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THE SILENT WIFE.

(Continued from page 3.)

Mr Smith spread on his hands with a
deprecating gesture.

"I assure you, doctor," he said, "I
didn't hear a word you said. So no
harm's done. I was literally dead to
the world."

He paused again.

Somehow, Paul doubted this statement.

MINA VANDERDECKEN'S PEARLS.

Morton Farr rarely entertained, but
when he did it was on a princely scale. He
had been very much against his daughter
appearing at the dinner-table.

Her nerves were terribly unstrung. Dr.
Weston had warned Mr Farr against ex-
citement, or allowing her to sit so long in
one position.

But threats and entreaties proved vain.
Nothing would do but that she should
take the head of the table, and show off
her gorgeous and most unsuitable apparel
and treasured jewels.

Doris, standing aside, while Mr Farr
was reasoning with his wayward daughter,
thought it pathetic that Helena should
not know the truth—that the gaudy
stones, flashing red and green and blue
from her skinny arms and neck, were
worth but a few pounds, and not the
thousands she still believed them to
represent.

"Well, if you will—you will," Morton
Farr shrugged his shoulders, and glanced
at the beautiful face of Nurse Angela.
"But, if you must, I shall make a stipula-
tion."

Helena pouted.

"I hate stipulations," she grumbled.
"They always spoil your fun."

"This one won't," Farr's eyes were still
on Doris. "That Nurse Angela joins the
party."

"No, no! I—couldn't!"

Doris flushed hotly.

To join the party she would have to see
her husband. It might even be that she
would be forced to speak to him.

She intended, somehow, to give him
another warning. But it must be done
secretly. She would wait and watch, and
clutch at the first chance she could get.

"But why, Nurse Angela?"

In Morton Farr's eyes was an expression
of undisguised admiration, from which
Doris shrank involuntarily. It was not the
first time she had seen that expression
on her employer's dark face. She recalled
Martha Cox's joking words: "You could
be Mrs Farr any day, nurse, if you played
your cards properly." Doris had only
laughed, and turned the conversation
quickly.

Paul had been right. It had been a mis-
take to pose as an unmarried woman. But,
then, from how many questions and pre-
variations her ringless hands had saved
her!

"I—I have no evening-dress," she stam-
mered. "I have nothing but my uniform."

"And what could be more becoming,
nurse?" Mr Farr touched the sleeve of her
dress. "To my mind it is the most becom-
ing garb any woman can wear. But, if you
dislike being singular, surely in Helena's
wardrobe—"

"It is impossible, Mr Farr," Doris
thought it time to speak firmly. "I will
remain on duty in the ante-room, if you
wish, in case Miss Farr requires aid, but I
utterly refuse to make one of your party."

"Please yourself," Mr Farr said. And
then, in a lower tone, he added. "You
must know that it is my dearest wish to
please you!"

"Father," Lena Farr's shrill tones broke
in. "Miss Vanderdecken is coming, isn't
she?"

"Yes."

"They say her pearls are priceless. I
hope she will wear them."

"I expect she will. Nina Vanderdecken
rarely goes anywhere without them. They
are historic, and once belonged to a de-
throned queen."

Helena sighed enviously.

"How I wish they were mine!"

"Didn't I tell you they were priceless?
I may be wealthy, but even I couldn't
afford pearls like Nina Vanderdecken's. I
wonder the thieves have not had a try for
them."

"Yes," Doris said mechanically.

She raised her eyes, and found Mr Farr's
fixed eyes upon her with an expression that
held something more than admiration. Un-
nerved by this strange look, and the news
she had heard, she turned away.

But Helena would not let the subject
of the pearls drop.

"Nina is a very rich American. She
lives in the Dower House, and is dad's
tenant. Martha used to say he would
marry Mrs Van, but now she says some-
one has put Nina's nose out of joint. I
wonder if you know who it is?"

She grinned impudently into Doris's
crimson face.

"Don't repeat such vulgar gossip. And
now you had better lie on your couch for
half an hour, or you'll be fainting before
the dinner is half over."

"I wonder if they are after the pearls!"

Doris paced her room, wondering how
best she could warn Roger of the risk he
was running. But before she had decided
on any plan of action the guests began to
arrive.

Mrs Vanderdecken was exquisitely
dressed in grey and silver. The cele-
brated pearls hung in two long ropes, one
of which reached to her knees.

The ante-room in which Doris decided
to wait lay between the further of the
suite of rooms and the big banquetting
hall.

It was an ideal place, as far as Doris's
plans were concerned, for she could see
into both drawing-room and dining-room.

Also, if she wanted to breathe the night
air, she could walk along the terrace, and
get a good view of the winter garden, the
door of which opened into the centre draw-
ing-room.

Heavy curtains hung over the ante-room
doors, and from behind these Nurse Angela
watched the assembling of the guests.

Roger Armer was last to arrive. As it
happened, Morton Farr stood not far from
the curtain that concealed Doris.

"I wonder, Farr," she heard her hus-
band say, "if you would allow me to use
your telephone. Awfully sorry, but I for-
got to send a message to my clerk!"

"Of course! Come this way. I'll take you
to the library, and then, if you'll excuse
me, I'll leave you."

They went away together.

Doris's nervousness increased. What
message did Roger want to send? Was it
to summon his accomplices—let them
know for certain that Mrs Vanderdecken
had argued, wearing her pearls?

Now was the time to warn him, to tell
him that if he persisted in his career of
crime she would shield him no longer, she
would be silent no longer. He should
have another chance of escape, and one
only.

Very quietly, she unlatched the window.
The moon, on a light powder of snow,
made everything bright as day. Keeping
close to the ivy-covered walls, she gained
the library windows. They were tightly
closed and curtained!

"How foolish of me!" she thought. "I
might have guessed they would be shut."

Mr Walter Smith watched the slender
figure, a smile on his bearded face.

"As I thought. She's shielding someone.
Well, can one blame a woman for shielding
her husband, no matter how big a black-
guard he may be? If what I suspect is
true, we shall have the gang in hand now
in twenty-four hours."

Throughout dinner Doris never took her
eyes off her husband. He sat on one side
of the American widow, Morton Farr on
the other.

She saw Roger furtively surveying the
priceless pearls that hung round Mrs Van-
derdecken's white neck. And then, all
of a sudden, Roger Armer made a curious
remark:

"Are you not afraid of carrying so much
value about you, Mrs Vanderdecken?"

Doris held her breath as she waited
Nina's answer.

(To be Continued.)

CONTINUOUS WHEAT GROWING.

In view of the soil exhausting demands
of wheat its continuous cropping in some
localities in the Dominion is a matter for
some surprise. Parts of the Rangitikei
district, in the North Island, provide an
illustration in the matter of continuous
oat-growing, and in a few instances wheat,
and it has been suggested that this dis-
trict could have done a good deal more in
amplifying the wheat supplies of the
Dominion during the shortage. A Home
paper to hand records a very interesting
fact in connection with continuous experi-
ments at Rothamstead, demonstrating that
white-straw crops can follow one another
without deterioration of the land for any
number of years. There, wheat has been
grown continuously on the same land for
73 years, with only two seasons' break for
fallow, and barley has been grown for 63
years, with only one season's fallow. There
has been some falling off on the unman-
ured land in the case of wheat, though less
than might have been expected—but a
plot supplied with farmyard manure
showed a rise from 28 bushels for the
first eight years to an average of 35
bushels in the last ten years. In the
case of fully-manured land, it has been
proved that no falling off in yield need
be anticipated. While the advantages
of rotations will never be questioned, what
the Ministry of Agriculture in drawing
attention to these experimental results
wish to emphasise, is that there are large
areas of clay where the possibility of
introducing some system of continuous
wheat growing, in which both grain and
straw will be sold, is worthy of serious
consideration, especially in counties where
there is a ready sale for straw. It is
suggested that the only real difficulty lies
in keeping the land clean and in getting
through the necessary cultivation in the
short period between the harvesting of one
crop and the sowing of the next.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH IN INDUSTRY.

In the old days of last century, when
large establishments were the exception
rather than the rule, the employer re-
garded his workman as one of his business
family (writes Sir Robert Hadfield, Bart.,
head of the great steel firm of Hadfield's
of Sheffield, in the London "Daily Mail").
And, though it be true that no man is a
hero to his valet, it is undoubtedly the
case that this close association of master
and man resulted in a personal under-
standing and regard which conduced to
good service on the one hand, and fair
and generous treatment on the other.

The same close personal relationship
between the head of a firm and the staff
is not possible in the ordinary course of
business to-day, but there is still room
for much closer co-operation between the
two great branches of the industrial
machine.

Many grievances on the part of the
workers—and some which have led to seri-
ous consequences—have arisen from almost
trivial misunderstandings. The employer
is misunderstood by the men he employs;
the employees' point of view is difficult
of appreciation by the employer.

The trend of modern industrial condi-
tions has been to cut the employer off
further than ever from his workmen.
Whereas formerly he would walk round
the shop, chat with the men, and give
them the opportunity of stating their
troubles or their suggestions to him, he
is now made aware of their aspirations
and demands only through the medium
of their representatives whom he meets
in round-table conference.

With such conferences we have per-
force to be content to-day, but their in-
stitution is all to the good. They have
had the effect of proving to both sides
that neither is as unreasonable as the
other thought it was. They settle
many difficulties and clear away many
obscurities, even though the employer
knows only the trade union representa-
tives and the shop stewards, and could
not identify the men at the benches who
are the real backbone of the business.

The loss of the personal touch in in-
dustry is to be regretted, for it had a
fine humanising influence, but industry
has grown to such an enormous size in
these days of world-wide markets that
its maintenance is practically impossible
to-day.

Many employers, however, though
bound to follow modern methods in
their dealings with their workers, still
endeavour to keep the old personal
touch in some of the little things that
count for so much in smooth working.
In doing so they are keeping alive, at
any rate, the spirit underlying the in-
timacy between master and man which
was so prominent a characteristic of
nineteenth century industrialism.

LAND FOR SOLDIERS.

GOVERNMENT PURCHASES.

According to a statement to a News
correspondent by the Hon. H. D. Guthrie,
Minister in Charge Soldier Settlement, ac-
tive purchase is being continued. He has
made a definite offer for an area at Tai-
rua, Mercury Bay, at a little less than the
vendor asked. If this is bought twenty
or twenty-two soldiers will be able to
secure good dairy farms.

The Government has bought the well-
known Motutara property near Kumeu,
on the Helensville railway. The area is
2,984 acres capable of subdivision into
twenty-two sections for dairying and
grazing. There are also a number of sea-
side sections fronting the West Coast.
Instructions have been given that no time
is to be lost in arranging the area for
selection.

An offer for portion of Clark's Opu-
estate, near Gisborne, is being considered
by the vendor.

There were 2628 fatal street accidents in
the United Kingdom last year.

The Hon. W. Nosworthy, Minister for
Agriculture, in the course of a letter to
Mr Twentymen Hodgson, of Oteramika,
says: "I have read with interest your re-
marks concerning the question of an ex-
perimental farm in Southland. Though
it is intended to establish such a farm in
the South Island the question of locality
still remains to be decided. I propose,
however, to shortly make a trip through
Otago and Southland in connection with
this matter, and if possible, I shall en-
deavour to have a look at the properties
you mention. The question of the Gov-
ernment acquiring this land for settlement
is, however, a matter for the considera-
tion of my colleague, the Minister of
Lands, to whom I am referring a copy of
your letter for his consideration."

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