

10 STORY BOOK

A Magazine for Iconoclasts

December
1921

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10 STORY BOOK



Vol. 20, No. 13

December, 1921

Twentieth Year

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And a few peppy little skits

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Authors and Literary Agents: The Publishers of 10 Story Book are at all times in the market for striking short stories of from 1,000 to 7,000 words. Material submitted should contain emphatic sex interests, realism, humor, or satire. Stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed in case of rejection.

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THE UNDELIVERED SERMON

BY HAROLD WARD

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THE Reverend Joshua Williams Butler, D. D., believed that his coming sermon on "The Social Evil" would be the crowning effort of his long and useful career. Several of the prominent members of his congregation had volunteered the information that it was expected to create a profound sensation. A number of the leading newspapers had given it flattering advance notices. His condemnation of the Scarlet Woman was to be bitter, scathing. He had every reason to think, without egotism, that the fashionable church of which he was pastor would be packed to the doors.

A conscientious worker at all times, a student of psychology and social science as well as a reformer, writer and lecturer, Dr. Butler threw his whole soul into the subject. Every possible authority was consulted. Statistics were gathered from far and near. Obligated to rewrite and revise, it was not until the Thursday before its delivery that he breathed a sigh of satisfaction, drew the final sheet from his typewriter and, with a feeling of relief, turned out his study lamp and prepared to retire.

Sleep, however, failed to come. The clock struck two and the minister still wooed Morpheus in vain. Finally, weary of rolling and tossing, he arose, dressed and, without awakening Mrs. Butler, slipped out into the deserted street.

It was a beautiful night. He walked

aimlessly, running over the important points of his discourse in his mind. Time slipped along unheeded until, with a start, he realized that he was far from home and in an unknown part of the city. He turned to retrace his steps, when, from a nearby alley, came a rush of men. Something hit him over the head. A sensation of falling — falling — falling — then oblivion.

He awoke, bewildered. His body ached. He drew his hand across his forehead. It was covered with blood. Groaning with pain, he arose from the sidewalk and staggered down the street, his head whirling.

A woman stepped out of the shadow. A soft hand was laid on the minister's arm. "Honey, don't you want to—"

The woman's pleading stopped suddenly as he turned his face towards her. "My Gawd," she exclaimed, "you've been slugged." She wiped the blood from his face with her tiny handkerchief. Vaguely he realized that she was pretty, but she was of a species new to him. The incongruity of her being on the streets at that hour, alone, never struck him.

"Better come over to the room until I fix up that cut in your head. I live just opposite here," she explained.

He submitted, weakly. Still in a trance, he allowed her to lead him into a nearby doorway and up a narrow flight of stairs. He had a hazy recollection of meeting

people. Someone remarked that "Daisy's caught another live one," but his condition was such that he paid no attention. Later he remembered.

The girl drew him into a cheaply-furnished room. An oil lamp burned dimly. From somewhere near came the racket of a piano. Raucous voices were raised in song. A smell of liquor perfumed the air. Faint from the loss of blood, bewildered, he dropped into a chair. As one watches a performance on a far away stage, he watched her, fascinated, slip out of her coat and hat and light a cigarette. It's peculiar, Oriental odor soothed him. Never before had he been in contact with a woman who smoked. His sub-consciousness told him that it was wrong. Yet it seemed the natural thing for this girl to do. He admitted to himself that he rather enjoyed the sensation of watching her. While he half dozed, she heated water over a small alcohol burner and cleansed the wound in his head. A feeling of dreamy security surrounded him. A lock of her hair brushed across his face. He forgot, for the second, his religious restraints. Her soft fingers hovering about him brought a pleasant inner warmth and an indifference to the pain. The blood pounded through his veins. His hand reached up and took hers. He felt something within him telling him that he must draw this peculiar woman to his lap, to press her slim, loosely clad body against his own, to bury his face in her fragrant hair. Her fingers curled in light, instinctive response about his, then, with a questioning look in her eyes, she withdrew them and again busied herself with his injuries. With small pieces of adhesive plaster she drew the edges of the cut together as neatly as a physician could have done. Pulling himself together, he mentioned this to her.

"I was a nurse once," she explained.

His head was clearing under her minis-

trations. He attempted to arise. It was only by a strong effort that he could stand erect.

"I'm afraid that I'm still pretty weak," he admitted with a wan smile. "Perhaps, if it is not imposing too much on your kindness, I can get you to 'phone for a taxi." He reached into his pocket to hand her a coin for the telephone. His pocket-book was gone. Gone, too, were his watch and his cuff links. "I have been robbed!" he exclaimed. He continued to search his pockets. One of his visiting cards fell to the floor. The girl stooped to pick it up. As she read the name, the card fell from her fingers. She straightened up and looked at the preacher curiously. She recognized him then, from his published likeness.

"You, a preacher, *here—here* of all places!" There was a ripple of quiet amusement in her voice. "A fine sensation if the newspapers find out that Butler, the reformer, has been here—alone—with me!"

Butler knew that the girl was mocking him, although, in his befogged condition, he failed to see the reason. Dizziness again overcame him. He seized hold of the girl for support. Her manner changed. Again she was the woman of the streets, her eyes gazing languorously, amorously, seductively into his. They hypnotized him. His faintness left him. He drew her to him and she seemed to melt into his arms. Their lips met. Her pretty hands rose, encircled his neck and held him fast. His mind became a blur of vague, fragmentary thoughts. Gone were the resolutions of a life time. Gone was the veneer of civilization. The preacher gave way to the man, passionate, sexual, conquering. He only knew that her magnificent, slender young body was pressing against his, that her ripe, red lips were thrilling him with their kisses, that his body was vibrating with passion. He was

the Cave man who had found his mate. Her eyes gleamed beneath her lowered lashes—gleamed with triumph and hate. She was flaming with exultation at the ease of her conquest. How easily he had fallen into her trap. She held him closer. Every vein in his body seemed ready to burst.

Her eyes fell upon the card still lying on the floor where it had fallen. Something—perhaps a thought of other and happier days—flashed through her brain. Her manner changed. She drew away from him suddenly and stepped back. He attempted to seize her again in his mad embrace, but she fended him away with her little hands. They struggled about the room. Her hair became loosened in the scuffle and fell about her shoulders. One sleeve of her dress was torn, but she fought on, grimly. With a sudden twist of her body she freed herself. He staggered backwards and panting from his efforts, sank back into the chair. Her voice came to him as from a great distance.

"I'm sorry—terribly sorry—that I let you go so far," she was saying, gaspingly. "I had no business to tempt you. No! No!" as he started to rise—"I am going to save you—save you from yourself!"

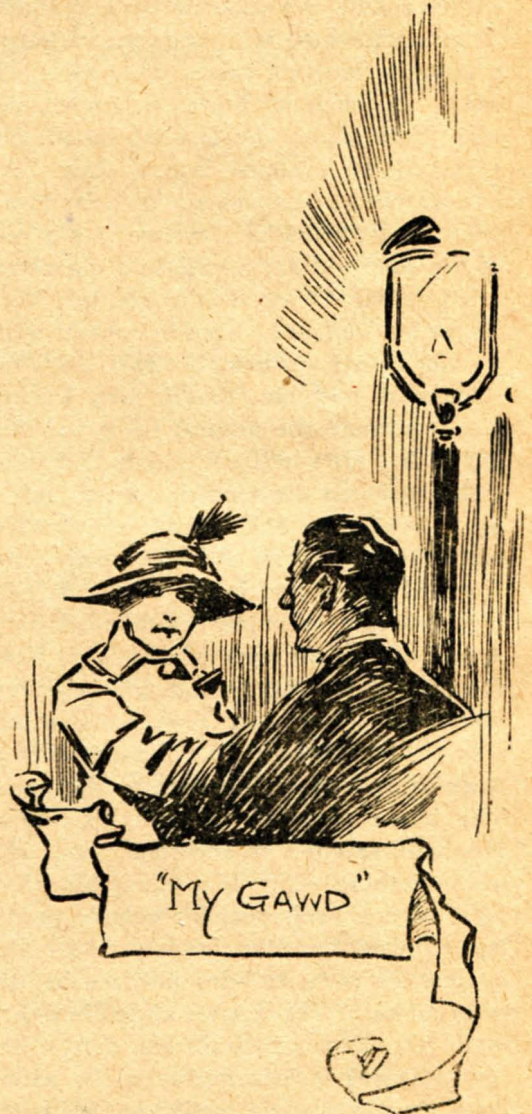
"Save me?" He repeated the words stupidly.

She was talking rapidly now. "Can't you see what would happen if anyone here recognized you? Look about you! Surely, man, you must realize where you are!"

The piano stopped. The realization of his predicament swept over him. The tawdry room, the girl leaning back on the bed, cigarette in mouth, her forehead pursed in thought, her hair loose, one bare, white arm thrown above her head, the beautiful lines of her figure displayed through her garments, her skirts, slightly too high, revealing a pair of neatly turned

ankles. She was still breathing hard from her struggle with him. As she gazed at him, her big eyes filled with wonderment.

"After all," she murmured, "a preacher's only a man."



He heard people passing through the hall. Snatches of whispered conversation reached him. He knew, only too well, what the result would be if these inhabitants of the Red Lights found him here. The newspapers! How the reporters would smack their lips over the juicy

morsel of scandal. He wondered what the members of his congregation would say. And his wife! Oh, the disgrace of it all! He turned to the girl, pleadingly, seeing in her his only hope of escape.

His appealing look stirred her into action. "Come on," she exclaimed. Hastily she knotted up her hair and donned her street attire. She assisted him with his overcoat and turned up the collar. With a little jerk, she pulled his cap down over his eyes.

"Stagger," she whispered, as they passed out into the hallway. He realized that he was to play the part of a drunken man and he did his best. Curious faces gazed at them from dimly lighted rooms, but with her hand holding him tightly by the arm, she piloted him safely down the stairs and onto the street gray with the first light of dawn.

Half an hour later, when he was safely out of the danger zone, she slipped back, suddenly, into the shadows.

"I'd better beat it," she whispered. "Here comes Casey, the bull."

The preacher attempted to restrain her, but she had disappeared—swallowed up in the darkness.

Casey, hastening up the street, stopped as he reached the minister. "Why, good mornin' Rever'nd," he exclaimed, wonderingly, touching his cap. "Sure, and me eyes must be failing me, for I'd have sworn I glimpsed 'The English Daisy' standing here only a minute ago."

"And who might 'The English Daisy' be?" asked Butler, pulling his cap further down over his battered forehead. He knew that the law, as embodied in Casey,

was against the woman who had just left him. He had the highest respect for the law, but he felt that it was his duty to protect her.

Casey laughed. "She's one of them females that you're going to preach about Sunday. I've ordered her to stay off my beat and she's got to do it or take a ride down the line. Bad as they make 'em. Used to be a nice girl, I've heard. Preacher's daughter back in England, I understand. Was a nurse in one of the hospitals until she met a young doctor and went bad—like they all do."

"I'm afraid your eyes are growing weak," smiled the minister. "I was unable to sleep and I've been walking up and down here for the last half hour and I have seen nothing of the person you mention. I would like to meet the—ahem—lady, however. I am sure from what you say that she would make an interesting character study."

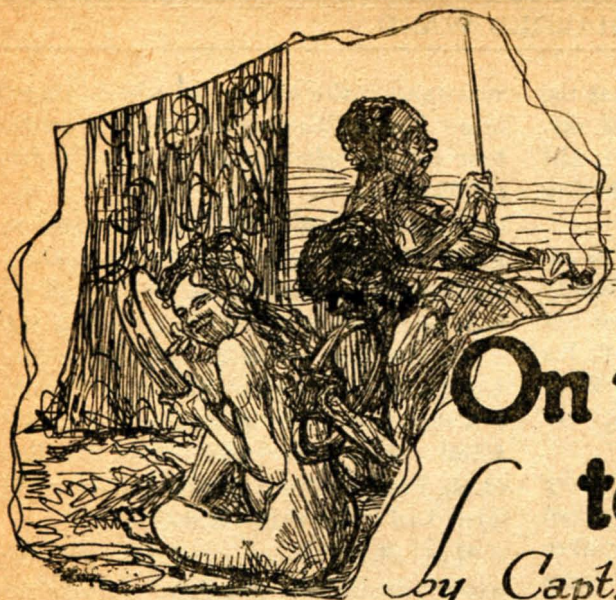
And with the first lie of his life on his lips, the Man of God walked slowly towards his home. Far down the street he saw a slim, girlish figure flitting through the shadows. He slipped quietly into the house, undressed and retired. Mrs. Butler was still snoring peacefully.

Those who heard the Reverend Joshua Williams Butler, D. D., preach on "*The Social Evil*" the following Sunday, were surprised at the tone of the gentleman's remarks. His sermon was an eloquent appeal for charity towards the woman of the Red Lights.

In his study, among the discarded sermons, lay his masterpiece.

The moving-picture censors, clean,
Claim mothers must be Mrs.
And show by taking out a scene
That babies come from kisses!

—Chas. J. Chic.



On the Road to Jericho

by *Capt. W. P. Barron*

IT was a neat job that Jakie the Rat and Big Nigger Jim pulled off that foggy evening down on Canal Street in New Orleans. Patiently they had followed George Swanson, the young up state planter, watching him with greedy eyes when he pulled out his big roll of cotton money, noting with minute care the trousers pocket in which he replaced it.

So, when midnight brought a heavy fog rolling in from the Mississippi, and the planter with mind befogged by strange New Orleans drinks, staggered along the Canal, Big Nigger Jim, coming swiftly and silently behind, struck him on the head with a piece of pipe. Then, almost before George Swanson had fallen heavily on the ground, the Rat had his roll, and the two footpads hurried away in the darkness.

George Swanson, breathing heavily, lay in a huddled heap beside the Canal. A thin stream of blood trickled down from his dark hair and spread out on the flagstones. From a nearby canal boat a rooster flapped his wings and crowed. A faint grey shone in the east through a rift in the fog. It would soon be day.

A priest, returning from the Creole

Quarter, where he had been to administer the last sacrament, hurried by on his way to bed. He saw the man lying there, but thinking him one of the usual riverside drunks, after a hasty glance, passed on.

A night watchman from the wharves also passed on his way for an early morning cup of coffee at Creole Joe's place, a block away. He, too, glanced at the prostrate man. It was none of his affair. All his life he had found only trouble when he stepped out of the beaten path of duty. So he, too, passed on.

The heavy breathing continued. The little pool of blood had congealed upon the cold stones. Alcohol and sudden violence had brought deep sleep to George Swanson. He slept as soundly here, on the hard stones, as he would have slept in his soft bed in his twenty-dollar a day room at the Planter's Hotel.

Then came Louise LeBrue, also on her way to bed, after sitting up all night for her aristocratic young mistress to return from a Mardi Gras Ball.

Let us meet Louise. She was a ladies' maid de luxe, carefully reared and trained by the good sisters of the Convent of the Incarnate Word. The gentle women

were foregathered from the best families of France and Spain. They knew what a good maid should be. Louise was such a maid, speaking fluently Spanish and French and a master hand with the needle.

Seventeen years before George Swanson fell beneath the neat blow of Big Nigger Jim, a carriage drew up in front of the Convent of the Incarnate Word, one night, just as the Convent bell was tolling for midnight prayers. A young man jumped out, and assisted a heavily veiled woman from the carriage. Inside the door of the Convent, the young man whispered a few words to the stately Mother Superior and put in her hands a roll of bills. He then departed, leaving the veiled figure in the Mother's care.

In due course of time, from an upper room of the Convent came the thin wail of a newly born child. A soft, weak voice said, "I know I am dying, Sister, but let me kiss her face. . . my little baby . . . Care for her."

And in this way came Louise into the world. Her father was from a long line of slave-owning planters—her mother from a long line of slaves. So cunningly had the two bloods mixed through the generations that in Louise there remained only a splash of Negro blood. Her large, quiet brown eyes, shaded with long lashes her olive skin. Thick, long dusky hair, tapering fingers and highly arched, slender little feet, all bespoke the cavalier blood that in years ago had faced old Cromwell's pikemen.

Amplly provided for, Louise had lived with the Sisters until she was seventeen. Then when her unknown, unseen father died, her income stopped, and Louise stepped bravely out to face the world.

The Convent Sisters, from long experience with similar cases, had foreseen and provided against this day. Louise was well equipped. Side by side with the

planter's daughter whom she served, Louise made a braver outward show of good looks, of poise, of caste. But . . . Louise did not belong. She was neither fish nor fowl. That splash of Negro blood! She could never hope to live it down.

Gently reared, dainty in all things, clean of soul and with a well-stored mind, she could not bring herself to live the happy, go-lucky, come day, go day life of the colored people she knew. So Louise walked alone. In addition to a general education, she had been taught to be chaste, not alone in deed, but that rarer kind, chaste in thought also. Chastity of any sort is rare among the denizens of Canal Street—the Creoles, the Mexicans, the what-you-wills from all over the world, but it was rarer still among those of Louise's peculiar caste.

If you had asked Colonel Starratt, he of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, for instance, the old Colonel as he stirred his julip or drank his coffee, thick as syrup, brought by his grand-daughter, would have answered, "No, sir, I regret to state, that among what I call Mule Niggers, the mixed breeds, you understand, there is no such thing as virtue, sir! They partake of the bad qualities of both races, sir, and scarcely none of the good."

Louise was the exception to this broad statement. Passionate blood boiled in her veins, and treacherous gold-filled hands were stretched out daily to pull her down, but so far Louise had won through.

Louise walked home in the dark of that early morning to her tiny apartment on Canal Street. As she passed George Swanson he groaned. It was a blubbering sort of groan that almost froze the blood in her veins.

Louise was frightened. Nevertheless, she came nearer, and kneeling down,

looked into the bloody face. She turned the head in order to get the benefit of what light there was from the street-lamp. The movement of the head helped George Swanson back to consciousness. He sat giddily up, putting up both hands to his pain-splitting head.

"Water," he gasped, "for God's sake water!"

Louise trained to quick action, snatched his hat, ran to the edge of the Canal and returned with the hat full of water. George drank greedily and then Louise gently bathed the gory face. This completed, George staggered to unsteady feet. Louise assisted him and they moved with gyrating uncertain steps along the Canal. Without thought, mechanically Louise found herself in front of her apartment. Then she was up the steps, up the short stairs, and into the cool neat room, into which through the open window blew the fresh wind of dawn. Louise helped George gently down upon the bed, and his bloody head quickly made a great crimson halo upon the snowy pillow.

Louise turned from the room, ran down the stairs, and out on the street to the next block to a doctor. After frantic pulls at the bell, the sleepy old practitioner poked his head out. He cursed Louise gently in French, until she spoke to him in the same tongue. Then he apologized abjectly, explaining he didn't know she would understand. Louise brushed all this aside, asking only that he come at once to a man sorely hurt in the head.

After examining George carefully, the doctor turned to Louise and said, "Dis man, who is he? Who is to pay?"

Impulse again drove Louise without thought as to consequence, but wanting to save lengthy and unpleasant explanations, she looked down at George snoring lustily on her bed, and said. "He is my husband. I will pay. How much?"

The old man wagged a wise head. Here, evidently, was a jealous brawl over a nice looking flirtatious young wife. He pocketed his fee, said nothing, and went to work.

In ten days George Swanson's wound had healed, and he sat before the open window looking out towards the river. Did I say George Swanson? Perhaps, I am in error, because the man who sat before the window, looking out towards the Father of Waters, was not George Swanson, save in body alone. The George Swanson, planter, that we knew that night on Canal Street, had escaped through the hole Big Nigger Jim had made in his head, and not even a memory of him remained.

In the body of George Swanson, we now meet Louise's husband. From the morning Louise had called the old Creole doctor, the mental derelict at the window had become the petted and spoiled darling of this lonely girl, who had played the Good Samaritan to him who had fallen among thieves. Daily she hurried home from work to minister to this silent man, who sat all day by the window, taking all for granted, rarely speaking unless spoken to.

On the day in question, Louise hurried home as usual. On her arm was a basket filled with dainties for her invalid, which she had snatched from her mistress' table. With an ample tip from a visitor at her mistress' home, she purchased at the corner cigar store a handful of the same brand of cigars she had observed her master smoking.

Upstairs in her apartment, she bent over George and kissed him. "How are you honey? Did you rest well today? I have some cigars for you."

George received the kiss with the *sang froid* of an old married man, and watched Louise as she prepared his dinner. In his eyes was a puzzled look, as if his mind

groped ineffectually with some mystery, but he said nothing.

When he had eaten and resumed his seat at the window with Louise by his side, busy with her sewing, he watched her fast-moving fingers for awhile, but finally caught her hand. On the ring-finger was a wedding ring. This Louise had bought herself, modestly explaining to her mistress with a description of an imaginary wedding to one of Mr. Pullman's efficient and grafting servants. The recital had conjured a fifty-dollar bill as a wedding gift from her mistress, with which Louise had purchased for her make-believe husband, a bath robe, slippers, underwear, and other masculine necessities. All of these were accepted by him as a matter of course.

George caught the hand with the wedding ring, and Louise looked up with fond eyes. "What is it, honey?" she asked.

"Are we married?"

The clear olive skin flushed a dusky red, but the hand George held didn't tremble nor her eyes falter.

"We surely are, honey. Why?"

"Then why do you sleep on the couch in the corner? Why don't you sleep in the bed with me?"

"You were ill, dear, and you could sleep better alone."

"But now I'm not ill, and I want you to sleep in the bed with me. You won't disturb me and I would like to have you."

Louise placed her arm about his neck and kissed him fondly, then laid her head upon his breast. Resting there for the space of five minutes, she swiftly fought out the battle with herself. Love, desire for companionship, the loneliness of the lean years of her girlhood, raced through her consciousness. She had held out all these years for what? Now there had come a parting of the ways. Life held

to her lips the brimming cup of desire. Fate had thrown in her way this man. Out of the unknown had come the husband of her dreams. She lifted her head, and with soft glowing eyes looked into his face.

"All right, honey," she answered. "Do you want to go to bed now?"

So that night, Louise lost that which she had fought to hold since her early maidenhood, but she gained a paradise of joyous companionship, and a sweet sense of the presence of someone who really cared.

In bed with him, she had but to stir, and she could feel on her arm or on her breast the head of her man—her husband for whom she worked and sacrificed, and concerning whom she could make great talk among the other maids "Of my husband this, and my husband that." Before this happy time, Louise had never dreamed of the happiness life could pour out upon one's head.

Then came the awful night of terror, when the crushed-in skull, pressing down on the brain, finally brought about a rebellion against the torture in a body rending convulsion. George awakened Louise from a happy sleep, shaking, and quivering in a nerve storm of the body that threatened to rend him apart.

Louise clad only in her nightgown, fled bare-footed through the darkness of the street to the old Creole doctor. She awakened him from a sound sleep, and with the strength of terror, dragged him to her apartment. The fit was still on him, and the old doctor told her it came from the wound in George's head.

With this there began for Louise a life of anxious terror. Her happiness fell away from her like one awakening from a beautiful dream. Night after night, she lay in bed beside George, her body quivering with nervousness, waiting for

the gibbering demon to seize and rend him.

The nights it did not come, he would awake, a cold sweat upon him from some fearful dream. Louise would then clasp him close to her breast and soothe him as if he were a little child. The convulsions came more frequently, but Louise never lost her fear of them. Always she fled to the Creole doctor for aid, and as the fits became more frequent, all her wages went to pay the doctor, and for medicine.

Louise didn't weaken. In her heart, before God, she had taken the unknown for husband, for better or for worse. The bargain must be kept, even if it was a one side agreement. Girding up her loins mentally, she worked all the harder. She worked extra hours. She did fine needle work at home, nights, selling it at the Woman's Exchange. She was ceaselessly on the alert in her mistress' home to serve visitors for extra tips.

In spite of all her efforts and the ministrations of the old Creole man of medicine, George grew gradually worse, his convulsions more frequent and his mind more dull.

Finally there came a day when the doctor shook his head and said, "Dere is no more I can do. An operation on ze head might do good—nozzing else."

From adriot patient questioning and a lapse into her childhood Creole French, Louise obtained the information that only an operation to lift the irritating bone and scar tissue from George's brain could cure the convulsions and restore the fast-dulling consciousness. It was this that most greatly alarmed Louise. Even now George scarcely noted the passing of the days. She herself was gradually becoming as only a part of the furniture. But as his sickness seized upon him, her love kept up to fend for him. Her whole passionate, lonely heart

fought to keep and hold this unknown unknowable man, as she now thought of only as her own, which the hand of death seemed stretched out to seize.

From the old doctor she learned that one thousand dollars would be necessary, and at least five hundred more for expenses and travel. Almost did Louise's brave soul give way to despair. But not for long. That splash of Negro blood . . . Not such a bad heritage after all when one is near despair. For untold ages the Negro had been held in slavery—all the miseries of the world heaped upon him by his own and other races, and he has laughed—always laughed! And that Cavalier blood. . . True to the last, until the head of Charles rolled from beneath the headman's axe, and after. That, too, was not bad. Even our old Colonel at the Planter's Hotel admitted that, "By Gad, suh, blood will tell, always!"

It did with Louise. She put despair from her and looked about for the wherewithall to get the \$1,500 together. Those who seek shall find. This has been known for ages. So, in seeking, Louise found the Creole Cabaret. There, nightly, after Louise was through with her mistress, she danced the unspeakable dances supposed to be seen only in the Orient.

New Orleans swarmed that year with sugar planters from Cuba, South American coffee planters, and cattle men from the Argentina pampas, and Mexican Hacienda managers. All were loaded down with the ready gold the great war had brought to those who produced the food of the world.

Money they spent freely, but for it they demanded equivalent. They demanded action, excitement for already jaded appetities, and novelty of entertainment. To comply with these demands, Louise, along with other beautiful Quadroon, Creole, and Mexican girls, per-

formed in unlawful and unmentionable dances and dancing stunts. They went the limit. Their price was high and their tips in proportion. Louise soon had a thousand dollars in the bank and had managed to hold on to her self-respect as well. Old Solomon was right when he pointed out that as riches increase, the expense account does also.

George could not be left alone all day. He was rapidly becoming irresponsible. It was one of her many worries—the fear that the authorities would take him from her. His fits grew in intensity and now occurred almost daily, so Louise hired a colored trained nurse at five dollars a day, to see to George until she came home for the five hours sleep she allowed herself between her duties as maid and cabaret dancer. The doctor, medicine, and nurse, the rent and board, and the fine raiment necessary for her cabaret work, all fairly burned money. Louise, try as she could, save as she would, something always happened to prevent her savings going beyond the original thousand dollars. Five hundred dollars more she must have. Without that amount, she was no nearer New York and the great surgeon's knife than before. The fits grew worse. The days passed, and even her fresh young vigor began to give way.

And then fortune—or would you call it so?—came her way once more. Little Dan Le Farge, the cabaret manager, stopped her one morning as she was leaving for home.

"Listen, Louise! How'd you like to make a cool hundred all in one lump? Them South American fellars, and them cowboys that brung them horses to be shipped to England, all want to see somethin' super-extra tonight — somethin' snappy. An' they've got the coin to pay you and to pay me. This is what I doped out. How about you an' Jeannette an'

Tottie dancin' that altogether stunt about three in the mornin'? Super-extra crowd—no cops fer sure, all safe as a church? What d'ye say?"

Louise shook her head, then shook it again at fifty dollars more and so on, up and up. But, do what she would she couldn't raise the old one-eyed poker player over \$250. So with George and the New York goal in heart, Louise closed for \$250 and a gentleman's agreement for ten-dollar tips from the "super-extra" crowd.

That night, with shame and bitterness in her heart but with her goal almost in sight, Louise with her three lissome, writhing, sensual friends danced the "altogether stunt" before the carefully selected crowd that Little Dan admitted to his place.

Shame for her beautiful exposed body and hatred for the admiring, sensation seeking crowd that looked on her degradation surged up in Louise's soul. But she kept steadily before her the thought of the darling of her heart who wasted away at home, and the relief from bondage this price of her shame would bring him. And yet she was short \$250. This stood a golden barrier between her, and the New York hospital.

Don Jose Rodequez, sometime of Rio de Janeiro, but now of Cuba and New Orleans, watched Louise with glistening eyes, that even the cafe of the Dead Rat in Paris had failed to interest. Don Jose, like King David, "was old and stricken in years and got no heart," but Louise's beautiful body and sensual movements warmed his sluggish blood. Louise stirred to life, a half forgotten memory of his youth—his first sweetheart torn from his arms to become the wife of a richer and much older man, an owner of vast flocks and herds. Don Jose had never married but he had loved. It had

been years since a woman had really stirred his blood.

The dance ended. Louise snatched up her bathrobe, and quickly covering her body, passed between the little tables towards her dressing-room. Eager hands were stretched out to her. Bills and gold fell at her feet. Voices pleaded for an encore. Smiling the vacuous smile of absentmindedness, Louise stooped and gathered up all that had been donated. Her heart sang—the ordeal was over. She thought no more of it, but craftily counted what she had gathered together. It was almost another hundred! She moved towards her dressing room. Don Jose plucked at her robe. As he pulled, the cloak came open in such fashion as to bare her breast and hip. Don Jose's old heart leaped within him and the blood hissed through his brain. The desire to possess this beautiful creature, if only for an hour, possessed him utterly.

Excitedly forgetting the little English he knew, he spoke to Louise in Spanish, heaping upon her the extravagant praise of that emotional language. To his surprise, Louise thanked him in his own tongue, using as good Spanish as himself. This was an added charm—to hear her speak his mother tongue!

Don Jose, carried away by desire, forgetting that here perhaps was only a woman of the streets, rose stiffly to his feet, and as nearly as rheumatic joints would allow, honored Louise with the sweeping bow of a Caballero of Spain. Then, tactfully, in language that could not offend, he hinted at his desire.

Louise looked at the old beau, who was almost in his dotage. Aside from the fact that her passion and desire was where her heart was, back there in the little squalid apartment on Canal Street, she felt the natural loathing of the healthy young animal for the aged and infirm. With this loathing showing

quite frankly in her dark eyes, she shook her head and smiled. Gathering her bathrobe about her, she again moved towards the dressing-room.

As is always the case, this refusal but fanned the flame of desire. Had Louise's object been to "string" the old Spaniard, she could not have played her cards better. Stepping in front of her, Don Jose barred her exit. Perspiration beaded his hot flushed face. He drew a great wallet, bulging with bills, from his breast pocket, and with trembling fingers he began to fumble with the bills. What was money to him—a prosperous sugar-planter of Cuba, and the owner of vast herds grazing on the pampas of South America? Money was worth only what it could bring, and if it could bring him this proud and haughty girl who had danced naked before him, yet safe-guarded her virtue, what were the odds?

Slowly, watching her craftily with rheumy eyes from under heavy lids, Don Jose peeled off bill after bill, until five hundred dollars swam before Louise's tired eyes. Then the impatient old man swore softly and said, "Mother of God, woman! have you no price?"

Louise, with a slow smile shook her head, and then. . . Here at last, in this old man's palsied hand, was the fulfilment of her dream!—New York,—the great hospital, and healing for her heart's idol! What was shame, loathing, virtue, even life itself, to this?

Louise left Don Jose's apartment at noon the next day, and against her breast reposed six hundred good American dollars. In her bank-book was eleven hundred more. Therefore, her heart was light, her race was won, her labor of love well done. George would soon be well again—as soon as steam and steel could carry them to New York and the surgeon could operate.

Louise softly entered her apartment

and gave a look of inquiry to her five-dollar a day nurse.

"Oh, Miss Louise," said the nurse, "he's done had three hard fits, but he's asleep now. I'll run home while you are here."

Louise nodded. She passed to the bedside and looked down at the purplish face, flushed from heavy stertorous breathing, and fast becoming vacant and brutalized by the fit demon that possessed him. As the door shut softly behind the departing nurse, Louise fell on her knees before the bed, and pressed his limp hand to her heart, then laid her face, wet with tears, beside the still one on the pillow.

"Oh, honey, I did it!" she whispered hoarsely. "Yes, I did it! But it was for you—to make you strong and well!"

George Swanson's consciousness returned to him, as one returns home from a far country—to grope among old familiar things, and to ponder, recalling this landmark and that, speaking to and recollecting this old friend and then the other.

Beside his bed, in New York, sat the happy Louise. She asked no more of life—her beloved had come into his own again. True, the bandage was still about his head, but the great surgeon had that day dismissed him, for the terrible convulsions were banished to the limbo of forgotten things. Sometimes, by interfering with existent circumstances, in an effort to make them better, we bring grief to ourselves. Louise, with the surgeon's aid, had recalled the consciousness of George Swanson, the planter, but "Honey," her make-believe husband, whom she had nursed tenderly for months, and whose real name she didn't know, was rapidly blending with George Swanson, the planter, the alert man of business.

In Louise's happy heart began to creep the terror of the unknown. Who was

this man she picked up from the streets and sheltered and nursed and loved and sold her soul for?

Until he gained sufficient strength to go out, George Swanson kept his own counsel from a life time habit of caution. Puzzled at his condition and wondering at his surroundings, he said nothing until able to shift for himself.

So, when he was able to leave the apartment, he spent four anxious hours in a Western Union Office, dispatching telegram after telegram to the wonder of the young woman operator. He was now able to link his memory with that night on Canal Street, and ascertained from his family lawyer in Baton Rouge that George Swanson had been missing for months, mourned for dead, and that his wife and babes joyously awaited his return.

He returned to the apartment and watched Louise, as with deft touches she prepared their evening meal. He pondered his problem long and deeply, sitting there with Louise in the kitchenette as she sang a little happy song to herself. What part had this woman played in his life? Was she a nurse, or what? He didn't know, nor could he even guess.

Louise, coming in with the food, switched on the light and they sat down to eat. Impatient to know about himself and eager to begin his journey home to wife and babies, he stammered out the question, "And who are you?"

Louise looked quickly up. It had come at last! But she would not give up without a fight. "Why, honey, what a silly question! Why, I am your wife!"

"Oh, no you aren't," he said evenly and quietly. "I've a wife at Baton Rouge!" And then he told her all—that is, all he knew, of course. Louise could have supplied the rest of it and made the chain complete, but she didn't. Her

heart was too full. If she had been stretched upon the rack, she could not have spoken. It all galloped through her aching head—terror filled nights, mean days of work, smarting eyes and needle-sore fingers, aching limbs, and outraged soul from cabaret work, and at the last, the terrible night with Don Jose that had seared her soul and purchased "honey's" health.

As he proposed to go on his way to the station and home, he said something vaguely of expense and gratitude. He did not know what he owed her, but he would repay. He must take down her address—here in the apartment. So he wrote it carefully down, then he stepped over to her to say good-bye. To his

credit be it said, he stooped and kissed her fondly. His heart ached at leaving, but she was so unresponsive and dull!

He raced to the Pennsylvania Station in a taxi. He had money, for establishing his identity by wire, he had drawn funds to make his journey, and his heart was light. "Where to, sir?" asked the ticket seller, and he answered absent-mindedly, "Home." Then correcting himself, with a smile, he added, "Baton Rouge, via New Orleans."

And Louise? As his train speeded across New Jersey, Louise, "which now of these, thinkest thou, was a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" turned her footsteps sadly to the Creole Cabaret, there to end her miserable days.

A BARNYARD TRAGEDY

The crisp and pleasant young man pulled up his horse and glanced at the lowering sun and then at his road map. It was still ten miles to the next town. He shook his head and searched the surrounding farmlands for signs of human habitation. The smoke rising from around the bend ahead of him gave him assurance. He spoke to his horse.

The old farmer met him at the gate and eyed him quizzically. He slowly nodded at the young man's explanation.

"Wal, I 'spose we kin put you up fer the night. Drove yo' mare 'round to the barn an' I'll help ye enhitch."

After feeding the horse and enjoying a delightful country supper the young fellow evinced his willingness to retire. The old man scratched his head.

"Wal, they ain't but only two beds, so I 'spose ye'll have to sleep with the baby. I guess that'll be alright, won't it?"

"Never mind, my good friend," replied the salesman hastily, "I wouldn't think of discommoding you to such an extent. If you will give me a couple of blankets, I'll gladly sleep in the hay loft in the barn."

"That 'ud be best, I reckon, Pa," seconded the old wife approvingly. "I'll fetch the blankets."

And in the half light of the rising moon the young man sought his virtuous couch amid the masses of hay.

He was astir early, and donning his clothes he rolled up the blankets and descended to the lower floor of the roomy barn. But he was not the first one to arise as he noted with surprise. A pretty and demure girl of eighteen summers was before him. She sat calmly milking one of the cows.

"Hullo," he exclaimed in surprise, "Who are you?"

"Good morning," she replied sweetly startled. "I'm the baby. Who are you?"

He gulped. The blankets slid unnoticed to the ground. Painfully he surveyed her. Finally he managed to gasp:

"—Oh, me! I'm the damn fool that slept in the barn."

—O. P. Jerome.



OVER her knitting, Mrs. Poddins shot a steely glance at the portly figure of her husband as he slouched comfortably in his chair reading a magazine. For a few moments the needles worked furiously while her double-chin protruded itself until it set at a very belligerent angle. Then her lips tightened and her eyes slowly kindled until they flashed fire. The psychological moment had arrived. She cleared her throat.

"That woman called you up again this evening," she observed by way of beginning. "She wanted to know if her sweetheart was at home!" This last was said caustically, accompanied by a grimace which made her fat, flabby-featured face resemble a shrivelled peach.

Mr. Poddins, apparently, knew just what was coming. He fingered his bald spot reflectively, slumped down even further in his chair, adopted a perplexed expression, and remained silent.

"There's no doubt in my mind but that you know her," continued Mrs. Poddins in her shrill, rasping voice. "No woman calls a married man at his home unless she has been encouraged by him. This particular one, in my opinion, is a most brazen hussy. She actually laughed this evening when I told her you were married."

Mr. Poddins laid his magazine on the table resignedly and suppressed a yawn. Then he took a cigar from his pocket and chewed the end off pensively

The knitting needles again began to work overtime.

"That's my thanks!" she went on. "That's my thanks for allowing you privileges, Horatio Poddins. I allow you to smoke in the house and ruin the curtains, play cards with your rough-neck friends once a week until after ten o'clock ——" A tear wended its way down Mrs. Poddins' nose and settled perilously on the end of it. "Mama always advised me to be firm with you. Mama ——" Words failed her.

Mr. Poddins put the cigar back in his pocket unlighted. Then he folded his hands across his paunch, closed his eyes, and sighed.

"Mama always said that you were wayward." She found herself and grimly fought back her tears. "When I married you fifteen years ago, she advised me not to do it. I could have married that lovely Joe Williamette. He never married after I refused him, and everybody knows that he just ate his heart out longing for me after I married you." Her chin trembled in spite of her. "No doubt you've been meeting that woman on the sly. She's called up every day now for a week and you never told me a thing about it. If you were innocent you would have done so. Every time she calls she wants to talk to her sweetheart. You're a fine looking sweetheart, you — you bald-headed weasel. Mama told me about you, but I didn't pay any

attention. That's the way with a girl."

Mr. Poddins opened his eyes at this. He took a good look at his spouse. Girl! He saw a good two-hundred-and-thirty pounds of rather settled, homely woman. He saw a too-pink face that did not radiate a great deal of intelligence. Girl! It had been many a year ———.

He closed his eyes and again relaxed.

She regarded him for a moment quizzically.

"Why don't you say something?" she demanded wrathfully. Then quickly, "You don't dare to!"

Mr. Poddins opened his mouth. It was remotely possible that he intended to speak. But he didn't. He yawned instead.

The phone bell rang. Mrs. Poddins started and dropped her knitting. Mr. Poddins twisted his neck reaching for the phone on the table beside him, but his better half got there first.

Mrs. Poddins lifted the receiver to her ear. He, fearing the worst apparently, fingered the end of his aquiline nose reflectively.

"Hello!" he heard her say. "Yes, he's here! . . . Who wants him? . . . His sweet heart! . . . This is Mrs. Poddins speaking . . . Do you realize that you are breaking up my home? . . . Mr. Poddins is a married man! . . . What do—" Mrs. Poddins rattled the receiver hook several times angrily.

"She hung up," she announced as she again seated herself. "I asked central today what her number was and she wouldn't tell me. But I'll find out—never you fear, Horatio Poddins. The truth will prevail. I will yet know who this woman is upon whom you lavish your affections."

Suddenly she arose to her feet.

"No!" she snapped as though she had suddenly made up her mind along other lines. "I won't bother. I don't care who she is. I'll leave you this minute. Then

I'll divorce you." This last announcement was made with decisiveness. She gathered up her knitting. "Mama will not be in the least surprised when I walk in with my things."

She slammed the door behind her.

Mr. Poddins sat for an hour in his chair after that, staring at the ceiling. Her heavy tread he heard upon the floor above him. He heard bureau drawers being slammed, a trunk being pulled about. Yes, Mrs. Poddins was going. Of that, he had no doubt.

The phone rang again. Mr. Poddins answered it. Yes, Mr. Poddins was at the phone. Yes, he would be at home during the next ten minutes. Yes, he would wait.

The ten minutes were almost up when he opened the front door and admitted a girl in a white skirt and tailor-made jacket. He escorted her into the parlor. She was young, very young, and it was apparent that she was frightened. Her big, violet eyes were wide and she grinned now and then in an embarrassed manner.

"I'm afraid I've done something terrible," she said in a whimpering tone.

Mr. Poddins' eyebrows raised a trifle.

"Tillie Shubert who lives up the street from you put me up to calling you on the phone and kidding you." The lady grinned. "We just got a new phone in our house and I didn't know who else to—" She began twisting her handkerchief. "I didn't understand what I was doing until today and then I realized the horrible truth. Tillie told me you were young and handsome and single. I didn't know—your wife told me—" Whatever she had intended to say ended with a gulp.

Mr. Poddins leaned back in his chair and put his finger tips together. He directed one ear toward the ceiling and listened. Yes, Mrs. Poddins was still packing.

"I made up my mind that I would come over and explain everything to your wife—" The visitor's voice trembled dramatically. "—as soon as I learned the horrible truth. I must not—must not—" Here she raised her clasped hands before her in a theatrical pose she had practiced before a mirror before leaving home. "—I must not stand between husband and wife, no matter what the cost!"

At that moment Mr. Poddins heard a door slam upstairs. He arose quickly and lead the girl to the door.

"It's all right," he said soothingly. "No harm's been done." He patted her arm. "Just forget it."

"But—but—" Violet eyes looked into his. "But—really, I must explain to your wife. Suppose—Oh, suppose she should leave you."

Mr. Poddins' ear once more directed itself toward the ceiling. He heard his wife's heavy footfalls on the stairs. He straightened himself to his full four foot nine. He hadn't a moment to lose. Mrs. Poddins was coming down the steps. He

could hear the sound of her suitcase bumping against the stair railing as she came. He must hurry!

He turned to his visitor and fixed a steely glance upon her. The violet eyes became frightened under it.

"Leave my house, woman!" he commanded. He saw that she was about to indulge in more dramatics. Quickly he rallied his forces. "Leave my house before I lose my temper."

He slammed the door behind her and watched her as she passed down the porch steps to the street. Then he turned and faced the stairway where Mrs. Poddins was laboriously descending with a suitcase in each hand.

"Did I hear a woman's voice down here just now?" demanded Mrs. Poddins querulously.

Mr. Poddins watched her as she pinned a flat, shapeless hat to her stringy hair determinedly.

"You did," he replied finally. "She was selling tickets to an ice cream festival."

A STUDY IN LANDLADIES

Mrs. Blythe was comfortably fat. She had been divorced four times and married once. The photographs of her former husbands adorned my bed-room. She understood men perfectly. Yet she always wanted her rent in advance.

Mrs. Clarendon had never married, yet she claimed to understand men perfectly. But I discovered after some months spent in her furnished room that she didn't know the first thing about us. She wrote to all the moving-picture stars for their autographed photos, and had a passionate liking for raw onions. Yet she always wanted her rent in advance.

Miss Smythe once had had money in the family, but was reduced to taking in roomers because of the high cost of living. She would gladly lend me money, and really read the novel I gave her for Christmas. Yet she always wanted her rent in advance.

Mrs. Davies showed a personal interest in my private affairs, and would play the Victrola for my benefit Sunday mornings. She used to sew my monogram on my pajamas as a pleasant little surprise. Yet she always wanted her rent in advance.

—Carl Glick.



MUSIC'S CHARMS

— BY H. ALLAN PERRILL —

THE efficiency expert had long been troubled by the problem of speeding up the leisurely stenographers. He decided, at length, to purchase a phonograph and some jazz records.

"If I can make them keep time to some of the modern jazz," thought he, "their production will be trebled."

Selecting a victim for the experiment he shut her in a small room with the talking machine and dictated the following:

Mr. John Smithkins,
Westhaven, N. H.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your letter of recent date I wish to state that I believe you to be doing us an injustice by cancelling your order and not stating your reasons for doing so.

That there is a slight trade depression, I will admit. However, I do not believe it warrants your cancelling so large an order.

You were very enthusiastic over our automobile hoods and other accessories when our salesman displayed them to you. Your order is now packed ready for shipment. Will you not reconsider your cancellation and allow us to send them to you?

Awaiting an early reply, I am

Very truly yours.

Then placing a "Blues" record on the machine he instructed the stenographer to type the letter. Watch in hand, he chuckled in self gratification at the speed she was maintaining.

Shoulders swaying, eyes snapping in ex-

hilaration and humming the refrain of the melody the typist was hammering on the typewriter in perfect rhythm to it.

"Makes 'em happy and content and increases their production three-hundred fold," chortled the efficiency man, joyously.

As the stenographer handed the letter to him for his inspection, his jaw sagged and his eyes protruded slightly from their sockets. This is what he read:

Replying to your letter of recent date, of recent date, I wish to state, that I've got the blues (those blooey blues) 'cause you done me wrong (yes you done me wrong). You didn't hesitate (Oh, you little devil!) To kid me along (bing, bang, crash, bong). You promised to be true—ooh—ooh, but you only made me blooey blue.

Chorus

Oh, I've got the blue—ooh—oohs,
I've got the blooey blues,
I've got the trade de-pres-sion blues.
To cancel your order wasn't right;
It surely makes me want to fight,
Oh, I've got those tra-a-ade depression blues.

Replying to your letter, listen to my plea, (Oh, honey dear) Replying to your letter, listen to me (give me your ear) Oh, let me send that order of hoods (ta dada da) For I'm the baby to deliver the goods. (bing, bang, crash, ba) I've got the 'stuff an' I showed it to you (on the level) An' you said that it looked mighty good and true (little devil) And I don't think it's very nice thing to do, To make me so darned blooey blue.

Chorus

"What do you mean by this farce?" demanded the efficiency expert, angrily.

"What farce?" questioned the girl, genuinely surprised.

"Do you mean to say that you had no idea what you were writing?" said the expert.

"Why I thought I was writing the letter as you dictated it. Those 'Blues' always affect me so strongly though, that perhaps I was paying more attention to the music than the letter. Did I make a great many mistakes?"

"The experiment was not a decided success," vouchsafed the man, somewhat stiffly. "We'll repeat the test, using a different type of record."

Using the "Gallivanting Rag" the efficiency expert was gratified to note that the stenographer was making even better speed than before. He hoped and thought that the letter would be written as dictated, now that she was guarding against her former mistake of allowing her mind to follow the music too closely.

His face looked crestfallen as she whipped the letter out of the machine and passed it over to him. For this is the way it ran:

Say bo, you can go to hell!
 You didn't treat me very well.
 Cancelling that order that you made
 Sorta leaves me out in the shade.
 Business is rotten but I should fret
 When I hear that melody, I forget
 All my troubles;
 They're but bubbles
 When, I hear that fascinatin'
 Hear that aggravatin'
 Hear that Gallivantin' Rag.

Chorus

Oh, that Gallivantin' Rag!
 Puts you on a reg'lar jag.
 You done me wrong, but I don't care;
 All I want to do is listen to that air.
 Play it again
 That fascinatin' strain
 That Gal-li-va-na-tin' Rag!

You done me wrong, but I'll give you another chance.

(Listen to that music, bo, I gotta dancel)
 If you'll reconsider cancellin' that order
 you made,

Just send me a telegram, charges pre-paid.

But if you don't, there ain't no sense in feelin' blue,

When I got that pretty mel-o-dy to listen to;

To that wonderful fascinatin'

Wonderful aggravatin'

Wonderful Gallivantin' Rag.

Chorus

"Did you apply yourself closely to this letter?" questioned the efficiency man, sharply.

"As closely as I could," replied the stenographer, earnestly. "You simply can't keep your mind altogether on your work when there's a jazzy piece being played."

The efficiency expert sighed but because he was a determined young man, he would not yet admit defeat.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have used jazz records," he thought. "A sad piece would carry them away with its melody and it might speed up the girls by way of contrast. At any rate, it's worth trying."

Summoning the office boy, he sent him for a record of "My Darling Nellie Gray." When it arrived he placed it on the machine and was ready for the third trial. The stenographer did not make quite as good speed with this as she had with the jazz pieces. She appeared to be devoting more attention to the letter and less to the music than she had previously, however.

What was that glistening in her eye, though? A tear? Yes, tears! There was not a doubt of it now, for they were trickling down her cheeks. Consternation and chagrin showed on the expert's face as he noted that this record, too, was carrying the stenographer away on its emotions.

He was prepared for the way in which the letter was written.

Oh, you've taken my order away
 And the skies look mighty gray
 For I'll never see your business, any-
 more.
 And the tears spring to my eyes
 And my chest is full of sighs
 And grief and sorrow strike me to the
 core.

Chorus

Oh I think you've done me wrong
 In deceiving me so long
 And making me think your order, it was
 true.
 For you said you liked our line
 And our goods you thought were fine
 And now you've turned me down and

made me blue.

Oh won't you listen to my plea?
 I'll die if you don't list to me
 To ship the goods to you, is what I
 crave.
 If you don't give me a chance
 I shall sink into a trance
 And soon fill a cold and mouldy grave.

Chorus

The classified columns of the newspapers
 carried the following advertisement the
 next day:

Phonographs and records for sale.
 Played only three times. Reasonable.
 Efficiency Expert. Hokum's Automobile
 Accessory Factory.

WHAT MONEY WILL DO

That smell—that smell of grease paint, powder, dust, gas, old walls, sharp perfume; the sickening, delicious, stale and never-to-be-forgotten odor of the theater, was the very life of Old Joe. He loved it all. He had climbed the ladder of success and had come down again. He knew the game and knew it well. He loved it.

Joe had gone to work there at the Palace, years and years ago as a "call boy," he rose from that to kid parts, from that to juvenile roles and then greatest of all, to the leading man of the company. His life ambition was then realized. He was the dashing hero for some years. Then the "drop" came, he was getting old, he had to take "father" roles, from that he went to character parts. He grew older all the time and finally had to stop acting altogether. The Palace Theater had taken him back, but not to act, he was to be the stupid person of a door-man.

Just now, Joe was again sad, he had come back to the theater for the last time. It was Sunday, the building wreckers would start in the morning to wreck the old theater. It was to be torn down and a large office building put up.

Joe went up to the famous dressing rooms for the last time. They were famous, why he, himself had at one time had the star's room. His thin, wrinkled face was very white, his bonny hands with veins showing strongly were nervous. As Joe went into the star's room, he slowly shook his head, as memories flashed back to him. Suddenly his whole body grew taut, a smile crept over his old face, he rushed over to the right corner of the room, ripped up the dirty old carpet, loosened a floor board, drew out a quart bottle of bonded liquor. It had been there twenty years. Ye Gods, he was happy, he shook with happiness.

No, Joe didn't drink it, he sold it to a liquor "hock shop" that had originated in 1940. This being 1950, the real bonded "stuff" brought a great deal of money to Old Joe, in fact it brought enough for him to buy the site of the palace Theater. He bought the old place because he had just remembered where two more cases of the "stuff" were hidden.

He was no longer the white-faced old man that he had been, but a real man of vitality. After selling the two cases of the "stuff" he was more than a millionaire, so he took up golf and spent his last days chasing a little white ball over a grass covered terrace.

—James Starr.



THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR

By Carl Glick

THREE blocks from the main part of the town, along the river front, was a row of sinister one-room shacks. During the day the street was silent and deserted, and the blinds in the windows of the houses all drawn. But at night a forced gaiety haunted the street. Beckoning lights shown from the windows. And silent, sneaking men shuffled by . . .

Here it was that Maybelle lived. No one knew her real name. When the rest of the town was asleep she could be seen sitting in the window of her "place" . . . waiting. Over the door her name was painted in red letters. She was not more than twenty-six. But she looked much . . . much older. Defiant and mocking And seemingly unashamed.

And then one day, Maybelle married. Of course the man knew. He couldn't have helped knowing. Perhaps he was no better nor no worse than she was, and his code of morals the same. But that is neither here nor there. Maybelle moved away from the street down by the river front.

In the spring they were going to the country. They had bought a ranch up the Bitter Root Valley, and were to take possession in March. But that winter they must spend in town. A none too particular real estate agent rented them a house in a decent part of the town. I doubt if the neighbors knew at first. Certainly the women didn't. There might have been a few of the men who did. But they were wise enough to say nothing.

And Maybelle made no efforts to be neighborly. She spoke to no one. She went no place. And no one ever came to see her. Her house was silent . . .

Next door lived the Simpsons. Mary, their only child, was a sensible sort of a girl. She taught a Sunday School Class, and had all the middle-class virtues. Yet despite all this, there was in Mary, a strong vein of tolerance. She felt that sinners need a helping hand as much, if not more, than a sermon. Truthfully speaking, her Christianity was something she wasn't afraid of putting to a test.

After a fashion, she was engaged to be married to young Howard Andrews. Howard had a good job and was saving money, she believed. While, as yet, there had been nothing definite said between them, still he had been keeping company for about a year now. And if that isn't strong enough hint that his intentions were matrimony, what is?

One evening they were sitting on the porch. Mary let Howard come over three nights a week. The summer would soon be gone. It wouldn't be many more nights they could sit out of doors.

"Who lives next door?" asked Howard.

"I don't know," replied Mary. "They moved in last week. I think they are strangers in town. Poor souls, they must be lonely. I haven't seen a person go there. I'll call on her some day this week."

"Let's go down-town for a sundae?" said

Howard, as usual. It was nine-thirty, and the proper hour to make this suggestion.

As they passed the house next door, the woman came out into the yard.

"Good evening," said Mary, in a neighborly fashion.

The woman nodded.

An odd look came across Howard's face, unnoticed by Mary.

"You know, Mary, if I were you," he said, "I don't believe I'd call on that woman."

"Why not?"

"Oh, just because."

"But your reason? It's all I can do. Why not try to be friendly?"

"I know this is a small town," he answered, "and people do that sort of thing. But just the same, if I were you, I wouldn't. She doesn't look to me like a person worth knowing."

Mary laughed. "I'm afraid there's something of the snob in you, Howard. Now confess, isn't there?"

"A good deal. I trust to first impressions, and I don't like her looks."

And that was all that was said on that particular subject.

A few evenings later Howard was to have dinner with Mary. Her father and mother were going out to the Wednesday Night Social Club.

"Come over and have dinner with me, Howard," Mary had said. "We'll get it together, and you can help me wash the dishes afterwards."

Along about six o'clock Howard put in an appearance. He rapped on the front door. But silence greeted him.

"She's probably around in the back," he thought. And so he made his way to the kitchen.

Mary greeted him with a smile.

"I thought I'd find you here," said Howard. "How are things going?"

"All right," Mary replied. "But you've got to help!"

"What do you want me to do?" he asked, perching himself on the edge of the table.

"Run out to the garden and see if you can find a bit of parsley. Just a little. Not much. I want it for the meat."

Looking through the window, Howard saw the woman next door come out upon the back porch.

"How's your neighbor?" he asked, as he paused by the door.

"All right," replied Mary, gravely. "Run along now. Dinner's almost ready."

As he made his way down into the garden, he saw Maybelle coming slowly along. Soon she was opposite him. There was only a fence between them. Howard was curious. He had heard that she had married. And he was wondering how she had adapted herself to her new life. He glanced back toward the house. Mary was not in the kitchen. She had probably gone into the dining-room to lay the places.

He leaned across the fence.

"Hello, Maybelle," he said.

The woman looked up.

"I see you've moved," said Howard. "Somewhat more fashionable quarters, huh? Going in for society, too?" He meant this to be funny.

But Maybelle did not laugh. Nor did she reply.

Again Howard questioned her.

"Home to callers?" he said softly.

Maybelle looked him full in the face.

"You dirty skunk!" she said. For a moment she stared at him. And then turning abruptly, she went back into the house, slamming the door.

"Well, I'll be damned!" exclaimed Howard to himself.

He looked toward the kitchen. Mary was standing in the door. Rather sheepishly he pulled the parsley from the garden, and started back to the house.

"I was talking to your neighbor," he said, noticing the question on Mary's face. He

felt that he must, in some way, explain his actions.

"I notice," Mary replied.

"She was rather abrupt. And I don't think she seems so very friendly."

"I don't blame her. I heard what was said, Howard. I was here on the porch, inside the screen."

Howard's face was rather pale.

Mary looked him over questioningly. Her eyes were accusing. Howard wished now that he hadn't spoken to Maybelle. But then, surely, she would never say anything. He didn't see how a woman of her sort would dare.

"I didn't tell you, Howard," Mary was saying. "But I went over to call on her the other day. I noticed she was watching me, as I went up the walk, from behind the curtains at the window. And it was rather a long time until she answered my ring. I believe, for that matter, I rang twice. You see, I knew she was home. Finally she appeared. She stared at me, and opened the door only half way. I was embarrassed. It was as if I was a book agent or a peddler of some sort.

"I've come to see you," I said. "To call."

"On me?" she replied. "Curious, huh?"

"It was evident she didn't want to let me in. 'We are neighbors,' I went on to say. 'And I am hoping we might be friends, also.'

"Then she laughed. I felt dreadfully sorry I had gone. There was something so mirthless in that laugh, so mocking.

"I guess you don't want to make friends with me."

"Why not?"

"Ain't your men folks told you?"

"And then she explained . . . 'You'd be sure to find out sooner or later,' she said. 'And what's the use? Anyway, we'll be gone the first of March. I don't want no friends.'"

"Howard," said Mary, looking him squarely in the eyes. "She played fair with me. You haven't . . . I remember what you said a few days ago. At least she was honest. And if I had to make a choice I'd rather know people who play fair with me . . . Good-night, Howard. Good luck to you in everything you may undertake."

"Mary!"

"That's all I have to say!"

Howard jammed his hat upon his head, and went slowly down the street . . .

CAUSE AND EFFECT

The commercial traveler, seated in front of the only hotel in the small western town, surveyed the crowds of children with an interest that was closely akin to surprise. Turning to the proprietor of the hotel, he inquired; "Why is it that this town has ten times as many children as other towns of its size?"

"Wal," replied the proprietor, "I reckon that there engineer on the Burlington is responsible for that."

"How can that be?" asked the drummer. "The Burlington doesn't stop in this town."

"I know that they don't stop here," said the proprietor, "but they come through here about 4 o'clock in the morning, and that dern fool of an engineer starts blowing his whistle two miles before he gets to this town and he keeps that whistle blowing all the time he's running through town."

"What has that to do with all the children?"

"Wal," replied the proprietor, "people can't go back to sleep, and it's too early to get up."



Liz ~ or Rosita

by John Wilbur

LIGE brought home Liz, his bride, to the log hut with a dirt roof, standing back a mile from the road. The dirt roof was matched by a dirt floor. A square hole sawed in one end of the hut served for a window. The fire-place had no chimney, and the cabin's interior was smoke-blackened. The sagging door hung on hinges of leather strap. Its knob was a wooden plug thrust through a knot-hole.

The shack's one room was furnished only by a straw-pile bed heaped with filthy rags, and some battered kitchen utensils. But the vacant-faced Liz was aware of no lack, and as time went on she did nothing toward routing the dirt. This bride and bridegroom of the "cracker country" were content to live in the house just as it was.

Day after day Lige, sallow and emaciated, sat outside on a broken nail-keg against the wall. He wore a pair of frayed old butter-nut trousers, held up by one suspender. His calico shirt had fallen to pieces without ever having known the washtub. A greasy felt hat, once black, but now faded to a green-gray, was pulled down over his eyes.

On the ground near him, under the shade of a scraggy tree which seemed to mourn at having to shelter "poor white trash," sprawled Liz, the wife of his

bosom. Liz owned only the poor calico dress that covered her. Neither she nor her husband had ever owned a pair of shoes. Her face and hands were always dirty, her nails black, and of her greasy head of hair the less said the better. Life held two joys for Liz,—resting and chewing tobacco.

Man and wife might be seen there at any time, in front of their cabin, Lige sitting on the nail-keg, with snuff and white whiskey beside him, Liz chewing and nonchalantly spitting, both gazing eternally at nothing, and dreaming—of nothing in particular. They had never been any nearer to the city than the cross-roads country store, and had no curiosity to go further. They could not read or write. Mentally weak and utterly shiftless, they were lacking in any desire to learn.

How Liz and Lige lived, no one knew nor cared. They had a little corn, sometimes a little pork or a few beans. A forlorn cow that foraged for herself provided them with milk when they had the energy to milk her. When they got any money, it went for snuff and white whiskey.

As the years passed, children came,—six of them. But Liz and Lige were fired with no ambition to improve their circumstances. A sack with holes

punched through it was the only garment any of their offspring owned. Liz had no mother love for these children. She bore them because they came.

As for their father, he had neither affection for them nor pride in them, and no plan for their future. The only thing he knew about them for a certainty was that they were always hungry. They had to eat, and he did not know how to provide for them—so he gave up the riddle. One day he arose from the nail-keg and left the log hut, Liz and the six children.

Wandering aimlessly, Lige reached a Southern gulf city. He picked up scraps of food wherever he could find them. Bananas left on the pier after the steamers had unloaded their cargo were a god-send to him. Once in a great while he did a little work on the levee, just enough to get money for snuff and white whiskey.

Usually he received no more than twenty-five cents, but one day he was paid a dollar. It was a great deal of money,—more than he had ever possessed at one time. He bought all the whiskey he could get for the dollar, drank it, slumped down in the shade of a cotton-bale, and sank into a stupor. When he awoke, he was on a schooner, shanghaied and sailing South.

But Lige was useless as a deckhand, for he could not and would not work. He had a weakened mind and no bodily strength. For one thing, he had never really eaten,—had never had a genuine "square meal." His whole life had consisted of sniffing snuff, drinking whiskey, and idle dreaming. When the schooner made port, he deserted, and the captain, glad to be rid of him, placed no obstacles in his way.

Fate landed Lige in a sleepy little tropical town of narrow, sun-baked streets and one-story red and blue 'dobe houses, all alike, with iron-barred win-

dows and roofs of brick-colored tile to ward off the heat. The town meant nothing to Lige, though its indolent people, whose language he did not know and would not bother to learn, were fit mates for him. He was warm, and that was enough.

Then, if such a spineless creature could descend, Lige did. He ate uncooked the shell-fish and sand-crabs he picked up on the beach, or cocoanuts that had been washed down the river,—anything he could get without effort. Still he did nothing but dream. But into his dreams now penetrated the longing for his former comforts, snuff and white whiskey. Always he wanted them, but he had no money. The dreams had been better with them.

The desire grew stronger. It came again and again, and the recurring impressions were so rare with Lige—finally tortured him into action. He hired out to the logwood contractor. He knew he had eight years to live before the logwood poison would get him; someone told him that.

Month after month he worked, with alternate chills and fever, in the logwood camps, and all that time he had his snuff and whiskey. But he was weaker than the other men, and he did not last out the eight years; the poison got him in five.

When it began to take effect, the contractor used to beat him to make him work. When he could not work at all, the contractor kicked him out.

Lige wallowed through fever-infected swamps, in rain and sun, burning by day and chilled by night, sleeping in slime and filth, making toward the sea. It was a skeleton that fell on the beach. If there was a breath of life left in him, it was undistinguishable.

Not far away lived a native woman with two beautiful daughters. The girls

had white blood in their veins, and it showed. Their father was white. He had been a prospector who had drifted into the country with a mule and pack, and had drifted out again as unceremoniously as he had come. But he was their father.

The mother had sold the older girl to a rich cattleman who had taken her away to his ranch. She was quite willing to go. At the ranch she would be petted, admired, given good clothes, perhaps even some gold ornaments. She would have compliments and attention as long as her beauty lasted. Besides, she would no longer have to go to the river and pound clothes all day on the big rock, standing in water up to her waist. The ranch would at least be different,—maybe it would be exciting.

And now the bargain had been made for the sale of the younger girl, Rosita. A rich and powerful coffee-grower had agreed to the price and had already paid her mother the money. She was even more beautiful than her sister. But Rosita looked at the coffee-grower scornfully. He was old and he certainly had no white blood.

It was this girl who had to go every Monday to the priest's house to gather up the soiled linen, then dig and clean the yucca and make the starch. Every Saturday she had to stand in the hot sun to do the ironing, and after that, carry the clothes on her head up the long hill, back to the priest's house. The clothes were heavy, and the church a long way from her home, but the mother knew that Rosita could be trusted to collect the money for the work and bring it all back.

The day arrived for her to be taken to the home of the coffee-grower. But Rosita had disappeared. With the first light she had stolen away. Taking a canoe and some food, she hid herself in the swamps. She had no definite idea of what she was going to do or how she

would live, but something within her cried out against giving herself to this old man who was all black.

She worked her way, when night came, to the beach through mire and grass, on the watch for alligators,—looking, straining,—until at last she glimpsed the sea.

As the girl stood on the sand, with the bright tropical moon shining as it shines only in those countries, she noticed a dark object on the beach. She was afraid, but the object did not move, so she went closer. It was a man. She touched him. Yes, he was dead, it seemed, but not yet cold. And the moon showed her that he was white!

Rosita worked over him, held water to his lips, washed the slime and filth from his face, fed him a little, then dragged him to her canoe and pulled him into it. The rest of the night she paddled on the sea, following the shore-line.

When day broke, and the hot sun rose, she got her man into the shade, cared for him, fed and nursed him. The next day it was the same, and the next, and the next, through many labor-crammed hours, until she came to a river into which she turned, going upstream to find a suitable landing-place.

In her desperate haste and desire to bring ease and comfort to her man, she cut down trees, with nothing but her knife and her little brown hands to aid her, and built her log house. Still she fed and nursed the man, until at last he became well and strong. But he did not work.

As Rosita grew into superb young womanhood, her beauty increased day by day. Her work, her beauty and herself were all bestowed upon her foundling in one glorious gift.

After Rosita had established her home, she left plenty of food at the log house for Lige and journeyed up the river. With her knife she chopped and felled forty

trees. These she hauled and pulled, tugged and rolled, until she got them to the river and threw them in. She bound them together with lighter woods and vines, so they would float, guided them through tangled masses of sickening growth and between fever-breathing lowlands, and brought them down one hundred and ten miles to the sea.

There she waited, with nothing but the brush for shelter, digging for food with her knife, eating whatever she could find. At last a steamer came, and she sold her logs to the captain. Talking with him, she found out where he took the logs to sell, and who bought them.

Then, paddling in calm and storm on the sea, through marsh and jungle in the river, rain-soaked and sun-baked, she made her way to the nearest town. With the money she had received for the logs, she bought an axe for herself, clothes, medicine and tobacco for Lige, and started on her homeward journey.

Now began Rosita's real career. She had discovered her own capabilities,—knew what she could do. She took another trip up the river, again leaving Lige in comfort, his needs anticipated and supplied. This time, with the aid of her axe, she felled one hundred and forty trees. With a repetition of her former struggle, she got the one hundred and forty logs to the sea. Again she waited for the steamer, but this time she sold only forty logs to the captain, consigning one hundred to the man of whom she had learned on her first trip. This was her own idea. She had thought it out for herself.

The beautiful girl who had become a beautiful woman continued with her self-found enterprise, felling her logs, floating them to the sea and selling them, keeping Lige in comfort, and giving him the money from the sale of the logs. Then she hired men to work for her,

superintending them herself, and the business grew.

Once, on returning home, she found Lige gone and the money with him, all the fruit of her toil and saving vanished at once. Going to the nearest town, she discovered him dead-drunk in a saloon, as filthy as when she had reclaimed him from the beach. But now he was no longer the skeleton she had dragged into her canoe. He fought her and struck her. So she stayed outside the drinking-places to wait for him until the money was gone, looking after him, seeing that he had cover at night, and at last got him back home. After that, though, she hid the money.

Rosita bought books. Between her trips she studied and educated herself in every way she could. She taught Lige to wash himself,—she taught him to keep accounts. She taught him to read and write, and it was harder work than felling trees with a knife. She gave him everything,—cleanliness, decency, respect, health, wealth and strength, the glory of herself. She awakened in him a sense of the possibilities of life, until at last this scrap of nothingness became a man.

Today, Lige is the mahogany king of the world. He has made many trips to London, Paris and New York, and sometimes Rosita has gone with him. While in these centers, she has tried to improve herself, learning music, the languages, and studying works of art. She has become a cultivated woman in the fullest sense of the word.

Lige has many thousands of pounds on deposit with his London bankers, some millions of dollars in New York, and several million francs in Paris. He has many properties, including a house in London.

His conscience troubles him. The claims of his wife, Liz of the cracker

country, are upon him. He wonders whether she is still chewing tobacco in front of the dirt-roofed hut, and whether he ought not to do something about it. He wonders about those six children he brought into the world. They have had no superwoman to slave for them and teach them the meaning of life.

Not long ago he settled on Rosita several thousand dollars a year,—even yet not fully realizing the irony of it, since it was she, and she alone, who founded the fortune. He meant to go back to his wife, the shiftless creature to whom he had been united by due process of law. He had no idea whether she still lived, or whether his children, like her, sniffed snuff and wallowed in the dirt. But he had brought them into the world,—they were his flesh and blood.

Rosita said nothing. She only watched him with her great dark eyes, while he made his preparations to leave. But he

could not go. He had a guilty feeling that he had not settled enough money upon Rosita. He doubled the amount, and made another start, telling her where he was going. She offered no protest, made no effort to hold him. But again he could not go.

Five times he has started. As many times he has come back to the magnificent, self-sacrificing woman who has given him everything, who brought back the breath of life to his body and made him a man.

Does Liz of the cracker country still sit in the dirt? Would she thank him to take her out of it? Rosita has taught him something of self-respect. Shall he use this self-respect to desert her and go back to the sloven to whom he was married?

The mahogany king honestly does not know which is the moral course. Which has the greater claim, Liz or Rosita?

TRY THIS

The time-tried remedies for a balky Ford had failed. Her tail had been twisted, water had been poured in her ears, gasoline on her back and she had even been given a dose of oil to loosen her up. Profanity and general abuse failed to arouse a spark of animation, or even a sleepy snort.

And then the stranger arrived. He walked up to the stalled Ford, lifted its hood and for a moment gazed quietly into its interior parts muttering softly to it. He stepped back and closed the hood.

"Try her now," he advised the driver.

A single kick of the starter and Lizzie started throbbing without even so much as a preliminary grunt or grumble.

"Stranger," said the owner, "Tell me, what in Sam Hill did you do to that Ford?"

"Why," came the cool response, "All I did was to open the hood and whisper softly, 'Turn over Lizzie, this is Henry.'"

—L. C. Taylor.

The Toll of Fear

by Ray St Vrain

ELGIE BOWEN had just finished her high school course when she answered Judge Henry Clay Stamper's advertisement in the morning paper for a young girl to learn stenography and make herself generally useful in his law office.

She found Judge Stamper to be a mountain of a man, sprawled all over a swivel chair and dropping down at the sides, untidy in his rumpled broadcloth Prince Albert, soft-fingered, soft-voiced, smiling tirelessly with grayish lips and appraising her with furtive, light green eyes.

Elgie, only seventeen, flaxen-haired, red-cheeked, unusually pretty, inheriting a curious fear of men from her dead mother, was frightened almost to death when this monstrously fat, pussy lawyer held her hand fully thirty seconds as he greeted her.

"Yes," he said in a gentle tenor—almost a falsetto voice, "my wife——"

His wife ——! Everything was all right, then. Unsophisticated Elgie gathered courage.

Judge Stamper bade her sit down and then told her his plan. He had followed the same plan with other young girls and it always worked admirably. His

wife, formerly an instructor in a business college, would teach Elgie the principles of the latest and best system of shorthand, and while learning she would live under the Judge's roof ——.

"But——," interrupted Elgie, frightened again.

Judge Stamper smiled; in fact, he had never ceased smiling. "It would be absolutely necessary, Miss Bowen. My wife is an invalid and never leaves the house. If you wish to be my stenographer you must learn Mrs. Stamper's method, taught as only she can teach it. While you are studying you will make your home with us and I will in addition pay you six dollars a week for helping me at the office. When you are competent to take dictation and can do fair work on the typewriter I shall of course pay you more. Your mother wouldn't object to this arrangement? Suppose I take her in my car to call on Mrs. Stamper ——?"

"My mother is dead," said Elgie, "also my father."

"Indeed? And you so young! Well, well . . .!" And the Judge delivered a little discourse on the vicissitudes of life, sighing from subterranean depths and exuding an eloquent moisture from his

light green eyes. He returned to the subject at hand, talked pleasantly for half an hour or so, and wound up by promising to call for Elgie that evening at her aunt's, where she was staying, and take her to see his wife. "We will be a father and mother to you, my dear child," he said, holding her hand another thirty seconds.

On leaving the somewhat shabbily furnished office Elgie was still worried and a bit frightened. At school the touch of a boy had always disquieted her; and the fat, cushiony hands of Judge Stamper now filled her not only with vague apprehension but downright disgust. Yet he was so old—and kindly; he was married; and she had always wanted to work in a law office. Her mother, whose distrust of the other sex had been almost psychopathic, had warned her on her death bed not to have faith in any man; but Elgie had begun to wonder if this were not a rather extreme view. Surely there were some good men in the world—even in the business world. Surely all men did not try to make love to their stenographers; and was it not possible that now and then could be found a man who was true to his wife?

So Elgie tried to reassure herself as she boarded a street car for home—but subconsciously, atavistically she had a consuming horror not only of the opposite sex but of the idea of sex per se. Dimly she remembered certain harrowing scenes in her early childhood, bitter quarrels between her mother and father. . . Then her father had gone away—forever; and her mother had triumphantly declared that if she had it to do over again she would not swerve a hair's breadth from the path she had marked out for herself. Later Elgie realized what she had meant. . .

That evening Judge Stamper, true to his promise, called for Elgie in his car

and took her to see his wife. The Stampers' house was a chilly, forbidding one, poorly furnished and ill-kept. Mrs. Stamper, a small, fiery-eyed woman with a face the color of death, looked as though she should have been in the incurable ward of a hospital. She continually pressed her hand to her breast as though in great pain; and at times her burning eyes almost filled with the suppressed tears of suffering. She seemed to be a really intelligent woman and readily agreed to teach Elgie her system of shorthand.

"It is a very good one, my dear," she said encouragingly, "and I am sure you will grasp it in a short time. I have already taught several girls for Judge Stamper."

Quite involuntarily Elgie asked the Judge why the girls had left him after he—and his wife—had been so good to them. The direct gaze of youth is sometimes embarrassing: the Judge flushed a copper red.

"They were ungrateful," he said. "But in justice to them I must say I didn't offer them the inducements I am offering you, Miss Bowen. Eventually I shall make you my private secretary."

Elgie felt quite proud; and Mrs. Stamper, bending almost double with the pain she heroically refrained from mentioning, smiled her approval. She soon bade the young girl goodnight, explaining that she was retiring early on account of losing a good deal of sleep lately; and then for half an hour or so Judge Stamper played brass band jazz music on a small but curiously stenorian phonograph. After each record he clapped his fat hands and then rubbed them, chuckling delightedly—and asking Elgie if she was quite sure she wasn't bored stiff; and she insisted with desperate enthusiasm that she wasn't at all ashamed to say she simply adored jazz.

On the way home he mentioned his wife's state of health.

"She looks frightfully ill," said Elgie.

"She insists she has a cancer. I just laugh it off. Oh, she may have some lump or other—many women do. What she needs is to get out of the house and take her mind off of herself. I don't believe in doctors. They're just a bad habit."

II

Elgie and her aunt with whom she had been living were not particularly congenial; so the young girl was glad enough to go to Judge Stamper's to stay while she took the lessons in shorthand from his wife.

Mrs. Stamper, ghastly, writhing with pain most of the time, proved to be a patient and efficient teacher; and in a few weeks Elgie assumed the position of stenographer in the Judge's office. He suggested that she continue to board at his house. She fell in with the plan, though the home life of the Stampers was cheerless in the extreme. The one maid was grossly lazy and incompetent, and Elgie's dark damp hall bedroom was never cleaned as it should be. The linens were suspicious, and the maid's cooking was a travesty on the culinary art. Besides, the breakfast and dinners (Elgie lunched at midday downtown) were made additionally unpleasant by Judge Stamper's brutally indifferent treatment of his ailing wife. One evening the poor woman, clutching convulsively at her breast, screamed shrilly and fell to the floor in a faint. Her husband grew furiously angry and made a scene, declaring that her illness was nothing but imagination. Elgie, disgusted, fled up to her own room.

Her employer's attitude toward her had become increasingly intimate and even tender. So far, however, he had been fairly circumspect. He had not

touched her with those soft fingers of his which she hated; nor had he made any equivocal remarks. Elgie, shrinking from all men instinctively, recoiled doubly from this one.

One midnight Mrs. Stamper had an attack of pain which roused the household. In spite of Judge Stamper's dislike of doctors he had to summon one to administer an opiate to the unfortunate woman. After she was resting comfortably he sought sympathy from Elgie. Both were sitting in the cold living-room after their labors. Inger, the maid, had gone to bed.

"My wife is the kind of a woman that drives a man to drink or worse," he said. "She has been a drag on me for years. I am seriously thinking of getting a divorce."

"Oh," cried Elgie, "that would be cruel. Surely it isn't a crime to be sick ——"

"If you will stay with me always and be my little comforter I'll try to put up with her," he said, suddenly advancing and throwing his arms around her.

With a wild scream she wriggled loose, ran upstairs to her room, locked the door, barricaded it with the dresser, and then sat up the rest of the night. At daybreak she left the house and returned to her aunt's. She did not go to the office that morning. Judge Henry Clay Stamper never saw her again.

III

Elgie's first experience with a man was not calculated to change her carefully nurtured distrust of the sex. In the next year she secured half a dozen positions only to resign them precipitately. Two of her employers were doddering old beaux who insisted on giving her flowers and candy; three were married men who were constantly begging her to go joy-riding with them; one was a young fellow who had no idea of responsibility, no respect whatever for women.

On leaving these pests Elgie had scenes with all of them. For each she worked longer than her self-respect sanctioned, postponing the inevitable day of resignation, as she needed all the money she could possibly earn. It cost her a good deal to live. She had left her aunt again and was boarding at a rather expensive place; and of course she had to dress well. Clothes, indeed, were her one great weakness. Fripperies and fineries, fur-pieces, silk stockings, lovely underthings she adored. She wore fine apparel very effectively indeed, and, like all girls, she would have preferred death to being out of style. Undoubtedly she would have felt hurt if the admiring glances of men in the street had not been directed her way, yet she was furious when they looked at her. She was very proud of her fragile ankles and was always careful that they could be seen to the best advantage; but when corner loungers' appraising gazes swept downward from her pretty face to her dainty feet and rested there she felt like striking the offenders dead on the spot.

At the end of her first year's experience of business life her aunt died and she was left quite alone in the world. The deceased, an improvident woman, had not left enough money to pay her funeral expenses, and Elgie, much as she loathed doing so, had to ask an advance of one hundred dollars from her latest employer, with whom she had been only a week. He was a real estate broker, a man in the thirties, named Eldred Rising. Quiet, good-looking, always well-groomed, with a sense of humor, he had made a rather favorable impression on the difficult Elgie. This impression was strengthened by his invariably reserved and respectful manner. Elgie did not trust him—she was incapable of trusting any man. But in comparison with the others she had known he was a positive

relief; and she was grateful for outward conformity to decency at least. In his heart he might have been blacker than the blackest of the preceding ones, the mountainous Judge Stamper, whose memory was a soul-shaking ague even yet; but Elgie had grown wise enough in the ways of the world not to cross bridges before she reached them.

Eldred Rising advanced his pretty, modish stenographer the hundred dollars without cavil. Indeed, he did so with a quick understanding and sympathetic readiness that was either the essence of guileless goodwill or a crafty effort to put himself in a position to ask favors in return. Elgie inclined to the latter view; and the very perfection of his acting—for acting she was certain it was—only made her fear him the more. She did not exactly hate him, for his personality was winning in a way, lacking all the oily horror of Judge Stamper's, for instance. But the Devil is most subtly, dangerously devilish when in smiling guise; and Elgie accepted the hundred dollar advance with not a few forebodings—and thanks that sounded rather sullen at best.

"Mr. Rising," she said, her delicate color mounting to her flaxen hair, "it hurts me terribly to take this money. It almost seems like a loan. You positively must deduct fifty dollars from my next month's salary; that will repay half. You'll do this?"

"If you wish, Miss Bowen. But it won't be necessary. I am perfectly willing to wait ——"

"No, no," she interposed, vaguely disliking his bright smile. "I don't care to be under obligations to anybody."

But next pay day she realized she would need the fifty dollars to live on, as she had spent her last cent on a blue velour robe she was lucky enough to get at a tremendous bargain.

It was quite the unhappiest moment of her life when she explained the circumstances to Rising and asked for more time. He was extremely considerate.

"Take all the time you want," he said, "six months—a year. I'm in no hurry."

This was reassuring and she drew a sigh of relief—for one must live; but his bright smile irritated her strangely. It seemed such a cock-sure smile. Already perhaps he was envisaging her as belonging to him. The thought was maddening to Elgie; and the kinder he grew the more she mistrusted him. Far cleverer than Judge Stamper and the others, he was playing a patiently waiting game. She made a solemn vow to outwit him.

Her position was an easy one with short hours and no real drudgery. But this, too, annoyed her. Was not Rising simply playing his game? Then when he voluntarily gave her a substantial increase in salary she was furious enough to run away. She might have done precisely that if she had not been in debt to him—and if her position had not been such a desirable one. She tried to look pleased when he told her he intended paying her more money, and no doubt she succeeded, as he smiled that quite insufferable smile and—really!—took her hand.

"Little girl," he said, "you're making a brave fight. Remember I'm with you." And then while her heart turned to ice within her he squeezed her fingers until they were red and then went over to the filing cabinet where he busied himself, whistling like a boy.

With exasperating frequency that afternoon she found herself glancing at him. He was good-looking, yes, with a finely normal, balanced personality. She had to admit as much . . . and somehow the admission brought a kind of warming glow to her cold, inhospitable little soul. Frankly she was pleased with him

—in spite of her fear, her unalterable conviction that he was a cunning brute only waiting his chance to do her harm.

The realization that she really liked him aroused her to new disgust, new fury. The others she had loathed. But this one, craftier than they, had insinuated himself into her favor. Now at last she decided to leave his employ. She would borrow the hundred dollars from somebody—anybody—to repay him, give up her easy position and take another, even if the work was twice as hard and the salary half as large.

IV

But fate intervened.

Elgie was stricken with an acute attack of appendicitis. She was taken to the hospital and operated on. Her recovery was slow.

Her doctor was the most highly paid specialist in the city; she had the most expensive private room in the hospital, one finished in white-and-gold and boasting a southern exposure; two cleverly self-effacing nurses attended her; fresh bouquets of flowers greeted her every morning from the little enameled stand beside her bed; and, in short, if she had been a millionaire's daughter she could not have had better care.

Who paid for all this? Eldred Rising, of course. At last when he came to see her she asked him the question outright, and he answered in the affirmative without any attempt at evasion, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"Why, certainly," he said with that bright smile which had lighted some of her turgid dreams. "Who was there to see you through this but me? I am your friend. . . "Your substitute is doing quite well, but things don't seem to go right at the office since you left. I'm longing for the day when you'll be back, little Elgie."

Little Elgie . . . ! The words, uttered

in that hypocritically pleasant voice of his, remained with her for hours after he had gone. They made her ill; gave her a temperature. She almost had a relapse. Little Elgie! How dared he? Now at last he was showing his true self. Next time he called he would perhaps attempt to kiss her.

But he didn't. He was simply very amiable—and very amusing with his droll stories of his little misadventures in office administration since his "capable little steno" had taken it into her wilful little head to get sick. Elgie was really entertained by his trifling chatter illuminated by the omnipresent smile, and when he left she felt unaccountably dull and dispirited.

When she had entirely recovered and returned to the office she asked him how much she owed him.

"Nothing," he said promptly.

She grew white and her face took on a deadly expression, a stony implacability, that might have characterized her mother's.

"If you refuse to regard this as simply a matter of business between us," she panted, "if you basely insist on putting me under heavier obligations than I am already I'll leave your employ this instant and resort to anything—anything—to pay you what I owe you. Now what is the amount?"

"Oh," he said after a stare of surprise, "I get your point—now." He went to his receipted bill file and added the amounts. "Fourteen hundred seventy-dollars and forty-five cents."

"Thank you," she said. "I shall begin repaying you, Mr. Rising, as soon as I possibly can."

That week he invited her to lunch with him at a fashionable restaurant; the next week to the opera, the theatre, a lecture; and then to the motion picture shows. All these invitations she declined, giving

headache or some other minor ill as an excuse. Eldred Rising simply smiled—and shrugged his well-formed shoulders.

In two months Elgie had saved seventy-five dollars to apply on her debt. She still owed the hundred dollars he had advanced for her aunt's funeral expenses. But on the very day she had intended handing him her savings she saw a suit and hat in a shop window that proved irresistible. She was in desperate need of new apparel (so she told herself), and by purchasing this particular suit and hat she saved twenty-five dollars, as they had been marked down from one hundred to **seventy-five**.

With burning cheeks and hanging head she explained the circumstances to Rising and asked him to wait awhile longer.

"As long as my little Elgie likes," he answered with his bright smile.

Before, he had called her "little Elgie." Now she was his little Elgie. He had progressed that far in his idea of ownership. Furious, she controlled herself only by the greatest effort. She insisted to herself that she would have walked out of the office then and there if she hadn't owed him that money. Debt! What a horror it was! No young girl ought to borrow from a man or let him pay her bills. What a tragical mistake she had made! She should have allowed her aunt to be buried at the expense of the city, and she herself should have resisted the fatal lure of clothes. . . . So — her hatred of men, deadly though it was, yet was not as strong as her desire to appear well in their sight. She was beginning to see the curious anomaly of her nature. . . .

Soon Eldred Rising asked her to go motoring. She went and enjoyed herself thoroughly. His behavior was beyond criticism. Then he took her to dinner, to the theatre, to various places. They had delightful times. Elgie gave herself over to the pleasures of the moment . . . yet

behind Rising's mask of perfect respect was he not lying in wait for her, as Judge Stamper and the others had done? She was convinced that her theory of his innate baseness was correct. Why, then, did she go about with him? Because she could not resist the charm of his lively, kindly companionship. Despite her hatred of men she was human—and young. And all women love love—even those who fear lovers.

Then, too, Elgie was waiting for him to show himself in his true colors. It would be the supreme moment of her life. What would she do? Kill him? She did not know. . .

If he had only loved her—in the right way! If he would only speak out and tell her of his love! But his studied silence, his sinister patience were maddening. Of course he did not really love her—he only desired her. Meanwhile he was playing with her. . .

"I'll pay you!" she screamed hysterically, after month after month of broken promises. "Your hypocritical kindness is worse than frank brutality. I distrust all men, but you doubly distrust because you are cleverer at hiding your real intentions. I'll pay you—tomorrow; and then goodbye forever!"

V

One of the boarders at the house where Elgie lived, Richard Willis by name, had long been violently in love with her. Not especially well-favored physically, he yet had qualities that appealed to her. He was a steady young business man; he saved his money! he talked beautifully, poetically about the divine passion but never got "fresh;" he often referred to Dante's idealistic affection for Beatrice and declared he had in him to love the same way.

"I believe in platonic affection!" he cried with considerable dramatic fervor.

Many times he had respectfully, rever-

entially asked Elgie to marry him only to be politely refused. She did not care for him, yet his boasted platonism rather pleased her. At any rate she feared him far less than any other man she had ever met.

The day came when she astounded him with the following question asked in all seriousness:

"If I marry you will you promise to let me live with you as a sister—as a wife in name only?"

"Why — certainly," he stammered, flushing.

"You say you believe in platonic love —"

"I do—most assuredly."

"I owe a pressing debt of nearly fifteen hundred dollars. If I marry you today will you let me have this money—without asking any questions?"

Richard Willis thought a moment. "Yes," he said at last. "I've got only fifteen hundred, but you may have all of it."

That afternoon they were married.

Within the hour Elgie took the fourteen hundred seventy-five dollars and forty-five cents to Eldred Rising and told him frankly how she had obtained it.

"Married!" he cried aghast. "Why, didn't you realize that I loved you—that I was only waiting my chance to ask you to marry me? But you were always so suspicious—so unapproachable—so offish. Oh, little Elgie, why did you do this incredibly foolish thing?"

She looked into his eyes and realized now—too late—that she had misjudged him. Here was a man, a real man, who would have protected her with his life. Oh, her infinite stupidity. . .!

She burst into tears and ran from the office, leaving the money on the desk.

In the middle of the night the people at the boarding-house heard a shot. They rushed up to the newly married

couple's room. Elgie, her gown in shreds, was lying on the bed dead, the pistol still clasped in her hand, a bullet hole in her temple. Her husband, in even greater disarray, stood dazed.

"What was the trouble?" asked one of the boarders. "Fighting?"

"I . . . when . . . she snatched the gun . . . I . . ." came the half-inarticulate mumble.

THE CASE OF JOHN AVERLY

John Averly was an ambitious ranchman, and one of his most cherished ambitions was to become enrolled in the Order of the Mystic Shrine. Therefore when this order met in Youngstown he certainly intended to go, but being rather a busy man he overlooked the date entirely. Upon the eventful morning when he was to have been initiated into the mysteries of the order, he arose early and made his way to a small pasture on the ranch to assist with branding and marking bull yearlings; also there were quite a few of the animals to be transformed into steers. Now right here we must confess that our friend John had a decided liking for that food commonly known as mountain oysters, therefore it is not surprising that when he finished his operations late that evening he decided to take a nice pair of the oysters home with him. Putting the oysters in his pocket, he cranked up his Flivver and gaily started toward the ranch house with a keen anticipation of devouring the delicacies at supper time.

Upon reaching the ranch, his wife came out and told him that the lodge had been trying to get him all day, having just 'phoned that unless he arrived by eight o'clock he would be too late for the initiation. They had a class of about twenty-five men to initiate and they had all been through the first stages of the initiation and unless our friend got in before the next round started, he would be left out.

Arriving at the club rooms in good time he was escorted immediately into a room which was separated from the rest of the class by a partition which ran up only about seven feet. He was ordered to strip by the men who brought him there, and knowing the playful disposition of the men in whose hands he was, he first begun removing his valuables. He had a little money in one pocket, a check book in another, a watch, some papers relating to some shipments of cattle, and then . . . A cold sensation crept up his spine, as his hand touched something soft and moist in his pocket. He had neglected to remove that pair of mountain oysters which he had intended having for supper. Realizing that it would never do for these city bred men to find such things in his pocket, he looked around desperately for some place of concealment. The room into which he had been taken was absolutely bare of furniture and there being no safe place he could put them, he threw them over the partition and they landed right in the middle of the twenty-five other candidates who were waiting fearfully both for the outcome of John's initiation and for the second installment of their own.

One of the men, a tall, rangy, sun-burned ranchman, picked them up and shouted, "My Gawd, just look what they done to John. Come on fellows, let's go. It ain't worth it." A mad stampede followed, and try as they might, the men who were organizing the lodge could not persuade any of the men living in that section to submit to an initiation, with the result that the club rooms were rented out and the lodge became a thing of the past. A year or more went by, and now John is the happy father of a fine young boy, but the candidates who were present at the initiation still shake their heads dubiously and change the subject whenever anyone mentions the Mystic Shrine.

—F. Kelly.

The Adorable Charlatan

by G. L. DEARING



AURELIUS AMMANCROW tilted his chair backward and planted his feet on the hotel balustrade.

"I hear the proud sirens of agriculture are going to reap a lucrative harvest of wheat in this section of Indiana," said I.

I was sorting labels of "Dr. Espicurius Epicunium's Hair Restorer" and "Madam Melbray's Marvelous Balm of Beauty" while Aurelius picked his teeth with a goose quill.

"Your ears," remarked Aurelius, "are registering fact, plus hearsay and truth. Have I, by any chance, ever enlightened you as to how me and Philander Pod shook down the butternut masticators of Iowa and made the Lone Star blush to the roots of her roseate reputation? It was ten years ago, and the stage set for a scenic effect of the Hawkeye state.

"Pod and me was selling bunion plasters, beauty balm, and patent rights to the he and she population of the town of Prairie Pride. Business was mellow, if not rotten. The corn growers were soured on homeopath pills, powders, and paste and focused the boiled optic upon our line of medicus patentus, having been skinned the week previous by some conscienceless charlatan who sold shaving paste that removed hair plus hide.

"This Shylock had secured a few pounds of epidermis with the flesh and wool thrown in when his ante was called by the city council whose maps were bandaged in mourning for late lamented and departed soup strainers, coy dispositions, and a cubic yard of manly beauty and handsomeness besides.

"The populace, resembling a turn-out of Kentucky night riders, rode Shylock out of town on a fence rail, his person adorned with a thick resinous substance obtained from pine and fir trees and decorated with the plumage of the barnyard fowl.

"Deposited without recourse in a sand bank on the edge of town, he was tendered his valise and ordered to unburden the corn belt of his hated presence, which he did without argument or digression.

"Prairie Pride, as a sample, was no better or worse than other towns of its size. It had, I judged, about 1,000 inhabitants or people, the largest per cent being being made up of men, women and children, a few of whom were human beings. The lid was on with a gasket underneath. No ice cream sodas on Sunday, no cigars. Nothing served but church, Sunday school, prayer meeting and song service, taken after each meal at bed time and upon arising.

"We gave Prairie Pride the once over and walked back to the hotel to thaw out. It was summertime and hot, but from the reception accorded us I figure Prof. Amundson was lookin' in the wrong location for the north pole. We invoiced Pod had \$2.10 and I dug up a flat silver certificate good on call at the U. S. Treasury for one dollar.

"'It looks,' says Pod, 'like such little items as Neapolitan ice cream, perfectos, claret, and chocolate eclairs would be absent from the dinner card this evening. Can you suggest alternates?'

"'My self starter of suggestiveness,' says I, 'is short circuited in the distributor box. My appetite, however, is hitting on all six. While taking the pulse of this cold, clammy and unfeeling village I noted on the outskirts of town a field of juicy, delicious, and ripening corn. Ere now, I doubt it not, the festive fowl reposes peacefully on the roost. Steaming roasting ears and roast chicken are not bad entrees, served a la carte, without cost, charge, or bill of expense.'

"'Your cranium,' remarks Pod, 'is registering brains. Let us repair to the hoop skirts at once, shake King Corn down for a few ears predestined by nature to cop the ribbons at the county fair and cause the ruralist's coop to unburden its finest specimen of physical perfection. I used to play in the silver cornet band and I feel perfectly at home with a drum stick in either hand.'

"We sauntered down the main stem and by the time we hits the edge the town was dark.

"'When it comes to copping the night bird from its boudoir,' says Pod, 'I have a Maxim silencer in either hand.'

"'In which case you're elected,' says I, 'an th' lot of corn falls to me.' And a lot of it did. I reckon we both lived up to our boasted attainments, though I hate to brag.

"An hour later we was safe as the babes in the tall woods, with a kettle of roastin' ears dancin' a jig over the fire and a big fat hen roastin' on green wood sticks.

"All of a sudden out of the bushes back of us a curdling screech that sounds like a cross between a caliope and the war cry of a Comanche Indian bursts forth and Pod an' me goes in to clean up the world's record for the hundred yard dash. We looked back. There in the fire light we could see a Fiji Islander prancin' about in joyous manifestations of delight with a roastin' ear in one hand and the north east corner of roast chicken in the other, and each one a tryin' to beat the other to the subway entrance of certain destruction. Pod takes a hitch in his trowsers and says:

"'Come on, Caw. No son of a sea cook dressed up in nakedness and murrurin' like a volcano inside can butt into the game and grab my stack of chips. I'm going to make him show his hand.'

"We ambles back to the scene of the midnight frolic and Pod addresses abrupt remarks to the human ogre:

"'What's the big idea,' says he, 'of hornin' into our tea party without presentin' your callin' card or havin' your name announced by the head butler?'

"The black man tries to answer Pod but a mouthful of truck makes a mumble of it.

"'Speak up,' says I, 'you imp of Mephisto, or place your order with the undertaker and send for the cut flowers. Our sense of social obligation and ethics has been violated *malgre nous*.'

"'Boys,' says the black man between a sob and a swallow, 'I crave for pardon. But (munch munch) food in its delicate and savory sensuousness (munch) has lured me thither. Food and I have been (munch) utter strangers for days.'

"'For strangers,' says Pod, 'you

mingle well. Why the masquerade in the cannibal costume and the hide out in the tall and uncut pines?"

"Fiji casts away a cob and draws fresh povender from the kettle.

"You invite meditation from its luxurious couch and history from the archives of a bitter past. Now that you have invited me to join you in this feast fit for the gods (munch) fall to, boys. I would not feast alone."

"You seem to be doin' pretty well for a monologue party," says Pod, "but your suggestion is not without merit. Eat we will, not wisely, but in self defence. Come on, Caw, before this human food destroyer cleans the boards. There's just about two ears of corn left, and Holy Grimbo! About all there is left to that chicken is it's altruistic disposition. Those drum sticks have beat their last tatoo. Yon tail will never wiggle again, nor those wings gently flutter hither and yon. In Heaven's name, you Ambassador to Dahomey, what did you leave besides the country?"

"We took the remnants of the chicken's constitution and by-laws and sat down. Fiji joined us.

"Now," says Pod, "expurge, unburden and come clean,—I mean as clean as you can, seein' as how you didn't come extra clean. My academic soul yearns for recitation."

"Well, he was the shaving cream vendor all right. Pod and I figured that the minute we sets eyes on him. Society had somewhat misused him. He glistened like a new buggy in the fire light, and smelled like the roof of a forty story skyscraper.

"We tried to get the tar off with a pocket knife but it stuck to him tighter than the Solid South to a Democratic Candidate. His howls would have drowned the murmur of Niagara. We laid off, finally, and thought up all the

means known to homeopathy and medicine.

"Taint no use," groans Fiji.

"I couldn't tell whether the groan comes from his pent up and injured feelings or the load of garbage he was on the outside of. Pod thumbs his lips and puckers his brow in painful meditation.

"Shy," he says after a moment, "you might connect with Uncle Tom's Cabin as Topsy or pose in front of a cigar store advertisin' licorice chewin' gum. Lookin' back over the future you have a delightful an' pleasin' past to draw from."

"Oh!" groans Shylock, the Fiji, "What'll I do, boys, what'll I do?"

"You mean," says Pod, "who will you do. It's gonna take a sandpaper factory to bring you down to normal delinquency. You ought a been satisfied with skinnin' the public out of their pin money instead of their skin."

"I was," answers Shy, indignant. "I used muriatic instead of boric acid by mistake, that was all. A slight technical error you must admit."

"Oh, a mere trifle," says Pod. "I have always been in favor of smokeless powder for the face and dynamite sticks for Roman candles. But there's the public, my dear man. They always blow up over such trifles as acetylene gas plants and gasoline stoves. Be that as it may, the treatment accorded your person was, to say the least, slightly exaggerated."

"Shylock would a been mighty glad to exchange the pound of flesh he got from the citizens of Prairie Pride for the five quarts of tar and trimmin's but in the law of barter and trade he had been worsted. He said it made him feel bad to be treated like a leaky roof when the inside of him was full of good intentions toward the misguided civilians. The more he thought about it, the more eloquent he become. Then he begins to get mad and to cuss.

"He sure knew all the words, phrases, and embellishments of the profane section. He began with the city council and the mayor, side-swiped the school board and maligned the town marshal. He seared and scorched the townspeople.

"His gentle stream of abuse widened into a roaring torrent of epithetical fury and in order to round out his oration he slammed the suffrage question, kicked a rib out of the Trusts and charged madly upon the Carnegie pension fund for college professors.

"We left him orating with his hands and feet to the stars and went to sleep.

"I walked into Prairie Pride in the morning and sells two members of the antiquated old maid's society a couple of bottles of face restorer made of cornstarch and blushin' with cherry coloring.

"They gave me two dollars and their confidence, and I left them 5c worth of glucose and breathless anticipation. When I got back to camp I finds Pod playing Solitaire.

"Where's the son of Ham?" says I.

"Oh," says Pod, 'I guess he heard a voice cryin' in the wilderness and beat it. What sayeth the busy Deborah?'

"Two bottles of Madam Melbray knocked down to the Superanuated Old Maid's Union for two bucks, cash in hand. After the funeral —'

"Who's funeral?" asks Pod.

"Trade," says I, 'has joined the morticians. It has croaked, expired and ceased to be. In other words it is dead. And thus do we find ourselves junipered, spavined and string-halted in pocket and purse. It is indeed the winter of our discontent.'

"Winter me eye," says Pod wiping his face. "That sun would scorch molten metal right out of the off-pourer's ladle in the Bethlehem Steel Works. The only thing safe from it is the frost coated hides of the populace of Prairie Pride."

"What, then," says I, 'is the billet?'

"Pod gathers up the pasteboards.

"I never could beat that game," says he. 'It's like goin' up against the little ball and walnut shell. I hear the bell tollin' the last sad tolls for Trade. I suggest that we go into this home for the unburied dead, sound the suckers with a rubber mallet and hoist an umbrella to protect us from the rain of shekels about to descend.'

"We wanders up the main street of Prairie Pride and goes into a restaurant where a large crowd of flies and a farm hand are waitin' at the counter to be served. We takes one look at the embalmed pies on the shelf, the cat asleep on the doughnut case, a rooster pickin' up crumbs under a table, and appetite, preferred, passes a dividend. We takes our hats and the air.

"That's some fly summer resort," says Pod!

"All of 'em there with their hair in a braid," says I, 'as far as Chattanooga.'

"Why, Caw," says he, 'I'll bet there's representatives to that fly convention from Cincinnati where they haven't sold a fly swatter in ten years.'

"We sits down on the curb and watches the corn growers go and come. We goes over the category from shakin' the baby's bank down to robbin' the Prairie Pride First National. Then Pod gets up. He cups his ear.

"I hear E. Pluribus Unum calling," he says. 'Come on.'

"I follows him. We goes into the town bank and Pod saunters up to the President's door. He knocks. The door opens and a bald-headed old guy with a red face and gray chin whiskers shows us to chairs and asks us what he can do for us.

"Are you," says Pod, 'the sole owner, proprietor and possessor of ten choice

lots that sit lightly upon the rim of this illustrious and thriving village?"

"I am," smirks the Pres. full of importance.

"What, then," says Pod, "is the lowest figure for the full deck?"

"The Pres. scratches his head and his hair tickles his fingers. He wants to appear wise but he isn't.

"You—er—mean——" he stammers.

"I mean," says Pod, "how much for the bunch without any cut out of the herd. Talk sharp now. I mean business and money talks or never was an oyster mummer."

"I hides a smile. Pod had, I judged, about \$2.10.

"We—ll," says the banker, "I guess \$25 apiece is the lowest cash figure. That would be \$250. Will you take them with you or shall I have them sent out?"

"I'll call for 'em with a dray," says Pod humoring the absent-minded old gentleman who used to run a grocery. "Warranty deed, abstract down to date examined and approved by our attorney?" asks Pod.

"Not a rotten one in the case," says the Pres. "We like 'em best scrambled."

"Pod takes a roll of bills from his pocket and counts out the money. My eyes bulged out.

"Give me a receipt," says Pod, "an start makin' the deed. Business is front name and dispatch my motto. We'll be back in an hour."

"The Pres. gave him the receipt and we left him.

"Where'd you get that roll?" says I when we hits the sidewalk.

"Poker," says Pod. "Peeled Shylock this mornin'. That's why he left. Got sore I guess."

"What's on the boards?" says I. "Summer Resort, Sanitarium for the Aged and Infirm, or a lunatic asylum for irresponsible and indigent millionaires?"

"Pod lights a perfecto and hands me its partner.

"Let us," he says 'repair to this human livery stable they insult by the title of hotel and partake of fodder. I've got to send a telegram. Then lay low with your ear to the rails and watch your Uncle Zachariah.'

"It was Pod's way and I was satisfied. The next day he takes me down to the depot to meet the local and a good looking young lady that alights from it.

"She is dressed in lavender with a lace hat and carries a black bag which Pod annexes.

"Miss Take," says Pod, "this is Ammancrow, the Secretary of our company."

"I cuts a pigeon wing and pops the toe of my boot on the sidewalk. I always fall hard for beauty; besides I had a position to maintain although I would have given anything but my suspenders just then to know the articles of incorporation of this one.

"Miss Take," says Pod, "as we passes up Main street, 'is the eminent lady geologist from Texas. You've often read about her in the papers, Caw?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes, indeed," says I. "I've often read of Miss Texas in the papers,—I mean Miss Take. Pardon my error, Miss Take."

"The beauty laughed and the joy bells in Heaven jingled.

"Oh, you men!" she giggles, "you're such punsters!"

"I looks at Pod to see if he's one of them things an' he must have been for he guffawed like a jackass.

"Tell Caw," says he, "how you felt the bumps on the phrenology of Mother Earth down in the Lone Star and opened up an oil field that made the Atlantic look like a frog pound."

"I shall be delighted to do so this evening, Mr. Pod. At present I have a desire to appease my gastronomical

satiety to its fullest. Is this the hotel?

"'It has,' says Pod, 'been so accused. Step in, Miss Take.'

"We stepped in and the rubes rubbed. Miss Take registered with a couple of PHD's and PG and E's after her signature and was given the spare room. A couple of nights before Pod and I were put out because there wasn't any room to spare; but then we wasn't ladies and didn't carry an alphabet after our monikers.

"'Now,' says Pod, 'hustle out your hostlers and give this lady the best in the hostlery in a hurry. See that she has hot and cold water in her room, likewise, cold and hot. And be sure the hot is not cold nor the cold hot. If she rings for water and you are out, send up something wet as she tells me she doesn't care whether it is cold just so it has a kick and is hot. The sky is the limit. As to price and charge, pooh pooh. Nothing is too good for the finest lady geologist in the United States.'

"The clerk sent a boy to show Miss Take her room and to park her valise for her. His bump of curio had become a mountain.

"'You say she is a geologist?' he asks excitedly.

"'The same,' says Pod.

"'They tell fortunes, don't they?'

"'My boy, they make fortunes. Look at the town of Prairie Pride. According to Miss Take's calculations and precepts Prairie Pride is roostin' on the biggest oil dome in the state of Iowa. She's goin' to make us all rich.'

"'Gosh!' blurts out the clerk, and swallows hard. 'You don't say!'

"'Put that down,' says Pod, 'where it won't rub out. Tomorrow morning Miss Take goes over my property east of town and if she smells petroleum beneath the bluegrass caressing its exterior beauty we will cause to gush forth on the by-

ways of this little city lakes of golden wealth.'

"We lights up fat perfectos with gold bands and passes out the door with the clerk spreading the news to the corn growers in the lobby.

"The next day, the town headed by the President of the Prairie Pride First National and the village band escorts our company and Miss Take down to Pod's property. The lady geologist looks sweeter than a crab apple bloom in a pink lawn dress with umbrella and hat to match. She powders her nose and smiles sweetly at everyone.

"The Prairie Pride Silver Cornet Band murders a selection, and the President of the Bank makes an hour speech which is a combination of sixty day notes, inflated currency, Sunday school conventions and butter and egg markets, jumbled together and served as an orotical omelet. Then the lady geologist trilby's out on Pod's newly acquired real estate and begins to geologize.

"She prode the earth with her umbrella, sprinkles some talcum powder on it, and looks at the cornfields through a pair of opera glasses.

"'You have a wonderful property here, Mr. Pea—I should say Pod, and you will bring in a gusher at 1,000 feet. There are enormous beds of coal—I mean oil under the surface. Have you any juicy fruit chewing gum?'

"She smiles sweetly at Pod, takes a tiny looking glass from her handbag and powders her nose. The corn growers go wild. They almost smother Pod to get first chance to buy stock in the new bonanza. Pod produces golden rod certificates with gold seals and red ribbons and addresses the mob:

"'Ladies and Gentlemen: You have heard Miss Take's verdict. Her word is infallible. She is a sure fire geologizer of the first water, satisfaction guaranteed

or no money refunded. You have heard what she says. It was Miss Take that discovered an oil seep in the Lone Star that was but a vast and unfertile swamp where only halibut and frogs grew and not even Hallelujah was raised. It was Miss Take that wrote that famous oil ballad "Be it ever so humble, there's no fields like these." She has discovered oil in filling stations by the thousand, trainloads of it. This is your chance to get in on the ground floor. One share costs you \$100, two shares \$200, three shares \$300 and so on. Even a child can figure it. We will deposit \$2,000 with the President of your bank, Mr. Squirm, who will immediately erect a derrick and sink the shaft to the first forty foot level where we will find a great body of pyrite ore—I mean oil. One at a time please. Don't crowd.

"The money almost buried us. I had rolls in my pockets, in my hat and in my coffee that night at dinner. So had Pod. We collect \$15,000 in 19 minutes, and Pod is made Treasurer with sole charge of the cash, and Mr. Squirm is made President with a controlling interest without any control. Pod turns over the \$2,000 to Squirm with tears in his eyes, and remarks that it will be necessary for the Treasurer and the Secretary to take a business trip to Chicago to order a specific wood to make the derrick out of as it must be gumwood and selected stuff at that. Miss Take will go back to

Texas in the morning on the same train to geologize some dogwood swamps for a broom corn site. The band heads the parade back up town with every body out of step to the music because they was all steppin' over bundles of imaginary kush they were goin' to make out of the Prairie Pride Bonanza Oil and Gas Company.

"The Pres. escorts Miss Take into the drug store for an ice cream soda with his wife a pullin' at his coat tails like a jealous hyena.

"'Oh yes,' says Miss Take, 'there is gypsum there by the lakefull. I predict we will strike granite sand at 300 feet. I think I will have carmel,' she smiles pinning up a rebellious lock of hair.

"I don't know what the Pres. ordered but I'll bet he got his when he stepped over the welcome mat that night at home, an' I'll bet it was hot tongue and cold shoulder the missus gave him for supper.

"The next morning Pod and me meets Miss Take in the parlor and splits three ways, each takin' \$4,000 in large bills.

"'Not a bad day's work, boys,' smiles Miss Take sweetly. 'By the way, Mr. Pod, have you any juicy fruit chewing gum? I dislike licorice, it reminds one so much of tar——' Huh? Why sure it was Shylock. That was his scheme to get even with the corn growers and Alfalfa Alfs of Prairie Pride.

THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY

Jack—"Jim, do you know what the height of folly is?"

Jim—"No, what is it?"

Jack—"For a couple to go to bed to save the expense of having a fire and then have twins."—*News*

Birds of a Twig

by

William Byron Mowrer



KALLEY had flopped.

The whisper went up and down the streets at night, creeping into dingy bar-rooms and houses where the shades are always drawn and sharp eyes are alert against the coming of the bull-wagon. It spread over the District like circling waves when a stone is dropped into a pond. It even came to the ears of Dalliman, the plain clothes sergeant, who laughed scornfully at the nark that told him Kalley had flopped.

For he had known Kalley many years, had pinched him times without number, and had sent him up the River twice for considerable spells. If a job was done in his territory, he immediately rounded up Kalley and grilled him, because Kalley was in on more jobs than any other crook of his extensive acquaintance. So Dalliman laughed loud and long at the whispered information that Kalley had flopped—hard and for keeps.

But the rumor held out against this unbelief, and even the scornful ones at last admitted that it was not a ruse but the unstuccoed truth. When Dalliman stepped down Neil Street one breezy afternoon and saw an unfamiliar sign banging in the March wind, he got out his reading specs to make sure a Kansan mirage had not come to town.

KALLEY'S CAFE AND LUNCH ROOM. He read it twice, forward and

backward; then, with a whistle of astonishment stepped inside where the proprietor in white cap and apron, with check stub dangling at his belt, was quartering a cherry pie for a hungry customer. He leaned weakly against the cigar case until the bustling proprietor looked up and nodded to his former foe and persecutor. When he departed half an hour later with a Havana Maduro between his teeth and two more in his vest—tokens of amity from the beaming, busy Kalley—he walked swiftly to the Station enjoying beforehand the open-eyed amazement his fantastic news would cause among his associates. He was prepared for unbelief; in his pocket reposed a little card with the inscription:

Kalley's Cafe and Lunch Room
Open till Midnight. Tables for Ladies.
Some Coffee.

The cause of Kalley's metamorphosis is not known, at least cannot be told in words. He himself probably did not know. He only realized that the Spring had brought a dislike for his old ways; that his hand had lost its cunning with clicking dials, and his wits were backward in planning scoops. His couple thousand invested in some business seemed to offer him an eminently desirable escape from his former way of life.

Some said that he had flopped because of Kitty. It would be good to report this,

because it is a fine thing to show that love for a woman can change a small-job crook with a ten page police record into a respectable cafe owner with credit at the bank. I would take a hop, skip, and jump at the chance to set it down that Kitty had changed him—but the facts are different. He did not meet Kitty until two weeks after Dalliman had smoked the third Maduro, and the Station had been compelled to admit that Kalley had flopped.

He had made her acquaintance one morning by asking her if the coffee had enough cream in it to suit her. Her smile and cheery "Thank you" as he doubled the quota of cow led him there—after when she breakfasted at one of the tables for ladies to give her an individual cream jar and the morning paper to read while she ate rolls and sipped the "some coffee." He made a necessity of waiting upon her himself; and quickly worked up to the point where he talked to her if the rush was not too great for his helper to handle.

Kitty was pretty, in a quiet way. She was tall and gracefully slender, with soft brown eyes and chestnut hair. Kalley's advances were met in a friendly, almost thankful manner as he began calling at her rooming house on Cherry Street and taking her out evenings. Since the history of a courtship is at best a tedious and difficult thing—except for the principals—I shall skip over the next month or six weeks to the evening Kalley sighed at the thought of her working at Gibb's Laundry starching shirt-fronts and collars eight hours a day for twelve ducats a week; and pondered upon the ability of the Cafe and Lunch Room to maintain a household creditably. If trade kept picking up as it had since he started, it might be possible by August.

For all his twenty-seven years, Kalley had never been wounded by the small

Archer. It is not good policy for those of the underworld to get in the way of the Arrows, because they connote a settled life, a home, and respectability—things incompatible with the profession. Hence his escape hitherto.

But Life had taken on a different hue since that inexplicable leaven, working in the mind of the crook, had caused him to forsake his midnight profession and come out into the sunshine of respectability. The metamorphosis was complete, even in matters of love; for the erstwhile cynical Kalley, escorting Kitty to the Neil St. Theatre, stepped proudly along with her hand resting on arm; yet dared not tell her of his hopes for a bigger business by August.

One thing kept him awake at night tossing sleeplessly—his record. He knew that Kitty liked him; he hoped she would listen when growing business made a proposal possible; but Kitty was a good girl, and the thoughts of her reaction to his Past, if it were revealed to her, knawed and tugged.

Should it be revealed? His newly-sprouted conscience told him "yes." Would it cause her to send him marching? His estimation of Kitty, based on the meagre information she had vouchsafed about herself, made him certain she would recoil from him if she knew what he had been.

In the battle that followed, or whether or not to tell, Kalley decided, as most men do, to draw a dark curtain over his record. He assuaged his conscience by the thought that he was now clear and would stay clear.

So when July sizzled past and the Cafe and Lunch Room had been forced to take on another waiter to handle the business, Kalley proposed one night down in the Park at an auspicious moment when the Band-master was handing around a number to his noisy followers; and thought

Kitty's low answer worth more than all old Streeter's diamonds—which he had once unsuccessfully tried to steal.

One mid-afternoon two weeks before the marriage, Dalliman sidled into the Cafe and leaned over the desk where Kalley in absence of customers was moiling painfully over his bookkeeping set. They chatted casually a moment. Dalliman often came in and talked with Kalley about his jobs, for in the ex-crook he had an audience both understanding and appreciative. But this particular afternoon the sergeant had something on his mind.

"Kalley," he spoke softly that the new waiter filling a sugar shaker near by might not hear, "I've a job I need you on. It's got me up a stump."

The cafe owner looked up slightly interested, and Dalliman continued:

"You heard about Bergman's jewelry store being robbed last spring?"

"What about it?"

"Well, they got a couple thousand worth of watches and rings. There were three in the gang. I would have rounded you in, but it looked like amateur work; smashed the front glass clumsily and left all sorts of evidence, but so far we've not been able to even scent the trail, and it's getting cold. Old Bergman comes down to the Station at three day intervals howling at us for being a roomful of nim-compoops, and lately he's been complaining higher up. If an old boy like you," Dalliman grinned, "had done the trick, we'd have an excuse; but we don't want to own up that we can't corral this green gang, and the Cap sort of passes the buck to me."

"You want me to nark on the job?"

"Well, not exactly nark, Kalley; but just find out enough to give us a start. You can lasso a couple hundred kopeks mighty easy. Bergman's putting that up for recovery."

Kalley looked straight into the sergeant's eyes. "If you and the Station and Bergman's reward are waiting for my permission to go to hell, you can take an airplane and start now. A nark!" he added scornfully. "I thought you knew me better than that, Dalliman."

The sergeant puffed unperturbedly. "You've got the wrong idea, Kalley. A nark is a crook and the bill won't fit you. I hunt crooks, but I'm not a nark, am I?"

The cafe proprietor appeared only slightly mollified and convinced by the sergeant's logic. Dalliman went on:

"This little affair of yours in a couple weeks would be helped out a lot by the two hundred, if only you'd look at the job in the right light. You'd have to carve a lot of pies to make the price of that solitaire; but if you take this you can buy it tomorrow and have a trip to Niagara left over."

Kalley and Kitty had mutually decided to forego rings until the gods and custom should be more propitious. A ring on Kitty's finger would have filled up his cup of happiness as much as would a waiting line of customers three blocks long. The crafty sergeant noted that his words were having effect and continued:

"If your store had been robbed and Bergman could locate the gang, you'd expect him to do it, and wouldn't call him a nark, would you? You're on the other side of the fence from what you were last winter. My gang could work on it and pluck off the berries in time probably, but you can do more in a night than we could in six weeks. And tomorrow you'd be measuring Kitty's finger on the sly and looking up trains to Niagara. I won't mention the personal favor you'd be doing me."

Dalliman paused, noting a reflective look in the grey eyes of the man. A keen judge of human motives and character, he knew Kalley was wavering and that

a little more pleading would win the suit. He started to urge another point, but Kalley cut him off short.

"I'll take it, Bob. Let's hear what you already know about the case."

The next morning the ex-crook walked into the Station. He had often done that before—under escort; but this time he nodded genially to a trio of officers and asked the Captain where Dalliman was. A few minutes later he was closeted with the sergeant. There was no preliminaries.

"The lot is cached over on the East side at Daggerty's Place."

Dalliman gasped. The speaker held up a finger and continued:

"They were afraid to pass it off, and it's all there. An East side gang did the job—poached on our Kenwood territory. I've got three of the four of them located, but the other cleared out. There were four of them in the deal, but only three in Bergman's store."

"We'll find him if we get the other three. Are you sure of this dope?"

Kalley scornfully refused to answer, and Dalliman hastened to add:

"Because if you are, the two hundred are waiting for you at the desk. We'll round up Daggerty's joint tonight, and tomorrow old Bergman will be offering up incense and rotten cigars to us."

Late that evening Kalley stepped out of Bergman's store with a tiny blue velvet box in his coat-pocket, whistling an extraordinary assortment of popular airs; and made directly for 222 Cherry Street.

The family was gone for a day or two and they had the parlor to themselves. Kalley secretly hoped that the ring would drive away Kitty's depression, which he had been unable to account for. The universal procedure took place: he had something and she must guess; a dozen wild guesses; she must shut her eyes and hold out her hand—at first the wrong

one, of course; he fumbled with the spring and dropped the ring; she cheated and opened her eyes before he had slipped it clear on. But instead of the cry of joy that he was entitled to and expecting, she burst into a paroxysm of sobs and threw herself on the divan.

Kalley was dumbfounded, vaguely realizing that the ring had brought to a crisis whatever had been troubling Kitty ever since he had known her. At first his awkward comforting elicited only fresh sobs, but gradually a word or two could be distinguished.

That she wasn't going to marry him—never. That he was too good and too kind. That she had lied to him, deceived him.

That she had been a shop-lifter, a thief, a full-fledged crook. That she had pulled away that Spring and stayed away but could never, never marry so straight and good and kind a man as he.

A fresh burst of sobs.

Kitty's confession was a bolt out of the blue to Kalley; yet his astonishment gave way to a feeling of self-reproach that she had been courageous enough to divulge while he had been afraid to do it. After a moment he found occasion to **ask:**

"Is that all?"

She looked up at him, meeting his significant gaze and understanding his question. A faint flush overspread her face.

"You mean . . . no! Not that, Kalley."

A fresh burst of sobs.

There was only one way to quiet her, he thought, and he took that way with a vengeance. His record on the Station's Black-Book would have read like an obituary compared to the account he gave of his past activities and life. Kitty listened without looking up.

"You see," he concluded, "we're two birds on the same twig. Now be reasonable and look up here so I can kiss you."

He was trying to put his arms around her. She pushed him away, half-hysterically.

"Don't! You don't know it all. They're looking for me right now, for the last job I was on. You won't marry a person the Station is after. I've got to tell you. I planned it. Last March, a jewelry store, Bergman's——Kalley, My God, he's fainted."

Dalliman back from the recovery of the loot, found a hatless and coatless Kalley profanely resisting the efforts of the night desk-officer to discover his trouble. Widely wondering, he hustled him into a room and listened as the excited Kalley pleaded, and banged the table, and pleaded again.

In the end Dalliman, more righteous than just, consented; and formed a huge

resolution in three parts: first, that he would lose complete track of the other three in the Bergman deal in consideration of a promise from them to hot-foot out of town and mention no names; second, that he would tell the Captain that identification of the parties was hopeless, and would give any officer that tried it a bum steer; third, that since Kalley was in no condition to traverse the streets alone, he would lend him a hat and coat and take him back to Cherry Street to reassure Kitty personally.

From the length of time that elapsed after Kalley went into the parlor leaving Dalliman smoking on the porch, the latter considered his reassurance and presence forgotten, or at least superfluous; and walked down to the Cafe and Lunch Room for a piece of pie.

I have been bawled out, bawled up, held up and held down; bulldozed, black-jacked, walked on; cheated, squeezed and mooched; stuck for war tax; excess profit tax, per capita tax, state tax, dog tax and syntax; Liberty bonds, baby bonds, and the bonds of matrimony; Red Cross, green cross and the double cross; asked to help the Society of John the Baptist, G. A. R., Women's Relief Corps, men's relief and stomach relief.

I have worked like Hell and have been worked like Hell; have been drunk and gotten others drunk; lost all I had and part of my furniture; and because I won't spend or lend all of the little I earn, and go beg, borrow or steal, I have been cussed and discussed, boycotted, talked to and talked about; lied to and lied about; held up, hung up, robbed and damn near ruined; and the only reason I am sticking around now is to see what in the Hell is coming next.

—Jack Frost.



DOES HEREDITY COUNT ?

By Harry L. Hamilton

EVERYONE in Memphis knew what Mamie Griffin was and when her boy, Allen, came into the world, everyone knew what he must be. So that Allen Griffin began life under a handicap. As a child he found himself the boon companion of the negroes and other denizens of his portion of the earth's surface; the stratum of society in the South Side is not thick, being composed of one layer.

The decent, law-abiding negroes in the South Side, on Bay Street, looked shocked when Mamie Griffin moved into their neighborhood and the Daughters of Zion discussed her from every angle of the pure versus the tainted. Regardless of the fact that many of the dusky daughters of Bay Street were somewhat lacking in morals, this ostracism continued. A negro woman can fall to the depths and it is taken as a matter of course, but when a white woman falls, even her less virtuous black sisters scorn. The law of color holds good only in that respect on Bay Street. In all others, there is no difference.

Allen was the dirtiest little kid in the South Side district and the only thing that distinguished him from his black friends was his tow-colored hair, dirty almost to the point of verminous, but unmistakably tow.

Where he ever learned to read is a mystery, if anyone were sufficiently in-

terested to inquire. It is most certain that he never went to school more than two days out of a month; but it was the delight of the boy to spend hours every day in pouring over the stories of the wonderful adventures of the Alger boys and the Tomlinsons and all the other heroes of the boy world, in frayed books which he obtained from the very shabby district library. Then he began telling his own stories to the little negro boys on the levee and his tales were more absorbing than those of "ole Unk" Sam, who knowed de mose goodes' an' skair-yes' stories 'bout ghos' es an' goblins!"

"I wisht I could write 'em," sighed Allen many times and one of the times, a queer-looking old colored woman who sold papers up on Main Street, heard him.

"What y'all wanna write, chile? Ain' yo dun go school, boy? Dey larn yo' t'ings," mumbled the old paper woman.

"I ain' dun gone to school much; my mammy she say people doan needa write ef'n dey can talk," said Allen.

"Dat mammy o' yourn de no-countest w'ite 'oman in Memphis," grumbled the old woman. "I dun gotta good notion o' fetchin' yo' up liken y'all oughta be fotched up."

Many things that followed were not understood by the wild little slum rat. Came the heated discussions between the old negro woman who had, contrary to

the custom of her shiftless race, managed to amass a fair fortune by her daily toil on Main Street, and the "no-count w'ite 'oman," Mamie Griffin. Miss Griffin contended that she could raise her kid like a kid should be raised, without the help of no nigger.

Mamie Griffin presented an odd figure to claim the title of mother, with her soiled black serge skirt, making no pretense at being other than it was . . . a cheap, ill-fitting, tacky, skimpy affair purchased at the poorest of the poor shops on the South Side; a pink waist of the peek-a-boo style, with yellow bows of cheap ribbon at the neck and elbows and a huge bow of the same sleazy material at the back, near the belt. Her pale, straggling, blondined hair looked as if a comb and brush were unheard of, but an attempt had been made to conceal its unkempt appearance by fastening an enormous black ribbon about it. Her shoes were of canvas, soiled and muddy, and the six inches of stocking which the skirt failed to cover evidenced a great need of darning.

She had a habit of peering near-sightedly over her nose that gave a ludicrous aspect to the perpetual blush on her cheeks. Mamie knew what she was and she didn't care who else knew it.

It was finally decided that Allen would go to school at the expense of the old paper woman if Mamie would agree never to see her boy again . . . to give up all claim on anything he was or ever would be.

"Yo' all wanta take my kid?" queried Mamie eagerly. "So that I haven't to see him again? Sure, yo' all kin have 'im. He ain' no goo' to me, the damn brat!"

So it was decided that Allen must leave the squalor of the South Side, the dirty majesty of the cobbly levee beside the seaward sweeping Mississippi; no more would the negro Daughters of Zion refer

to him haughtily as "dat Mamie Griffin's kid." He was going to be educated.

All this made no difference to the little hoodlum who loved to tell about Granny Jawtooth's ole witch stick and the 'leven ghostses of the bayou. He knew only that he was to leave his only friends, the pickinnies of the South Side; that no more would his mammy swear at him and tell him that he was a pest; never again would he have to beg a bite of overripe fruit from ole Unk' Sambo, the fruit-stand man, whose fruit always was over-ripe, though little of it went to fill the aching void in Allen's stomach.

The twelve years which proceeded to pass, as years have an uncomfortable habit of doing, found things little changed in South Memphis. The old paper woman grew more bent and grey and her bank account became larger, in spite of the monthly sum which was dispatched to a little college town in southern Mississippi. Her only interest in life now was the occasional letter which came from the boy who, gradually, was learning that the world is a wonderful place in which to live. The years softened the memory of the uncouth, blondined woman with the soiled blouse and the more soiled mouth. With her, the years had dealt even more harshly than is the wont with women of her class. Frequent administrations of peroxide would not make the hair come right. She was a pitiful wreck on the sea of vice.

Allen's hair still was tow-colored; his eyes were the sort of grey that looks through and around you without seeming to see you. There was a sort of questioning look about his eyebrows that reminded one of something about to happen, without reaching the state of reality. I would have to say that he was the envy of his class and that his brains upheld the honor of the school; however

a love of truth still lurks within me, so I must confess that Allen's marks in Mathematics were the despair of the teacher, tho they caused Allen small concern. In Chemistry he was terrible, combining the wrong bases with the wrong acids and getting ghastly results. In several instances, he was rescued from violent death only by the interfering presence of a student better informed in chemical matters than he.

But in English and History . . . ah! There were no students who could write more highly imaginative stories with wilder plots than could Allen Griffin; no heroines more beautiful and useless than his; his heroes were braver, handsomer and more adventurous than were the hardest knights of old. In the evenings, when there were long Greek lessons to be studied by the upper-classmen, and his fellow-Freshmen should have been cudgeling their brains over the sins of Euclid, Allen held forth in his small room on the top floor of the smallest dormitory of the college. Many were his tales of goblins and the ghosts he had always thought of as being real; his tales of the exploits of King Arthur would have caused that gentleman to rise from his grave in terror.

Let us stand aside and permit Father Time to lug by a few more years to their reluctant ends; he draws aside a black, velvety curtain that hides the future from the human eye. We see a small Mississippi college in the throes of commencement. As you expected, we find young Mr. Griffin just on the verge of launching his frail bark on the sea of life . . . that allegorical simile we always find when a small college passes up its latest batch of seniors and gets ready for the next.

Alas, fair readers, Allen must remain tow-haired. The passing of the years did not change his flaxen locks to light chest-

nut or glowing blond, nor even a golden red. It was a whitish-yellow, coarse, belligerent mop of thatch which confronted the youthful collegian when he consulted the mirror, which he did at times. But he was straight and up-standing and he didn't remember that the South Side existed, except when he received letters from the old paper woman, carefully printed upon rough paper. Those letters must have cost the old crone many long hours of toil and brain-fag. Allen sensed the grey haired negro who had made his education possible only as a spirit. He wrote letters to her as if he were writing to one of his favorite sprites or goblins; the letters he received from her in return he pretended were from a witch, who, with one wave of her wand, had made his education possible.

So far, I have studiously avoided mention of the girl . . . but, of course, there was a girl. What young fellow with questioning grey eyes attains his twenty-second year without a girl?

This girl was owned, managed and sometimes bragged of by old Silas Evnonton, who taught Sociology for a living and had no knowledge of the habits and manners of any society except his own and that of his daughter. Old Silas was not the usual, fictional type of absentminded college professor . . . far from it! His was the cold, calculating mind that one associates with a psychoanalyst or a German spy. (Don't be alarmed: Professor Evnonton is not going to be our villain or our stern father; he did not oppose the love of Allen and Dorothy simply because he knew nothing of it; nor did they.)

"Dorothy," breathed Allen soulfully, as the young couple strolled from the club house after the third fox-trot; "Dorothy, will you . . ." and the magic of the moonlight crept into his voice.

Over the sycamore trees with their silvery leaves gleamed a sheen as of a wedding in Fairyland; the music of the orchestra in the distant clubhouse helped to keep up the illusion and Allen seemed to hear the gnomes tuning up for the princess' ball. So he murmured even more softly, "Dorothy, will you . . . will you write to me after I am gone?"

"Why . . . why yes, Allen; I'll send you a post card if father will let me," promised Dorothy shyly . . . or slyly.

"But not a post card . . . a letter! A long one, pages long, every day!" persisted Allen, with a sort of catch in his voice.

Ah, the cruel coquettishness of the young lady of seventeen! For, said Dorothy, "Why Allen, what could I say to you? . . . pages every day! Dear me, there is nothing I could say to you in a letter that would interest you so much as that!" And the long pause was almost a question.

"Yes you could, Dot," importuned the youth; "write about just you . . . and me."

The strains of a persistently tantalizing waltz sounded from the nearby clubhouse where the Senior class was entertaining its young lady friends for the last time.

"Why Allen Griffin," exclaimed Dorothy, "there is Jimmie Wharton's waltz! Hurry, or he'll think I'm trying to cut it . . . and he has the cutest curls, don't you think?"

Breathing anathemas against Mr. Wharton's unsuspecting curls, Allen permitted himself to be propelled back to the airy clubhouse.

And that is our love scene. I am sorry that it could have been more impassioned, but again I must deplore that grain of truth which hovers around my conscience.

Everyone said that Allen Griffin would

startle the world with his literature; Allen thought so himself. Not that he impressed the fact upon anyone. In fact, he was almost modest, a lost virtue in this enlightened day of precocious youth. He felt, secretly, that some day the world would be swayed by the power of his written word and that his name would be synonymous with those of his idols of literature, O. Henry and Victor Hugo. Meanwhile, he "accepted a position" as a writer on one of the Memphis newspapers . . . the one extolled at the corner of Main and Madison by the old paper woman, who owned a block of the stock, though that fact was known to few people.

"Say, Griffin, old top," burst out Tommie Brennon, with a slap on Allen's back, just in the place where one hates to be slapped; "Come over to the Tipton theatre; the Skyhigh Girls are on this week and it's a peach of a show. Huh?"

"Nothin' doin'," Tommie. I'm deep in the absorbing details of the burning of the planing mill up in Covington; horrible waste laid to a pile of shingles and an old storage shed." Allen threw this bit over his left shoulder as he pounded out an item which he felt sure would never reach the public. That had been the fate of most of the stuff he had written in the past. The longing of his soul (along with every other reporter from time immemorial) was for something big . . . a scoop that would startle the Associated Press. But such events were rare in Memphis and besides, there was small likelihood that he would stumble upon it.

"Well, I'll wait fifteen minutes for you, so shake it up." Tommie's speech was more useful than ornamental.

Tommie Brennon was Allen's room mate at a small lodging house on an obscure street not far from the newspaper office. He was an alert young chap

who missed nothing that occurred within ten miles of him. If a fire broke out in Hernando, Tommie happened to be within writing distance. If a murder was pulled off in North Side, near the gas house, Tommie was sure to be passing at the time, no one could elope without braving the eye of the watchful Thomas. The only time he rested was when he could coax theatre tickets from the dramatic critic . . . and then the leading lady was likely to faint at the crucial moment or a daring robbery would be perpetrated under his very nose, so that Tommie would break into print again. In this way, he had been able to get into the good graces of the city editor so that he was a sort of free lance for the city news.

Allen had not been so fortunate. He would walk past a man cracking a safe in the front window of a bank and write about a violet which had sprung up out of the dirt at the side of the pavement. News seemed to pass over, through and around him, so that only the influence of the old paper woman kept him in a job.

Since that day so many years ago when Mamie Griffin's kid left South Side for the school in Mississippi, he had had no glimpse of any one of the black friends he had made there. Even the kind old paper woman lived in his memory as a wizened, bent old witch who had kissed him and told him to be a good boy and l'arn. But now he thought of them and wished he could find the place where they lived. He wanted, especially, to see the old paper woman and thank her for all she had done for him. Down in his heart was a half-ashamed, half hopeful idea that she might really be a witch, for in spite of his twenty-two years and his five-foot-eleven, he thought there might possibly be such things as "ghostses and goblins."

Prayerfully laying the thousand-word

tale of the fire in Covington on the city editor's desk, Allen donned his coat and . . . demurring that he hated burlesque shows and would much rather see a movie . . . went across the street to the Tipton Theatre, where he caught himself, several times, smiling at the girls on the stage and his shoulders swayed to the jazzy strains of the "Honk Honk Blues," which was being shrieked by an elderly soubrette in pink who cavorted and pranced on the slovenly stage.

"Gosh, this show is awful," mumbled Tommie, but the next instant he panted with pleased surprise, "Say, Allen, pipe that chicken in yellow tights . . . there, that one at the end, in back!"

Allen looked and grasped the arms of his seat; "Why, that's Dorothy!" he almost yelled.

"Huh?" grunted Tommie! "Do you know some people in a punk bunch like this?"

"Why, why . . ." gasped Allen, all in a muddle. "That can't be Dorothy! Her father would never let her go on the stage, especially with a company of this sort. But it must be Dorothy! No one else has those brown, melting eyes or that waving chestnut hair. . ."

Tommie gazed at his friend with pitying scorn. "Wake up, you poor fish; are you going nutty? I didn't know you were under the influence of the so-called weaker sex."

All through the show, Allen sat as one in a daze, not taking his eyes from the girl in yellow tights, in the back row, at the end. He was turning over in his mind the best way of getting to speak to Dorothy, for he was sure that it was she.

"How do you go about it, Tommie?" he inquired.

"How do you go about what?"

"How do you meet 'em . . . talk to em? I know that girl in yellow tights. She

is Dorothy Evnonton; her dad teaches Sociology down at school."

"Well, you poor hecker!" abused the blase, world-wide Tommie, all of twenty years old, himself. "Send 'er a note and tell 'er to meet you at the stage door; then take her somewhere to eat . . . Child's or some chop suey joint. That's the way everyone does. But she can't amount to much if she hangs around such a gang as this."

"She amounts to a lot with me, anyway, and I'm going to talk to her tonight, or know the reason why." Determination fairly glared in Allen's questioning grey eyes.

The sophisticated Tommie was unruffled; "Yes, I guess you'll know the reason why, if you don't see her."

With palpitating heart, Allen wrote the note to the girl in yellow tights and dispatched it by an usher, who whiled away the tedium of between-acts by selling peanuts and popcorn. No answer came back, but it was an anxious tow-haired boy who presented himself at the stage door in the dirty alley and waited, despite the venomous glares of the door-keeper.

Allen was not the only waiter. The peanut-boy usher made a fair income from the notes he took behind the stage; in fact, he supported a wife and four children on it.

At last the door opened and the weary people who work that we might be amused, poured out, chattering and giggling and, in some mysteriously quick manner, pairing off with Allen's fellow waiters. The alley soon was deserted. No sign of Dorothy had he seen, nor anyone who bore the slightest resemblance to her.

Finally, seeing that the theatre must be empty, he walked dismally toward the pavement. He wondered what could have become of Dorothy, for there could

be no possible doubt that the girl in yellow tights was she.

Suddenly Allen was startled by hearing a familiar voice say, "Beg yer pardon!"

The voice was familiar . . . without being what he had expected at all; it was undoubtedly Dorothy's, but was so hard, so harsh; Dorothy's voice was the rich, liquid voice of her own Mississippi. This voice was like hearing, in a dreadful dream, a loved one speaking in the tones of a loathsome thing. The tones were rasping, grating.

Allen turned and beheld . . . was it Dorothy? . . . It was a hard-faced Dorothy, then, gaily decked in glaring purples and reds. Her neck was not fresh and soft as it should have been, but was instead long and stringy. The brown eyes held a hard glitter and the mouth (Dorothy's curved so delightfully and the dimples at each corner of it were of the sort for poets to rave over) . . . ah, the mouth; under its line of carmine was a straight line. It was an unclean mouth. And she was . . . yes, she was an older Dorothy than his.

"Did you send me a note?" And it was like the scratching rasp of a dull saw.

"Yes, I sent it. I was sure that I knew you, you resemble the girl that I want above all others," in a daze at the mysterious identity of the woman who so greatly resembled Dorothy.

The woman laughed in a mirthless way. "Do I? Well, it's a long time since anyone said that to me. This girl . . . who was she?"

"We can talk about it somewhere else, can't we?" asked Allen, his eye on a policeman who was sauntering up, suspiciously eyeing the ill-matched couple on the pavement. "Let's go to a good . . . to a restaurant."

The woman caught the unconscious

implication and laughed silently and defiantly.

Over the coffee-stained, patched tablecloth of a nearby restaurant, Allen told the woman of his mistake; that her startling resemblance, on the stage, to Dorothy had filled him with apprehension lest it be she.

"And this . . . this Dorothy?" asked the woman, trying hard to veil her eagerness to hear the answer to her question. "Where does she live?"

"She is Miss Dorothy Evnonton and her father teaches Sociology in the college I attended in Mississippi." Allen felt a slight revulsion at mentioning her name to this coarse woman.

The woman laughed her mirthless, nasal laugh, but the hardness somehow left her eyes as she said, "Small wonder that you made that mistake; she is my daughter."

Colorlessly she said it, but Allen's blood leaped in his veins as the full significance of this startling remark burst upon him.

"But what . . . what . . . why . . ." he stammered, at a loss how to frame the many questions which throbbed through his mind. The Evnontons had allowed the impression to stand that Mrs. Evnonton had died long ago, in fact, shortly after Dorothy was born.

"Well, I may's well tell you the whole story; I didn't think I ever would tell it to anybody." The chorus woman moistened her throat with a gulp of near-beer and wiped her not over-clean hand over her mouth. "I was a dancer in a small cafe in New Haven and Silas Evnonton, dam him, was a student at Yale. I didn't want to marry him. I knew his family was better'n mine. My dad killed a guy and did time in the pen. But he insisted and the other fellows at the table insisted so I finally married him. It was the end of a merry party a gang

of them college fellows was havin'. Well, I may's well cut it short as possible, an' they ain't no use in dragin' it out, anyway. You know how it would have to turn out. Silas Evnonton graduated and took a job at a small college in Maine. I went with him, tho he made life a curse to me by his constant slurs that I'd persuaded him to marry me when he was drunk. Then when I offered to divorce him, he was furious and insisted that I wanted to ruin him as a professor by lettin' the world know about his little escapade. 'Little escapade!' Sometimes a little escapade sends a soul to hell. But I don't want to whine. I knowed what I was doin' when I married him. Things went on like that till my kid was born. God, how I wanted that little kid as she laid in my arms and cooed up at me!" The woman took another swallow of the near-beer and Allen looked away in an agony of revulsion. The woman went on, "Silas said I was not fit to raise her; that I was no good and that I would make a mess of things. It was his idea that I should disappear, leavin' my kid with him. I had to do it. But Lord, how it hurt to leave 'er! That kid was the first thing I ever saw that I could love. And it has been the only thing! Well, what's the use of harpin' on it? I got a job with a musical show and stayed with them for a long time, till I began to lose my looks. Too much dissipation, the boss said. Hum . . . well, you see what I am now. I'm down and out . . . and I want my little girl! I want my kid!"

For a long moment, Allen gazed out over the other tables; across the soiled, frayed tables appeared the vice-marred faces of the men and the miserable, painted faces of the women who frequented the place. He felt a dull sort of pity for the woman opposite . . . a gnawing at the heart. Forever must she look upon a vision of the unattainable;

for her, there could be no realization of Hope, of dreams, of her aspirations; never could she clasp her daughter to her sunken breast and murmur, "My daughter!"

* * * * *

In another part of the not-large, Southern city, sat a miserable, slovenly wretch. She leaned over a table with her sharp elbows on it. On her sodden face was a thick coating of cheap rouge through which slow, heavy tears had coursed little dirty rivulets. Across the room sat a haggard old crone, who might have been seen any day at the corner of Main and Madison, selling papers and crying them out in her weak, quavering voice.

The figure huddled over the table sobbed a low, heart-breaking moan. "So, mammy," she mumbled, "I want my kid; I want my Allen!"

"Now ain' yo a nice 'oman to be a-wantin' a fine eddicated boy liken 'im? He eddicated, he is. Ain' yo done say yo never want to see 'im agin, ef'n I sen' 'im to school?" The old woman was indignant.

"Yes, I know, mammy, but . . . oh, I want my kid; I want my Allen! I don' want nothin' else but my kid!" And Mamie Griffin dug her sharp elbows into the table and groaned in the agony of denied motherhood.

* * * * *

Allen left Dorothy's chorus-girl-mother at a cheap lodging house in a terrible street; it was a miserable, down-at-the-heel hotel and Allen shuddered as he rang the bell for the admittance of the woman.

At his room, he found Tommie buried in a book. "Say, you," he burst out as soon as Allen opened the door; "here's a special delivery for you. It's from that place in Mississippi. Hurry and open it and see if someone has left you a fortune."

"Dear Allen:" ran the brief letter:

"Father died last week and I am going to try to find my mother, I have just learned from some old letters that perhaps she is not dead after all. Why did she not come for me, or at least write to me before? But where-ever she is, I want my mother and I am sure that I shall find her somehow. Will you help me? With love, dear, Dorothy."

* * * * *

"Dorothy!" cried Allen at the station.

"Allen, you dear!" exclaimed the small girl in black, embracing him right there on the platform; there was an unexpected kiss and the two faced each other in blushing amazement. The first kiss.

"And will you help me to find my mother?" pleaded Dorothy, after she had told of the shocking death of Silas Evnonton, of heart failure.

"Your mother! But you have never seen her since you were old enough to remember. And you say you never saw her picture?"

"No, isn't that queer?" said Dorothy in wonder, "And I often asked father to show me one. He always seemed to be angry when I asked. Allen . . . you don't know anything about my mother, do you?"

"I?" lied Allen; "How should I know anything about her?"

He found rooms for her at a small but respectably clean hotel and left her in the care of the housekeeper there. Then he called at the cheap lodging house in the terrible street where Dorothy's mother existed. He told her everything. "What's to be done?" he asked.

"I want my daughter, my Dorothy! Bring her to me!" sobbed the mother.

Allen was horrified. "You don't mean . . . you can't mean that you would make yourself known to her? Oh, you couldn't do that! Dorothy is a pure, innocent girl; she has never looked upon vice; she does not know that such people as you exist. She must never know you!"

"Not know my daughter . . . not see my only kid! Oh, you can't mean that!" The mother's heart seemed to be bursting and her whole body shook with the agony of the fading out of the great hope that had sprung up when Allen told her that Dorothy was seeking her mother. "But . . . but I'll be a good woman. Honest to God I will! I'll give up this life . . . I'll even give up the stage if you'll only let me have her! Please, mister!" The mother's voice, hard and harsh though it was, died down to the heart-rending sob of a lost creature in torment.

Allen was filled with pity for the miserable creature who was Dorothy's mother, but the thought of leading Dorothy to this woman and saying, "There . . . there is your mother." No, he could not do it. It would ruin her life.

* * * * *

A haze of smoke clouded the city room at the newspaper office; the next day's edition was being made up with the aid of tobacco of varying degrees of vileness.

Tommie Brennon pounded vigorously on his typewriter and yelled for a copy boy.

"Here's a peach of a story, Allen," he called thru the smoke of his cigarette; "a dame from the Skyhigh Girls show took to the muddy old Mississipp' early this morning. Bugs, I suppose; those women are absolutely depraved, so I don't see what led her to it. It made up a swell story, though, and I put in some stuff about a secret sorrow and all that sort of rot. By the way, she looks something like that dame of yours in the yellow tights. Say . . . did you meet her?"

The buzzer on Allen's desk rang frantically.

"Mr. Griffin," said the city editor, when Allen had hurriedly obeyed his summons, "a copy boy, in looking around, found this

story on the floor by your desk. It's just the sort of stuff that the kids will fall for . . . about ghosts and goblins and all that sort of junk. Did you write it?"

"Yes sir," faltered Allen, fearful of being ridiculed; "I have always been fond of fairy stories since I was a kid."

"Well, Mr. Griffin," the editor went on, "I am going to give you a chance to write 'em as specials for our newspaper syndicate. We need some new stuff and I think I can assure you that you will be well paid if your stories catch on."

In a daze Allen returned to his desk. He had found himself at last. He had arrived. Now he could ask Dorothy to be his wife. Dorothy! And he had driven her mother to suicide! The old question of heredity fought itself over in his mind. Could anything good come from the dust? Could a fragrant flower grow from a wayside weed? Oh, the thing almost drove him wild. It is the old question that has for ages baffled older men than Allen.

In the moonlight of the vine-shaded balcony of the hotel, Allen told Dorothy the story as gently as he could. He felt that it would not be fair to Dorothy to withhold the facts. She listened quietly.

"I don't remember my mother, either, Dorothy; but I am sure that she was a good woman, just as I am sure that your mother's love and longing for you were salvation."

Allen drew Dorothy nearer and the kiss of reverence and love healed the hearts of each of them.

Away down on the South Side a gaunt woman dug her sharp elbows into a rough table and allowed the searing tears to course down her painted cheeks.

"Oh, I want my kid . . . I want my Allen!" she sobbed. "Oh, God, give me back my boy!"

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Bed-Time Stories for Little Tots

By H. ALLAN PERRILL

A very successful series of educational animal stories which the author tells his children each night. Acknowledgement for their inspiration is made to the syndicated articles of this type.

How the Pony Became a Little Hoarse

"A pony, dear children, is a dainty little creature that shakes a wicked hoof. The pony has a thick, warm coat of fur, given it by some fair admirer. The pony is highly or-na-men-tal but not useful in the least. It does not work well in double harness for it is too coltish and will not pull its share of the load.

"The or-ig-in-al cost of the little an-im-al is not much but the upkeep is tremendous, due to its large appetite. It has a great many cute little tricks that it exhibits when it is feeling its oats. One of them is ordering so large a repast when you take her out to dinner that she gets ill and then charging the doctor bill to you."

"Does the pony kick, papa?"

"Yes, my children, the pony is a very high-kicker, in more ways than one."

"Can't we have a pony, papa?"

"No, children. As I said before, it costs too much to keep one. In addition to eating too heartily the pony insists upon having a great many stalls all of which are very ex-pen-sive."

"But how did the pony become a horse, papa?"

"Oh yes, dear children, I nearly forgot. The pony went barn-storming and as the show went broke, the com-pan-y had to sleep in an old stable and so when the pony woke up in the morning, she was a little hoarse.

"Now run to bed, children, and don't dream of ponies for if you do, you'll have nightmares."

How the Poor Fish Threw the Bull

"There once was a poor fish who was called a sucker because he bit at e-ver-y thing that came along. He fell for every bait that was offered him. Any girl with a half-way pretty face could have hooked him had she desired.

"But no one wanted him because he was so bony, especially around the head.

"He was crazy about a little dear who had some good lines, but she didn't use them in fishing for suckers. She wanted a gamer fish. a

fighter who would put up a little re-sis-tance when she tried to haul him in. The sucker would have swallowed her lures at one gulp and then swam straight for her. What she desired was a fish whom she would have to play a little before she could land.

"The sucker was greatly dis-cour-aged but he didn't give up hope en-tire-ly. He realized that he hadn't a good front and de-cid-ed that in order to show her he wasn't such a skate as he looked, he would have to throw the bull.

"The bull was a mighty an-im-al in those days and had never been thrown by a weakling like the sucker. Only those who were boastful and strong and fearless of con-se-quen-ces had ever man-han-dled him. But the poor fish was de-ter-mined to make the attempt.

"So when he went to see the little dear, that night, he took the bull by the horns and threw it.

"'Oh, you brave thing!' exclaimed the little dear. 'I had no idea that you could do that.'

"'That's nothing at all,' said the sucker and he threw the bull even harder.

"And he kept right on throwing it until he had made so good an im-pres-sion that she married him.

"And after they were married, he found that in order to live hap-pi-ly to-geth-er, he had to throw the bull a dozen times a day."

"Is that the story of you and mamma, papa?"

"Why no, children! What ever put such an idea in your head?"

"Well, I heard auntie say that mamma was a little dear, but she married a poor fish."

"What nonsense, children! That's only a fish story, and all fish stories are lies. Run to bed and I'll attend to your auntie."

The Chicken Who Made a Goose of Herself

"I'm going to tell you a story of a foolish little chicken that made a goose of herself, children.

"This par-tic-u-lar chicken was a cute little wren who loved fine feathers. She was quite a high flier, when it came to ex-trav-a-gant ideas. A modest little cottage wouldn't suit her am-bi-tions at all. She de-man-ded a fine a-part-ment in which to roost and fix up her nest."

"Did she want to have some baby chickens in her nest, papa?"

"No, children, she didn't like babies. She had a little poodle dog which she wor-shipped and that suited her better than babies."

"Wouldn't she live in a common coop, 'stead of a swell 'partment, papa?"

"No, my dears, the only coop that she would con-sid-er is spelled c-o-u-p-e and runs on wheels."

"Did this chicken have bugs 'n' have to be sprinkled with powder, papa?"

"Hush! hush! children. Your question is in-de-li-cate. This wasn't that kind of a chicken and if she had seen a bug, she would have screamed.

"Well, one day, a handsome young cockerel with only one yellow bill to his name came along and wanted to marry the chicken. But she only laughed at him and said that a fellow with only one yellow bill couldn't prop-er-ly support her poodle. The one she married would have to have thousands of yellow bills. She cackled and said that the di-a-mond set amber comb on the top of her head was worth a dozen of the single yellow bills he had.

"So this young cockerel went away and tried to forget her and she married a rheumatic old rooster with oodles of money.

"And that was how she made a goose of herself."

"Didn't the young cock-er-el ever marry, papa?"

"Yes, he married and has children to whom he tells stories like these every night."

"Who was the chicken, papa?"

"Hush, my children. You mustn't ask so many questions. Run upstairs and leave your papa to his dreams.

"And oh, by the way, children, you needn't say anything about this story to your mother. She al-read-y knows it."

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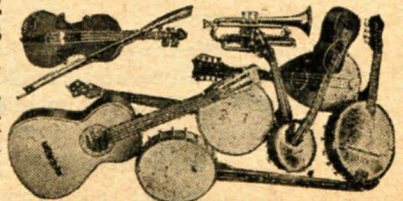
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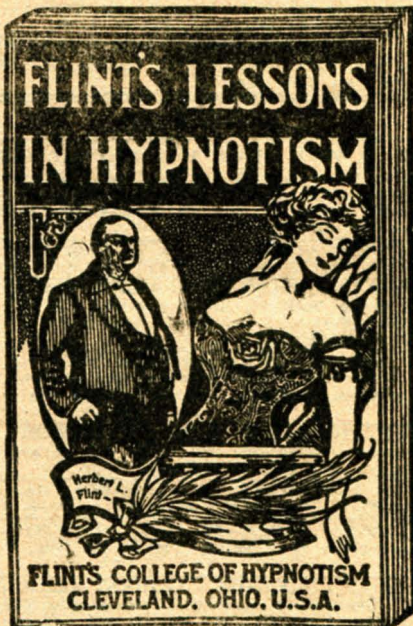
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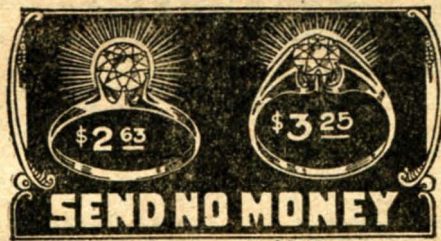
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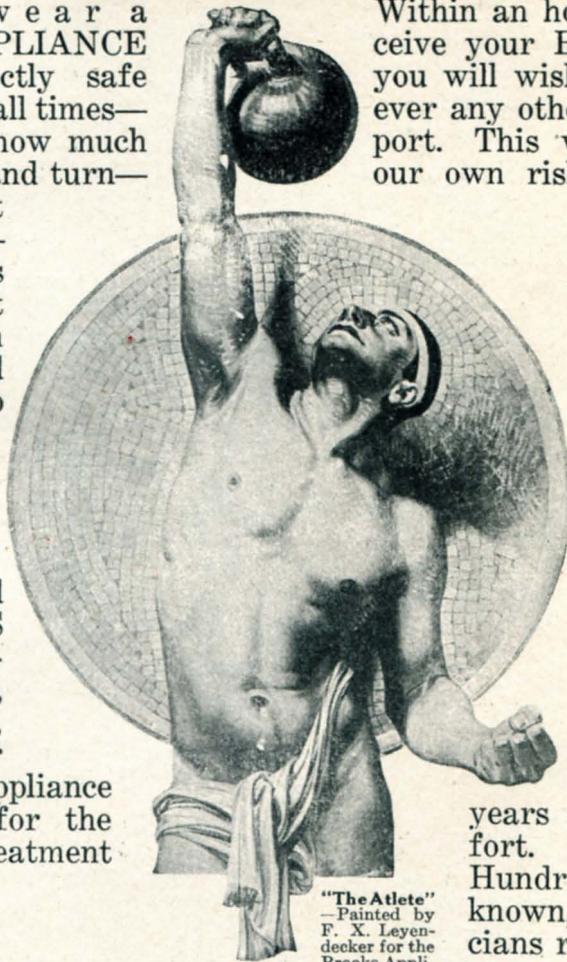
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