The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

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ILLUSTRATIONS by LAUREN STOUT

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SYNOPSIS.

John Valiant, a rich society favorite, becomes involved in a scandal with Mrs. Compton, wife of Senator Farrell, and which was the principal source of his wealth. Farrell, a political power, vows he will ruin Valiant financially and socially for the corporation. His entire remaining possessions consist of an old motor car, a fine bird dog and Damory court, a tumbledown estate in Virginia. Damory court he meets Shirley Randolph, an auburn-haired beauty, and decides to marry her. Shirley's father, formerly Virginia's governor, Mrs. Dandridge, and Major Bledsoe exchange remarks concerning Valiant's past. Shirley tells Valiant the major. Valiant's father and a man named Swanson were rivals for the love of Shirley's mother. Valiant tells Shirley Swanson and Valiant fought a duel, the former was killed. Valiant finds Shirley's mother overjoyed with words and tenders and the build. Valiant tells Shirley's mother that John Valiant was a gentleman. Dinner. He is surprised by a fox hunting party which has invaded his land. He is invited to attend at the head of the party. He gives consent to the contested fox. Gossips discuss Valiant's affairs with Mrs. Compton. She calls the major with the other fox hunt party. Valiant declines to remain at Damory court. Valiant and Shirley plan to produce a living for him.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

They stood on the edge of a stony ravine which widened as it went into a shallow marshy valley. The rocks were covered with gray-green feathery creepers, and here and there with early yellow tendrils of love-vine. Across the ravine, on a lower level, began a grove of splendid trees that marched up into the long stretch of neglected forest he had seen from the house.

"You love it!" he asked, without withdrawing his eyes.

"I've loved it all my life. I love everything about Damory Court. Richard as it is, is still one of the most beautiful estates in all Virginia. Thrown nothing finer even in those days just behind us, where those bamboos stand, is where the duel the children spoke of was fought."

He turned his head. "Tell me about it," he said.

She glanced at him curiously. "Didn't you know? That was the reason the place was abandoned. Valiant, who lived here, and the owner of another plantation, who was named Sassoon, quarreled. They fought, the story is, under those big hemlock trees Sassoon was killed."

He looked out across the distance, he could not trust his face now. "And—Valiant?"

"He went away the same day and never came back, he lived in New York till he died. That was the father of the court's present owner. You never heard the story?"

"No," he answered. "I—till quite recently I never heard of Damory Court."

That was the last dust ever fought in Virginia," she said, with a touch of custom. "I'm glad it's gone. Aren't you?"

"Yes," he said slowly, "it was a thing that had to go, and perhaps it's a blast if he could have had his choice afterward I would have had it the old thing there that morning than this one."

"He must have suffered, too," she agreed, "or he wouldn't have exiled himself as he did. I used to wonder if it was a love quarrel—whether they could have been in love with the same woman."

"But why should he go away?"

"I can't imagine, unless she had really fooled the other man. If he also couldn't have borne seeing Valiant afterward." She paused with a little laugh. "But then," she said, "it may have been nothing so romantic. Major Bledsoe, who was known as Devil-Bledsoe, said he could swear the man out because he rode over him on the wrong side. Our attorneys in Virginia, I'm afraid, don't stand on ceremony when they fight duels."

He did not answer. He was looking out once more over the luminous stretch of fields to the northward to her. Curious and painful questions were running through his brain. With an effort, he thrust these back and recalled his attention to what she was saying.

You wonder, I suppose, that we feel as we do toward those old estates, and sort stone by stone—yes, and log by log of them inexorably as we do. But it's in our blood. You Northerners think we're desperately romantic about the dead. But it's true. We're still as proud of our land, the old, old places, and love them as well as our ancestors ever did. And you wonder we resent their passing to people who don't care for them in the Southern way?"

"But suppose the newcomers do care for them?"

Her lips curled. A young military she who has lived all his life in New York to care for Damory Court? A youth historically rich, brought up in a superheated atmosphere of noise and money?"

He started uncontritually. So that was what she thought! He felt himself flushing. He had wondered what would be his impression of the neighborhood and its people, their possible opinion of himself had never occurred to him.

You think there's no chance of his choosing to stay here because he actually likes it?"

"Not the slightest," she said indifferently.

"You are so certain of this without ever having seen him?"

She glanced at him covertly, an incredibly sensitive of the impropriety of the discussion, since the man she accused was certainly his patron, many of his friends. But his insistence had roused a certain balky willfulness that would have kept her silent. "It's true I never seen him," she said, "but I've read about him a hundred times in the Sunday supplements. He's a regular Lancelot of the high-roller section. The idea of a good time is a dog-banquet at Sherry's. Why, a girl told me once, that there was a cigarette named after him—the Valiant Valiant!"

"Isn't that double the point? He cause he has been an idler, must he continue to be a—valet?"

She laughed again. "He wouldn't make a good valet, Hef! Glad I decided improvement to make Damory Court as beautiful as possible, I'm afraid he was, and a modern mantle cupid in head of those Italian marbles, and lay out a kite-shaped track——"

Everything that was impulsive and explosive in John Valiant's nature broke out with a bang. "No!" he cried, "whatever else he is, he's not such a preposterous ass as that!"

She faced him angrily at once. Her eyes were sparkling. "Since you know him so intimately, you're highly approve of him."

"No, no," he interrupted. "You mistake me. I shouldn't try to justify him. He did have had risen to the roots of his brown hair, but he did not lower his gaze. Now the red color slowly ebbed, leaving him pale. "He has been a pitiful and true enough——and till a week ago he was Idiotic Kelly for the Sunday papers. At this moment, except for this one property, he's little better than a beggar."

She had taken a hasty step or two back from him and her eyes were now fixed on him with a dawning half-fear ful question in them.

"If the failure of the Valiant Corporation," he went on, "involves Damory Court, much less been aware of it. I wasn't betrayed—I've loved it that he came here—no! I'm not a beggar. He just never set foot in Virginia in his mortal life."

She shook a little at her throat with a start. "Cands!" she echoed, faintly.

"Yes!" he cried. "I am that husband-harlequin John Valiant, himself."

CHAPTER XIV.

On the Edge of the World.

There was a long silence. Both he reckoned by minutes but sufficiently long for each to recover from the first surprise.

"That was ungenerous of you," she said then, quietly and slowly. "Though no doubt you—found it entertaining. I don't know what you expect me to do to taken for an architect."

He flushed darkly, replied, with a trace of bitterness, "to have suggested that I was a fortune-hunter—that was the true-shadowed path.

He bowed slightly, gnawing his lip, wanting to say he knew not what, but wretchedly tongue-tied, saying that the great white moth was still waving its tawny wings on the dead stump and wondering if she would take the rage pleasantries. He felt an embarrassed relief when, passing the fence where they had stooped to raise them.

There all at once the blood seemed to shriek from his heart. With a hoarse cry he leaped toward her, seized her wrist and roughly dragged her back, feeling as he did so, a sharp fiery sting on his own hand. The next moment, with clenched teeth, he was stamping his foot down on it again and again, driving into the soft earth a writhing, root-like something that slapped the brown wintered leaves into a blazing turmoil!

He had flung her from him with such violence that she had fallen sideways. Now she raised herself, kneeling in the feathery light, both hands clasped close to her breast, trembling the dim earth-floor below like a new sea on a theater. Little puffs of dust from the protesting grass were wreathing about her sat face, and she pressed her hand against her shoulder to repress her shivers.

"The horrible—horrible— thing!" she said whisperingly. "It would have bitten me!"

He came toward her, panting, and grasping her hand, lifted her by her feet. He staggered slightly as he did so, and she saw his lips twist in a pallor oddly. "Ah," she gasped. "It has bitten you!"

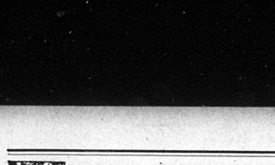
"No," he said. "I think not."

"Look! There on your ankle—that mark!"

"No!" he said something, just that first moment. He lacked personality "It's queer. My foot's gone fast asleep."

Every remnant of color left her face. "Then it's a—snake!" she cried. "Oh, why did you—"

"Hush!" he said, and he felt her shrinking like, warm and tremulous, against his hand. Then she stooped to draw away sharply with sweeps of her skirt. "Not that! Yes! I'm afraid! My lord—you shan't!" He dragged her back, fighting like a desperate snap, lifting himself, peak



The Next Moment, With Clenched Teeth, He Was Stamping His Heel Again and Again.

doctor's. I might run to the house and send for help. But there will be a take too long. Besides, the doctor wouldn't be able to do anything but me.

He stooped beside him, putting the hand back by his on the stick and said harshly and slowly, "Now, then, strength. "Tighter, tighter," she said, "you have still hours to wait. It is not the first time that I've operated myself. Now, then, fasten—" he said, with a flow a dozen feet away.

He stooped, shakingly, then dropped into hammer-like thudding on the ground and grasped the foot with both with shuddering, and her eyes dilating with some determined purpose.

"What are you going to do?"

"You take and, and he felt her

"My lord—you shan't!" He dragged the stick from her hand, with desperate snap, lifting himself, peak

warned that if, after crossing the Italian frontier, they enter any of those zones, they will be liable to have cameras seized and be subjected to great personal discomfort. Each visitor is given a plate or film be found on a visitor to Italy after crossing the frontier without the consequences would be still more serious—London Telegraph.

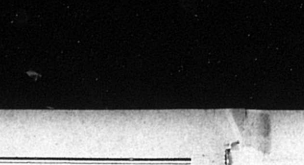
"Don't Speak" Club.

The Moscow prefecture has just founded a novel club in the form of a newly formed club in that city the chief feature of which is the penalty imposed on its members within the club premises.

Any infraction of this cardinal rule involves a monetary penalty. The club is well appointed and luxuriously equipped.

Gesture is the only medium of intercourse among the members. The same rigid regulation obtains at the club buffet and in the dining-room, as well as in the library and general rooms. Orders are conveyed to the silent waiters by means of tablets they carry—Daily Mail.

PENETRATION SYSTEM OF ORCHARD SPRAY



Compressed Air Sprayer.

The modern farmer measures the value of his spraying by the results he secures. He sprays to protect his fruit and trees from insect and fungous diseases, and a satisfactory spraying system must give this protection with the least expenditure of money and of labor.

The keynote to successful spraying is thoroughness, and thoroughness means one hundred per cent of clean fruit. Every grower of apples, whether carted or scaly peach tree infested, knows the cost of production and lessens the quantity of marketable fruit.

While most of the pests occur on the surface of foliage and bark, with-in easy reach of the spray, a great many are located within crevices and crevices, under bud-scales, and in the

Gasoline Sprayer Equipped With Tower.

calyx cup, or are so oily that they are hard to wet. In the matter of practical control it is these protected pests which must be reached. The spray must wet through the wool of the woolly aphis, reach the aphis eggs behind the scaling bark, thoroughly cover scales and fungous spores, wet the orchard surface, bring to the lowest crevices of the bark, and place poison where the young insects feed—the fleshy stamens of the apple blossom. Any spraying system that will not reach these pests will easily control them on the average orchard. Where coarse scales or