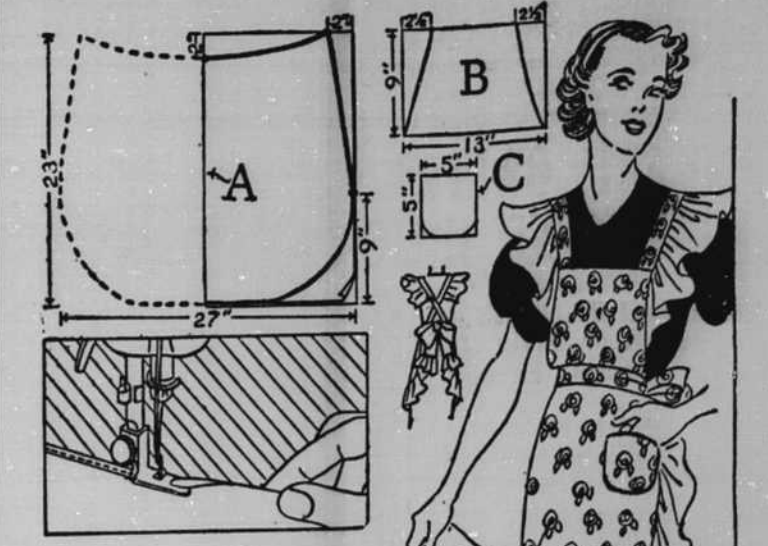
The process went on rapidly under exposure to rays so intense that they are invisible to the human eye. Plants can evidently distinguish ultra-violet light and reds far beyond the range of visibility for the human race.

While the sensitiveness of plants to rays of colored lights is a fact of general interest to gardeners, it will have an economic value, Hoover believes, in bringing specimens into bloom earlier or later than under ordinary conditions. Growers will be able, by flooding their greenhouses with green light, to hold back their plants or, by the use of deep red and blue rays, to force them into bloom far ahead of their season.

Papyrus Made From Plant
Papyrus paper was used extensively in Greco-Roman times and was made of the papyrus plant, which grew in profusion along the Nile.

HOW to SEW

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



THIS pink and white chintz apron with pink gingham frills should inspire anyone to make long strides towards the kitchen. It is easy to cut. The material required is 1½ yards of 36-inch-wide chintz or cotton print and one yard of plain material.

For the skirt of the apron, cut a piece of paper or cloth 27 inches wide and 23 inches deep. Fold this lengthwise through the center, as at A, then measure down from the top of the fold and in from the corners the distances indicated in the diagram and mark the dots. Using the outline of the apron skirt as you see it in the diagram. The dimensions for shaping the bib are given in the diagram at B. The pocket is a 5-inch square with lower corners rounded as shown here at C. The apron ties are cut 6 inches wide and 36 inches long. The strip for the belt should be cut 2½ inches wide and a facing strip the same width should be cut for it. The shoulder straps are cut 4 inches wide and then creased lengthwise through the center.

The strips of the plain material

for the ruffles are cut 6 inches wide. The ruffle material before it is gathered should be 2½ times the length of the space it is to fill after gathering. Use the machine hemmer foot shown here at the lower left for hemming the ruffles and the machine ruffler for gathering them.

NOTE: Mrs. Spears’ latest book—Gifts and Embroidery number—is now ready. Ninety embroidery stitches are illustrated; also table settings; crochet; embroidery designing; fabric repairing; novelty gifts and dress accessories. Forty-eight pages of step-by-step directions. Available to readers who will send name and address and enclose 25 cents (coin preferred). Just address Mrs. Spears, 210 So. Desplaines St., Chicago.

TIPS to Gardeners

Protecting Flowers

AN EARLY season flower pest is leaf beetle, a chewing insect whose presence is indicated by holes in the leaves. Found most often on allyssum, zinnia, marigold and annual phlox. Remedy: Use stomach poisons in the form of sprays containing arsenicals or pyrethrum.

Snappedragon, aster, petunia and verbena are the principal victims of the cutworm, a chewing insect which cuts off plants at the ground. It should be combated, says Gilbert Bentley, flower expert of the Ferry Seed Institute, by placing about a spoonful of poison bran bait around the base of each plant.

Aphids bother almost all the popular flowers except zinnia. They cause wilting, crumpling and discoloration of the leaves. Spray or dust with pyrethrum or nicotine sulphate.

Downy mildew shows up white all over a plant and discolors to black, killing leaves and rotting stems. Remedy: Dust regularly, but lightly, with flowers of sulphur.

Art of Meditation

The art of meditation may be exercised at all hours, and in all places; and men of genius, in their walks, at table, and amidst assemblies, turning the eye of the mind inward, can form an artificial solitude; retired amidst a crowd, calm amidst distraction and wise amidst folly.—Isaac D’Israeli.

MEN LOVE GIRLS WITH PEP

If you are peppy and full of fun, men will invite you to dances and parties. BUT, if you are cross, lifeless and tired, men won’t be interested. Men don’t like “quiet” girls. For three generations one woman has told another how to go “smiling through” with Lydia E. Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound. It helps Nature tone up the system, thus lessening the discomforts from the functional disorders which women must endure. Make a note NOW to get a bottle of world-famous Pinkham’s Compound today WITH-OUT FAIL. From your druggist—more than a million women have written in letters reporting benefit. Why not try LYDIA E. PINKHAM’S VEGETABLE COMPOUND?

Add Not Another Fault

If you see a fault in others, think of two of your own, and do not add a third one by your hasty judgment.—Flammer.

MOROLINE FOR BURNS

SHOW WHITE PETROLEUM JELLY IN LARGE JARS 5¢ AND 10¢

CATCH COLD EASILY?

VICKS VA-TRO-NOL

helps prevent many colds

COLDS HANG ON AND ON?

VICKS VAPORUB

helps end a cold quicker

FOLLOW VICKS PLAN FOR BETTER CONTROL OF COLDS

Full details of the Plan in each Vicks Package

Becoming Honest

What is becoming is honest, and whatever is honest must always be becoming.—Cicero.

A Truth Is Obscured

Every duty we omit obscures some truth we should have known.—John Ruskin.

CHEW LONG BILL NAVY TOBACCO 5¢ PLUG

Let’s go to town —at home!

NO TELLING what tomorrow’s weather may be. It fools the best fore-caster. But we do want chintz for the windows. We do need a carpet sweeper, a new percolator, and a new end-table in the living-room. And we don’t want to slosh around rainy streets to hunt them. Problem: How to thwart the weather man. Simple enough! Let’s sit down by the fireplace and read the advertisements. Here it’s comfortable and snug. We’ll take the newspaper page by page, compare prices, qualities, brand-names. Tomorrow, rain or shine, we’ll head for the store that has what we want, and be home again in a jiffy.

● “Buying at home”—through the advertising columns—gives you wide selection, more time to decide, and satisfaction when you decide.

● MAKE IT ONE OF YOUR PLEASANT HABITS!