Today's Morals as revealed to Judge Ben B. Lindsey

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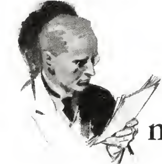

What the dentists say about this modern plague of gum disorders

Soft food is to blame, they declare, because it deprives our gums of the stimulation they need to keep them sound and healthy

THERE are three short quotations printed on this page. They are picked at random from a mass of similar evidence, but they give the gist of the dentists' view toward these stubborn troubles of the gums that plague so many thousands.

And as to the cause of these troubles, there is no longer a shadow of doubt. Soft food, the dentists agree, must bear the major share of the blame.

It's these creamy, rich and appetizing foods of ours—these modern culinary triumphs, if you please—that cause most of the trouble. For these foods make things too easy, too luxurious, for our gums. They completely lack the coarse and fibrous elements that stimulate the gums and encourage a vigorous circulation of the blood within their walls.

So, deprived of the normal massage that mastication should provide, the gums become soft and sensitive—too weak to resist the encroachments of disease and infection. And sooner or later "pink tooth brush" puts in its appearance—a warning of greater, more serious troubles to come.

How to offset the damage soft food does to gums

If you ask your own dentist how best to care for your gums, he will tell you that the first step is to restore to them the stimulation your food deprives them of. Very likely he will explain to you the new doctrine of gum massage that is gaining so many thousands of followers, and show you the simple technique of this gentle frictionizing with the fingers and with the brush.

Probably, too, he will recommend that you perform both the massage and the regular twice-daily brushing of your teeth with Ipana Tooth Paste.

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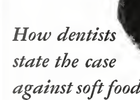
How dentists state the case against soft food



Nearly all our modern food is soft, entirely lacking in the roughage and fibre that once kept gums and teeth sound and healthy.

Look over these excerpts. The dentists agree that soft food is the cause of nearly all gum troubles and that stimulation and massage are the proper correctives.

From a recent professional paper:

"Rendering the food superfioe is an echo of the oft-repeated charge that we do not use our mastication muscles enough—that we establish a blood stasis and thus deprive the teeth and gums of circulating nourishment."

From a noted authority:

"To replace the benefits derived from natural living, which now seems almost impossible, the artificial production of similar effects is attempted through the several forms of exercise. Applied to the dental tissues various methods have been devised to artificially stimulate an adequate blood supply to compensate in some degree for the loss of normal function."

From a textbook on preventive dentistry:

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Table of Contents

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Gobseck
The Firm of Nucingen
The Commission in Lunacy
Colonel Chabert
The Unconscious Mummers
A Second Home
Gambara
Melmoth Reconciled
The Maranas
Maitre Cornelius
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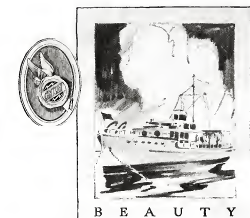

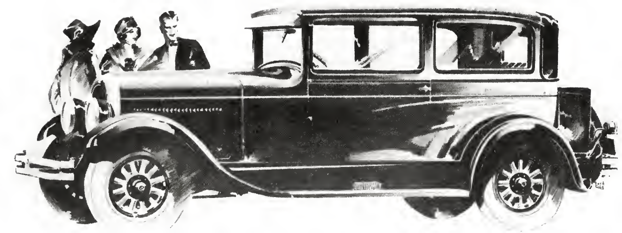

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Table of Contents

ART SECTION—BEAUTIFUL WOMEN
Norma Shearer, Pola Negri, Dorothy Wegman, Jeanne Green, Dorothy Knapp, Marguerite De La Motte

SERIAL NOVELS OF POWER AND PURPOSE

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE—*A novel of modern society by the author of "The Salamander." (With résumé.)* — *Owen Johnson* 42
Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

WE LIVE BUT ONCE—*The fascinating chronicle of a ruthless love. (With synopsis.)* — *Rupert Hughes* 64
Illustrated by Will Foster

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS—*The strange romance of a ranchman and a chorus girl. (With full summary.)* — *Struthers Burt* 82
Illustrated by Ernest Fuhr

SHORT STORIES OF SPARKLE AND THRILL

DINNER IS SERVED—*A brilliant story of European society.* — *Rita Weiman* 31
Illustrated by Frederic R. Gruger

THE HOLLOW GOD—*The quaint adventure of two sailors ashore.* — *Arthur Mason* 52
Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer

GETTING MARRIED—*A modern yet old-fashioned love story.* — *Maude Radford Warren* 54
Illustrated by C. D. Williams

THE MYSTERY OF MOLLIE CORBIN—*The Professional Friend solves his hardest case.* — *Leroy Scott* 59
Illustrated by Lester Ralph

THE CUTIE—*A drama-in-brief of the city streets.* — *Arthur Ebenhack* 70
Illustrated by Frank Bensing

EXILES OF THE SKY—*The romance of a discredited air-pilot.* — *Samuel Spewack* 78
Illustrated by Rico Tomaso

DEAR DIARY—*New chapters in the biography of a movie-mad girl.* — *Virginia Dale* 88
Illustrated by Edward Ryan

SPECTACLES—*A grim little gem by the author of "Hatrack."* — *Herbert Asbury* 91
Illustrated by J. Henry

THE REAL SPIRIT OF OUR DAY

GRANDMOTHER'S RUG—*A significant essay by a great-hearted philosopher.* — *Angelo Patri* 25
Decoration by Franklin Booth

TO THE LADY—*Graceful verses by a well-loved poet.* — *Douglas Malloch* 26
Decoration by Arthur E. Becher

THE CREDIT—*A common-sense editorial by a keen observer.* — *Bruce Barton* 29

THE MORAL REVOLT—*Is the Judge right in predicting a new code of morals?* — *Judge Ben B. Lindsey* 36
Illustrated from Photographs

FRAUDS OF SMART SOCIETY—*A society leader reveals its inside stories in illuminating fashion.* — *Mrs. Philip Lydig* 72
With Illustrations

COVER DESIGN—*Painted from life.* — *Edna Crompton*

Of Vital Interest

NOTHING this magazine has ever published has produced deeper nation-wide interest than the two series of articles by Judge Ben B. Lindsey of Denver's famous Family Court; and by New York's noted social leader, Mrs. Philip Lydig.

In the present issue the attention of readers is specifically called to page 36, where Judge Lindsey's third article begins, and to page 72, where the third in Mrs. Lydig's great series opens. While the interest in these two notable series is cumulative, each article stands alone. Readers of "The Moral Revolt" and "Frauds of Smart Society" in the present issue, however, will be glad to know that in the next number another article in each series will be presented.

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Runaway Minds

By M. MERCER KENDIG, B. A.
Director, Department of Education, THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

A BRILLIANT friend of mine had just told me she was leaving her third position in three years. No sufficient reason for the failure of her bright prospects developed in an hour's talk. However, as the door was closing behind her, I saw in a flash the real cause of her difficulty in achieving the success she seemed to merit. She and thousands like her, equally well-favored by fortune, were the victims, not of the world's misunderstanding but of their own "Runaway-Minds."

When these people sight something hard or distasteful in their way, they indulge in a mental "shy." Off they go, down the nearest road of escape, like an untrained colt. They sink into nervous breakdowns, leave their jobs and generally fail in the adjustments and stability of purpose necessary for happy business or home life. For these flibberty-gibbets, the "time is always out of joint," and they can never "set it right." They lack the training which produces the mental stamina to stand still in the face of a difficulty, look it in the eye, and carry on toward a well-considered solution. Their minds have never been broken to the harness of intelligent mental habit. They would be amazed and unbelieving, just as my friend was, if you tried to show them that what they were really doing was running away from themselves and their own mental insufficiency.

The "colt years" are the easy years for breaking to mental harness. Left to maturity, it is a problem for the highly trained psychiatrist and means the waste of what might have been successful years. Out of my experience in dealing with boys and girls, I have found that, in modern life at least, the best environment for the development of stamina is the good boarding school and, in summer, the camp.

Here results are not measured in so many examinations passed but in terms of stamina gained in meeting and solving these problems of the school room and others equally important which arise in the social life of the students. The educators in these schools know that it is method, not subject matter, which counts in breaking young minds of their "coltish" habits. They realize that the power of social adjustment is most important in the preparation not only for college but for a satisfying after-life. So the training goes on as carefully on the playfield and in the dormitory as in the study hall.

It is a subtle work, this training of young minds to be the willing tools of the personality. It requires untold understanding, patience, and experience. It requires ample time and the opportunity to deal with the individual which is seldom found in any but Private Schools. So I would like to say to all parents who feel that, in the rushing life of today, they cannot supply this training, and to those who are disturbed because they cannot control the environment and associations of their boys and girls, that two to six years in a good boarding school is the finest investment in stamina-building. It is an investment which will yield dividends of joy and usefulness to their own children and to society.

With the assistance of a large staff, I have devoted many years to acquiring an intimate knowledge of modern education as carried on in the Private Schools in every section of our country. I will be glad to have you consult with me about schools, by letter or personal interview. Red Book Magazine readers are always welcome at our offices. This service is free to them at all times.

M. Mercer Kendig

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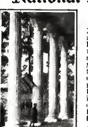
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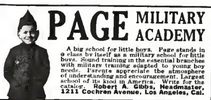

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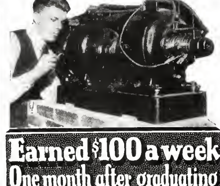

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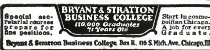

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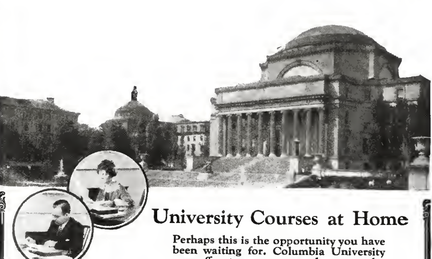

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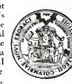

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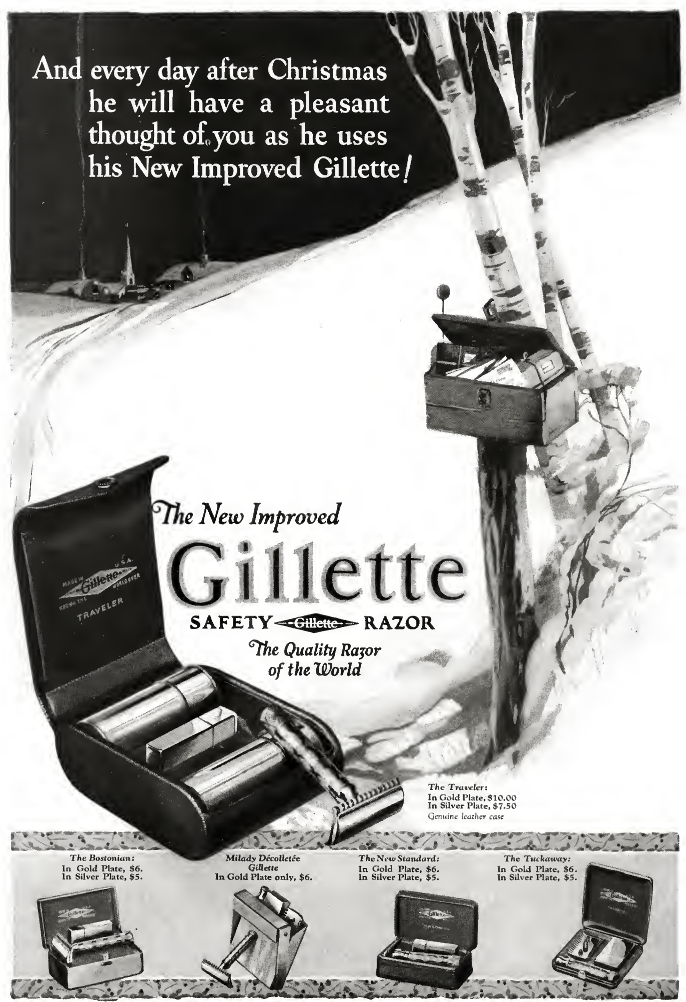
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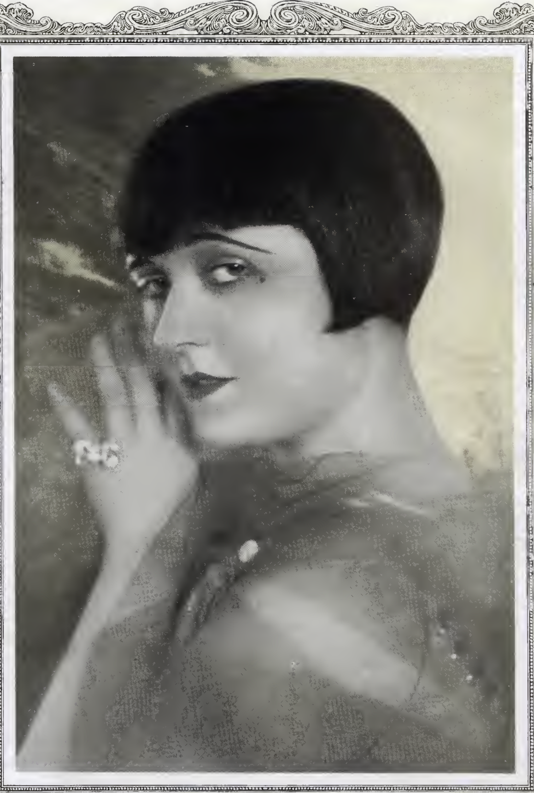
Film Star

Photograph by Melbourne-Spurr, Hollywood



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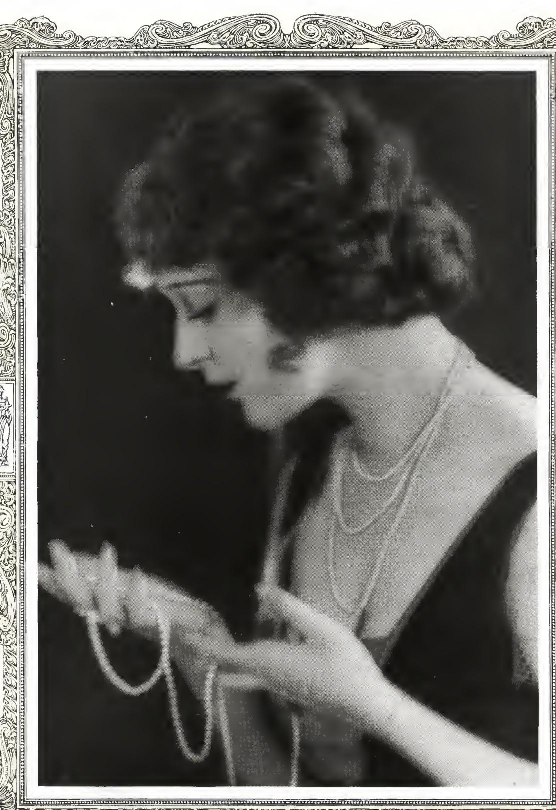


MARGUERITE DE LA MOTTE

Film Star

Photograph by Melbourne-Spurr, Hollywood

It is perfectly plain that the most beautiful and comfortable cars in every price class are precisely those cars whose bodies are built by Fisher

FISHER BODIES

GENERAL MOTORS

Grandmother's Rug

by Angelo Patri

Decoration by Franklin Booth

OUR grandmothers had little leisure to make lovely things; yet they made them. They made them in spite of the fact that they had to carry every drop of water for household purposes from the spring, had to make their preserves in open-kettle style, had to lay down the eggs and the pork and the mince-meat every fall, and make soap every springtime.

They walked miles every day in kitchens planned like barns. They cooked and washed and mended, and nursed the neighbors, and bore children; but before they folded their hands in sleep, they found leisure to create something lovely that they might leave a touch of beauty along the trail as a token to those who came after.

On the floor of the new cottage's best bed-room lies an old hooked rug; on the bed, a patch-work quilt. The patterns are stiff and quaint, but they speak to the lonely spot in you, that spot that aches to create its own bit of beauty to mark the trail of your passing.

The grandmother who made the rug and quilt lived far from people and museums and art-clubs, but the patterns are all the better for that. They came straight from the heart and mind of one filled with the gracious spirit that illumined homely things and turned them into messages of beauty.

The rug and the quilt that hold places of honor in the cottage today spanned years in their making. A bit was hooked or stitched in as Great-grand-mother waited for a pot to boil or a loaf to bake or for the men to come in from the fields. She was not impatient to complete it. There was pleasure in searching for the very bright piece to fit into the precise spot where it belonged, and a thrill in discovering it. It was enough to see it grow under her hands, and to think of the time when its perfection would send a glow of warmth and color through the chill of the best room.

Perhaps her great-granddaughter may not make such a quilt or rug, but surely there is a chance for one's own bit of beauty. There is perhaps a lovely garden or an orchard where one day happy children will play? Or a book with a message of gladness? Some piece of public service? Some touch of beauty that you will leave somewhere along your trail to speak of your passing?

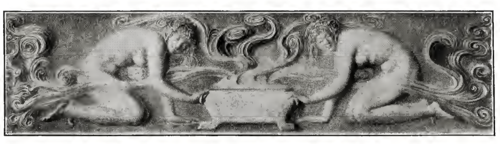
Great-grandmother had less time, less opportunity, less incentive than her descendants of today. Had she, perhaps, more spirit?

The best wishes, lady, yes,
Congratulations all around.
He's won a bunch of loveliness,
He surely has, the lucky hound!
A dandy fellow you have found—
And yet forgive us just a pang
As wedding-bells begin to sound:
You're busting up a darned good gang.

For he and I and Jake and Ed
Have pal-ed around for quite a while,
Together played, together fed,
And tramped together many a mile.
We've lived in poverty and style,
Got many a bump and many a bang,
But now—well, lady, don't you smile:
You're busting up a darned good gang.

Yes, he and I and Ed and Jake
Have been together quite a lot.
A pile of wealth we didn't make—
We maybe did and maybe not.
But when the gang together got,
The smoke was thick, the rafters rang,
The laugh went round—I tell you what,
You're busting up a darned good gang.

Of course, it's better as it is,
We all of us are glad it came;
A home, a wife, and kids of his—
Well, that beats any poker-game.
Yet sometimes, looking at the flame,
He may remember then—oh, hang!
I can't help saying just the same,
You're busting up a darned good gang!



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In France, home of cosmetics, Palmolive is the second largest selling soap, and has supplanted French soaps by the score. In beauty-wise Paris, Palmolive is the "imported" soap.

Remember those facts when tempted to risk an unproved soap on your skin.

HAPPINESS is more necessary to a woman, sages say, than to a man. Yet what woman can be happy who is unattractive? . . . The girl who is beautiful in simple, unaffected ways is sought by everyone. "The most popular girl in her set" is usually the happiest girl.

Beauty is often only a matter of a lovely skin. For *that* is youth. And youth is the most priceless possession in the world... a possession now, thanks to natural ways in skin care, that is extended long past the allotted time. Youth well into the forties is common today. Thousands have gained it by following this simple rule:

The rule and how to follow it for best results

Wash your face gently with soothing Palmolive Soap, massaging the lather softly into the skin. Rinse thoroughly, first with warm water, then with cold. If your skin is inclined to be dry, apply a touch of good cold cream—that is all. Do this regularly, and particularly in the evening. Use powder and rouge if you wish. But never leave them on over night. They clog the pores, often enlarge them. Blackheads and disfigurements often follow. They must be washed away.

Avoid this mistake

Do not use ordinary soaps in the treatment given above. Do not think any green soap, or one represented as of olive and palm oils, is the same as Palmolive.

And it costs but 10c the cake! So little that millions let it do for their bodies what it does for their faces. Obtain a cake today. Then note the amazing difference one week makes.

Soap from trees!

The only oils in Palmolive Soap are the soothing beauty oils from the olive tree, the African palm, and the coconut palm—and no other fats whatsoever. That is why Palmolive Soap is the natural color that it is—for palm and olive oils, nothing else, give Palmolive its natural green color.

The only secret to Palmolive is its exclusive blend—and that is one of the world's priceless beauty secrets.

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THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY (Del. Corp.),
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The RED BOOK Magazine

December 1926 · Volume XLVIII · Number 2 KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

The Credit

By BRUCE BARTON

IN a friendly conversation the names of two men came up, and the following facts developed:

The first man insists that every letter which goes out from his office shall be signed by his name. Every good idea originated in the office is presented to the client as *his* idea. His associates are merely a background for the one big personality. When they grow tired of being subordinates, they drop out, and he hires new men in their places.

This man has accumulated considerable money. He has not accumulated many friends. And if he should die tomorrow, his business would fall apart.

The other man was once my boss. On the day I reported to him for work he said: "I want you to take my job away from me as fast as you can. If the time comes when you can do the work better than I can, then I shall expect to keep right on drawing my pay just for having had sense enough to hire you."

He is now president of a big business, and only the other day he made me stop on the street to listen while he told what a wonderful crowd of young fellows he has. They, of course, worship him. And if a truck should hit him tomorrow, they would feel a personal obligation to his memory to carry on.

It is curious that so few men ever learn the value of sharing the lime-light. As an aid in getting things done painlessly, it can not be beat; a truth which none has ever appreciated more than shrewd Ben Franklin. When he was soliciting subscriptions for the first public library in America, he discovered that some people were reluctant to subscribe because they thought the success of the project would give him too much prominence.

"I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight," he remarks, "and stated it as a scheme of a *number of friends,* who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practis'd it on such occasions; and from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it."

Every lover of Lincoln recalls his eagerness to give his generals the glory. "I will hold McClellan's horse," he said, "if only he will give us victories."

Similarly, the Jesuits, those experts in human nature, have a saying to this effect: "A great deal of good can be done in the world if one is not too careful who gets the credit." It is sound wisdom.

But every day the whole parade is held up because the Fat Man insists on riding on the elephant, or the Snake Charmer thinks her name wasn't printed big enough.

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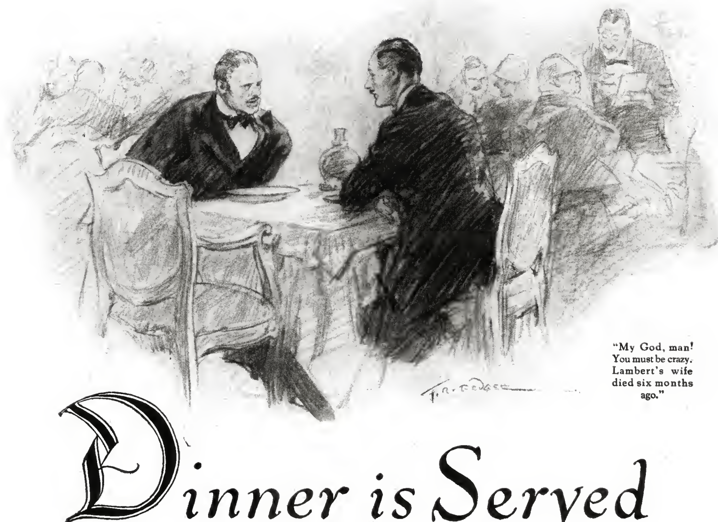


"My God, man! You must be crazy. Lambert's wife died six months ago."

Dinner is Served

By Rita Weiman

HERE *is another of Miss Weiman's stories written for this magazine against the background of a European adventure. Rarely is the reader made part of the mystery of a tale as one is in the present instance. It is as if one were, herself, lurking in the shadows of the chateau's great hall watching the drama unfold.*

Illustrated by Frederic R. Gruger

A PHRASE simple enough. One used in thousands of homes every night. A phrase so utterly commonplace that the mere words do not even register. Yet on two occasions I saw it affect a man, a normal man, in a way that startled me.

The first time was at a dinner in London, one of those formal affairs at which the men wear tail-coats and war orders, and check their sense of humor at the door.

"Dinner is served," announced the butler, majestically opening the tall double doors leading from drawing-room to a cavernous beyond, lighted by candles alone.

The only other American present, Philip Norton, sprang to his feet and stood staring upward at a spot where wall and ceiling joined. My eyes followed his. A dusky cornice, that was all. Yet there he stood, immovable, until his dinner-partner gently touched his arm.

Three months later we were week-end guests at a house on Long Island. Though writers, sometimes dignified as authors, and moving in the same set, we had not met since the London episode.

The house was a fine example of modern antiquity, our host taking particular pride in the fact that all the furniture was authentic Sixteenth and Seventeenth century, even though the walls were elaborate Twentieth.

We were sitting together, Philip Norton and I, as the cocktails were passed. Talking of trivialities, as I recall it—the latest play, the newest trend in public taste. Nothing vital or personal to either of us.

Presently the doors at the end of the hall swung wide, framing a long table, candle-lighted. The expected announcement came:

"Dinner is served."

Instantly, Norton was on his feet. His eyes fairly drove upward, once more oblivious of the fact that a dinner-partner was

at his side. Again mine followed. Nothing but dark beams and a carved staircase vanishing into shadow.

"What is it you see there?" I whispered.

He gave a start, turned, crooking his arm.

"Let's call it momentary mental aberration. Association of ideas. A story I can't write."

"Why?" I put as we moved toward the dining-room.

"Too close to it. Can't make it objective—in spite of the popular belief that authors draw on their own experience."

"Then of course it concerns a woman."

"Yes."

"American woman?"

"No—French. It couldn't have happened in this country."

We were seated by this time. The long table, the dimness of the high ceiling, the heavy oak walls with a few mellowed pictures, a Rembrandt, a Van Dyck, that seemed sunk into them—all suggested Europe far more than an estate little more than round the corner from Fifth Avenue.

"I thought," he added, a strange mingling of dread and despair in his expression, "that I'd come to the point where I could impersonalize the thing. But this house, its atmosphere—well, that's the tragedy of an imagination, isn't it?"

"Are you sure it's only—imagination?"

"I realize it's emotion—primitive, utterly, helpless. I'm like a man witnessing a slow execution. Horrified—but there's nothing he can do. Every time I hear those three simple words, it's like the pronouncement of a death-sentence."

"Yours?"

"No."

"Hers?"

"No."

"Why don't you let *me* write the story?" I urged.

He put down his wineglass and studied me as if he had really never seen me before—as a man might question the advisability of granting a sacred trust to a stranger.

"I don't know," came from him, "whether it would be wise. The man is prominent in France, and the world knows only that he is ill. Ought it to know the truth, I wonder?"

"Let me have it, anyway," I pleaded. "Perhaps I can judge."

It was the following night that he told me. The rest were busy at bridge. We were quite alone in the main hall. Too late in the season for a fire, the wide chimney-place yawned, darkly mysterious. Candles in sconces flickered softly but without warmth. Tapestries, veiled in shadow, suggested age. I think nowhere else would Philip Norton have brought himself to relate the story that he told me. He did so in a monotone that made it the more deeply poignant. Thus I give it to you. In the husky voice of a man whose eyes alone spoke tragedy.

THE valley of the Chevreuse, an hour or so from Paris, is deep, languid and beautiful, like a lovely woman half-asleep. Holding a subtle promise, the velvety suggestion of silence. One feels that it speaks in whispers.

It belongs to traditional France rather than to that traffic and bargaining which, since the war, have held Paris and its environs in the grip of commerce. The cobbled villages are set low. Occasionally, from the side of a hill, the scarred walls of an ancestral château frown down on any sign of modern progress.

Some of these old places are closed. Others spread open only one wing, like great wounded birds trying to fly. One, however, for five years—until, in fact, ten months ago—showed signs of renewed life, of prosperous vitality.

Strange irony! The Château de Grange would have been in a state of decay more pitiable than all the rest, if it had not been for the many millions of a *bourgeois.*

I met Henri Lambert after the war. I had been a correspondent throughout, and stopped in Paris for some time following it to study *post-bellum* conditions. No one knew just where Lambert had hailed from, nor how his millions had aggregated to such stupendous proportions when all France was poverty-stricken. Some said he was a native of Alsace-Lorraine. Others hinted that he belonged in a section treacherously near the Prussian border. The fact remained that his residence in France antedated all suspicion of him. He was a merchant,—*commerçant,*—a man of fifty or a bit over, and unquestionably a snob.

No one expressed surprise when, in 1919, he married the young Comtesse de Grange—no one, that is, but the friends of the Comtesse. In spite of pitifully straitened circumstances, none of those familiar with the impetuous, reckless family, its absurd pride of race, believed that such a man would ever be welcomed even as a guest within the old walls. When he took possession of the château and at the same time of the last descendant, they asked among themselves what despair had driven her to it. Certainly not poverty alone.

There had been three to carry on the old name. But the war had taken two, the brother and a younger sister. The boy had gone down on the battlefield. The girls had both gone out as nurses; Vera de Grange had come back alone.

Contrary to general belief that the young Comtesse would immure herself within the age-old family walls, she reappeared in society shortly after the declaration of peace. Her marriage to Lambert occurred within six months.

It pleased him to make the Château de Grange their home. No residence in Paris in the midst of the *nouveau riche,* but the bringing of old France to his very doorstep. I have always believed that my invitation to spend a week-end there was due entirely to his expectation that I would make him the subject of a magazine article.

HE was a big man with a bulky figure, slightly *embonpoint.* He made a fetish of overimmaculate care in dress and manner, like a rough surface overveneered. One felt the coarse grain under the gloss. His eyelids, heavy and white, never quite lifted even when he directly addressed you. Though pleasant in speech, he had a way, in fact, of looking past, not at, you. He wore a beard, clipped carefully, gray hair streaking the black. His teeth were glittering white, and he smiled a great deal, but his eyes were strangely without mirth.

A queer composite, Henri Lambert. In business he could not be tied, let alone topped. He knew not only every detail of his own affairs but those of his competitors. His shrewdness was a constant source of comment. Yet this amazingly keen man was dominated by superstitions—the most childish ones, at that, like any untutored peasant.

As we drove out to the Château de Grange, the sinking sun like a stain of blood against dark hills, he told me in all seriousness the traditional tales of the valley. He knew every one of them. Skimming along the roads deep down between silent hills, he related, voice hushed with reverence, the ghostly stories of the section. He peopled the countryside with the stalking phantom of tragedy, and feared it as he feared his God.

We turned from the main road and curved up the hillside. A new crescent moon like a small pale streak in the heavens rose before us. Beyond it shone one brilliant star. Inclosing both, the purple velvet blanket of oncoming autumn night. A crisp scent of falling leaves filled the air with strange pungence. Above us brooded the somber gray façade of a pile that seemed always to have been there.

On entering the Château de Grange, one's footsteps resounded against the flagging of a short corridor worn black from the tread of centuries. This opened on the vast reception-hall, its ceiling arched dimly, its walls covered with time-worn tapestries, save where narrow windows went their length. A huge place, yet oddly intimate. Cold, yet beckoning.

In one corner at the extreme end, outline lost in wavering shadows, a small stone stairway led to a brief balcony that appeared to hold only two Gothic doors. These, as well, were not more than vague shapes stenciled against darkness. From the balustrade hung another ancient tapestry swaying slightly, the figures on it animated by its motion. Full of the life of those long dead, this room. And over all, the softly pointed light of candles like pallid finger-tips held against hushed lips.

I looked at the figure of the man beside me, more suggesting than visualizing grossness. In spite of possession, in spite of his titled wife, he could never belong here. A discord crashing across minor keys. A ribald laugh through sadness.

MY hostess did not appear to greet me. An old servant who took my bags explained that Madame la Comtesse was resting. Today she had not been so well. He said the words plaintively with lingering love as he spoke her name. And, shoulders bent, as he went the length of that vast hall, he seemed as much part of it as the figures in the ancient tapestries.

The guests who assembled an hour later were largely city friends of Henri Lambert. I took it this was an occasion on which wires were to be pulled and business transacted. Strangely, though, there were no women present. A queer assemblage for those walls to house, men important chiefly because of wealth—hardened citizens of the world who applied breeding only to cattle.

At eight o'clock the doors at the end of the hall were gently swung open.

"Will you take this ring—sell it—and leave the money in a blank envelope at—" Breathlessly she murmured an address.

"Diner est servi," came the voice of the old major-domo who had shown me to my room.

Those of us who had stood waiting looked uncertainly from one to the other. Madame la Comtesse was still to appear.

Lambert's frowning eyes settled on the balcony. Then, of a sudden, he strode heavily past us and mounted the short flight of stone steps. Accented by the stillness, came a thundering knock. Nevertheless it had to be repeated before a door opened slightly.

"Dinner is served," I heard him say.

The mass of shadows made the woman who stepped out little more than a pallid luminous blur. But I distinctly saw her go past Henri Lambert without giving him a glance. She moved noiselessly along the balcony and down the steps. And the eyes of the men assembled followed her. At the foot, she paused. The arched doorway was like a black frame suffused with golden light. Within it, her figure seemed outlined by a halo.

Out of the deep clustered shadows behind her flowed

Going toward her, there swept through me with a sort of shiver, a strange feeling that one of the drooping tapestry figures had come to life. Though young, she seemed world-old. Her form was lost in the floating gown she wore, more a drapery wrapped round her than a dress. I took her hand as Lambert presented me. She looked at me, and I have never encountered more desperately unforgettable eyes. I saw them only at night and in the somber, uncertain flicker of candles, but their expression seemed to come from far off, their intense dark-rimmed beauty the sort that cannot be defined.

The hand in mine, slender and sensitized, was weighted with rings. Rather a shock, so many jewels decorating a woman so exquisite. They did not synchronize with the frail glory of her. Again that crash of discord. Across her forehead gashed a band of rubies, like a wound newly cut. Actually, it hurt me.

When we were seated at the table in a room high and oak-walled, with only an occasional family portrait to relieve the denseness, I noticed that her hair was purple-black like the night sky. She had a way of smiling at her guests, conventionally, as if it were expected of her. But again I felt a certainty of distance. She was miles away, that woman, though man's desire might bring her intimately close. And each time Lambert drew her gaze to his, it went apart from her, not in any way taking her with it. A horrified feeling it gave one, that she withdrew her thought from him, even though she could not withdraw herself.

Even had I not endured the experience that came to me four years later within the same walls, I should never be able to forget the incidents of that week-end. Conventional on the surface, the coming and going of men occupied with normal pursuits, I could not lose a sense of lurking terror. It was there, like the unsure shadows that hid in corners of the great hall as the candles touched its spaces with light, or the sun streaked across its gloom.

Our hostess failed to appear during the day. No explanation of this lapse was forthcoming. We drove back toward Paris for golf, or played bridge, or discussed affairs of the hour. We

faint light. "You—you!" he wailed. "You—liar!"

lunched magnificently in a small and more intimately appointed dining-room—food representing the flirtatious toying of an ingenious *chef*.

But each night we went through the same experience of awaiting the lovely silent Comtesse. And each night she was summoned by her husband in the same way. Nor was she with us long after dinner. A few words exchanged in a soft, distant voice, and she excused herself, vanishing like a mist up that short flight of steps.

On the last night we were alone for a moment while the others, over their port, discussed some business situation of which I understood nothing. I left them, wandering deliberately into the great hall, where I knew I should find her.

Standing in the deep embrasure of a window, her eyes were upon the darkness—as if there she could discern something hidden from the rest of the world. In heavy gold brocade, a jeweled girdle round her hips, yet so singularly frail, she looked more than ever like some medieval spirit.

Inexplicably she gave me that feeling that if a man tried to touch her, she might vanish. And this, in spite of the fact that she was by no means an ethereal type. It was rather the somber shadowy quality of her eyes, the indefinite depths of them.

She turned as I came toward her.

"Mr. Norton," she said quickly, "may I ask a favor of you?"

The abrupt, completely simple question took me somehow off my feet.

"Why, of course," I responded eagerly.

"You will think it odd, an absolute stranger. But ever since you arrived, I have been praying for a moment with you."

"Anything I can do," I answered in my limping French.

"Will you take this ring—sell it—and leave the money in a blank envelope at—" Breathlessly she murmured an address.

Her fingers tugged at an enormous diamond on her hand and thrust it into mine.

My first impulse was to thrust it back. The problems, let alone perils, of such a mission were *(Continued on page 98)*

Judge Ben B. Lindsey in his Denver library at work upon his articles for this magazine.

Men and women of all ages and classes come to Judge Lindsey with the secrets of their private lives. On these extraordinary stories his candid articles are based.

FOR twenty-seven years Judge Lindsey, presiding over Denver's famous Family Court, has been the confidant of thousands who, in the intimacy of his judge's chambers, have sought his counsel and advice.

¶ Based on what he alone knows, Judge Lindsey has arrived at certain conclusions. What those conclusions are and the stories of the actual, human court cases upon which they are based, the famous Judge is disclosing with complete candor and astonishing bravery in the series of articles he has written for this magazine, the third of which begins on the opposite page. It is already demonstrated that these articles are arousing even more discussion than was aroused by Judge Lindsey's earlier book, "The Revolt of Modern Youth," of which the present series is virtually a continuation.

¶ Ten years ago the candor that Judge Lindsey displays in these articles would have been impossible, just as impossible as would have been the likelihood of a famous judge on the bench suggesting that a new code of sex-morals was being created. Yet Judge Lindsey does just that; and as basis for his suggestion, he tells in his articles the actual stories that are being told him now—this week—day by day. No more outstanding series of social documents has ever been offered bv a magazine than this.

The MORAL REVOLT

By JUDGE BEN B. LINDSEY

THE papers gave great space not long since to the story of a wealthy man who shot his wife and then himself. The pistol lay on the floor between the two bodies. At first it was uncertain which had fired the gun, and what was the cause of the quarrel. Later, in the dead man's pocketbook, were founa the torn fragments of a letter written to his wife—a love-letter from another man.

To ask the question whether this husband would have killed his wife and himself if custom had not taught him the savage lesson that such was the traditional and proper course for any real man to follow in such circumstances, is to answer it. Men and women have been *taught* that line of conduct from childhood, precisely as a high-class Japanese is taught from childhood that under certain conditions of disgrace the only conventional thing an honorable man can do is to commit *hara-kiri*. He must not shoot himself or take poison or resort to drowning, mind you. The convention calls, not merely for suicide, but for suicide in a ritual manner, prescribed and painful—evisceration.

We think such conduct senseless and irrational. When an American general loses a battle, for instance, our customs require nothing of the sort from him. We would consider it utterly preposterous. The conventional *hara-kiri* we think unworthy of intelligent human beings; and so it is, as judged by every reasonable standard of conduct that we of the Western World know anything about. And yet we prescribe, and have prescribed in the past, other conventional courses which are equally unreasonable and unworthy of intelligent human beings. We grow up taking these for granted as the proper thing to do if one has the nerve.

For instance, men used to stand up at a prescribed distance apart and try to kill each other with sword or pistol if one had called the other a liar or a coward or had flung his glove in the other's face, or had done some other thing which was supposed to snuff out the other's "honor" as a puff of wind extinguishes a candle-flame. Obviously the flame had to be relighted—by a magic ritual; and the magic ritual was to fight a duel. A human life was thought a fit price for extinguishing or even causing to flicker the sacred flame of romantic "honor." It didn't matter how evilly a man might live. He was "honorable" until he refused to fight some one who said he wasn't. In the event of such refusal he was a "coward."

Well—we don't duel any more—not in America, at least. We would call a killing in a duel murder, and would treat it as such. We no longer have romantic illusions about what dueling *is*.

On the other hand, we still cling to the prompt and romantic use of a gun when "infidelity" shows its head in marriage. This hideous thing *still* remains among our sanctioned practices. It is of course contrary to our statute laws, but what are statute laws when they run counter to custom? It is founded in part on romantic love, and in part on the rooted notion, still extant, that women are property, and that marriage, on either side, confers the ownership of one's mate.

Photograph © Clinedinst

MISS JULIA LATHROP

The former chief of the Federal Children's Bureau says: "Judge Lindsey's working hypothesis is the essential goodness of human nature. His remedy is to give a chance for that goodness to emerge. The book" ("The Revolt of Modern Youth") "gives to every open-minded reader something reassuring and inspiring."

Here is a tradition of whose "respectability" there can be no possible question; and yet it has no possible value this side of hell. It does not make men brave or women good. It merely makes beasts of us whenever we acknowledge that it has authority over us. For such sanctions as this are *war;* and war, on any scale whatever, public or private, is an evil, degrading and needless thing.

The fact is that our marriage conventions, as they work out in the "unwritten law," *glorify jealousy and make a fetish of it.* I believe that jealousy, taking the form of a claim to the exclusive ownership and possession of a mate, is the cause of most divorce litigation whenever such litigation is based on a failure in the sex life of the parties involved. I am sure, too, that it is, directly or indirectly, the cause of ninety per cent of unhappiness in married life.

Jealousy is simply another way of demanding one's place in the sun—or under the domestic spotlight—a place in the center of the stage, as an *exclusive* object of consideration and attention. It is an impossible claim when made by one human being on another, and human relationships are unworkable in its presence.

At the very heart of this "Christian," but so often unChristlike, civilization of ours, we place this ugly thing, this mother of lies and abominations, on a throne beside the domestic hearth; and in so doing we exalt selfishness, exclusiveness, fear, suspicion and raw egotism to the height of cardinal domestic virtues.

Jesus said that he who makes himself least becomes thereby the greatest; that he who takes the lowliest seat is called higher; that the meek inherit the earth; and that those who stand and serve become the lords of life. Life is builded on such spiritual paradoxes as these.

But how can these paradoxical values of the spirit find their place in a marriage code which so often derives its authority and its compulsive control over human beings, not from the free will and mutual consent of the persons involved, but from jealousy?

Let me define here what I mean by this word: Jealousy must not be confused with the perfectly natural desire to have and to hold an important, and possibly a first, place in the heart of a person whom one loves. It consists rather in a willingness and a determination to hold such a place regardless of that free and spontaneous mutuality so necessary to real love. It is a wish and a determination to possess another. Unlike love, jealousy does not give *first* place to the happiness of its object. It gives first place rather to the desires and self-interest of the person who feels it. Its object, often cleverly disguised, is personal advantage. Jealousy is concerned with one's own

happiness. Love is concerned with the happiness of the loved one. Jealousy has nothing to do with love, though it masquerades as love. Animals often show it. It is common and instinctive even in very young children. Mothers often show it when their sons marry. The fact that it is biological does not justify it; for love is also biological, and it is the higher law, since it makes for greater intensity of life. Jealousy belongs to nature, "red of tooth and claw." In a thing so complicated as human life, jealousy is a triple-distilled spiritual poison; and where sex relations are concerned, it ruthlessly murders every other spiritual quality that can make marriage either practicable or desirable.

I do not discount the fact that when two persons love each other unequally, so that the one pines for what the other cannot give, the situation is unfortunate and often tragic. But if love cannot be forced, that, surely, is no excuse for trying to force it. Such a course may be instinctive, but it is also irrational and wrong. We shall do well to face life as it is. I admit that it is not always as we would like to have it.

When the word "jealousy" is used with respect to husbands and wives, it is usually taken to mean an unfounded and therefore mean and ignoble suspicion. *Othello* is a classic example of jealousy in marriage in that sense. But had *Desdemona* been in fact "unfaithful," then we would not call *Othello's* emotional response "jealousy," unless within some carefully restricted meaning of the word. Rather we would think of it as the legitimate rage, the righteous wrath of a wronged man, whose wife had played him false, and whose friend had stolen from him a woman who was his particular and exclusive property—he being also hers, though less so.

J. M. WILLIAMS,
Hobart College

"The more I read your book, the greater its message seems to me. It does not seem possible that this country would ever feel the same toward those questions, after reading your book, as it felt before."

Under the stress of such righteous wrath, he might, with that sanction of custom called "the unwritten law," properly kill her, kill her paramour and then—if intended for High Tragedy—kill himself.

The customs now in force in our so-called civilization pronounce all this *morally impeccable.* If you don't believe me, try to assemble a jury that will pronounce guilty of murder the man or woman who slays in such a fit of *traditional, customary, socially sanctioned, homicidal rage.*

And find, if you can, the man on such a jury who would not feel that the person who did not experience such homicidal rage under such conditions fell far short of his or her duty, and was either a coward or a cold-blooded fish.

And yet this attitude of mind is irrational and savage to the last degree. It assumes as a fact what is happily becoming less and less a fact, that one person can own and possess another person—as if anybody, under any conceivable human relationship, could have equities of so preposterous a nature. Such equities are fictitious, and the custom that has sanctioned them for ages has no genuine authority. That is why men and women in this age are beginning to snap their fingers at it.

Phyllis, aged twenty-two, married Bert, who is three years older than she. The marriage took place three years ago.

Phyllis had already come to me with her troubles, and she came to me immediately with this.

She was sorry she had married Bert. She told me with tears that she did it on impulse. "I felt I ought not to," she said, "and I called you by telephone for an appointment, to ask you what you thought. But you were out of town, and—and—here I am. Can't you annul the marriage, Judge?"

"How can I, Phyllis?" I said. "You are over twenty-one. If you were less than that I could probably free you. As it is, you will have to submit to the cumbersome divorce machinery by which the State makes it as difficult as it can for adults to effect divorce."

Then she told her story: She had, as I knew, for a matter of two years, had an affair with a man of forty, whom I shall name Bell. Mr. Bell possessed wealth, social position and education; and he was very different from the callow youths of her own age with whom she was used to associating. He was attracted to her by her beauty and her very real refinement. But he was married, and there could, therefore, be nothing in such an affair for Phyllis but disappointment, and surrender of her lover. He wanted to divorce his wife and marry Phyllis, but as this would mean his ruin as a professional man, in Denver, he did not dare take such a step. At the same time Phyllis' intimacy with him spoiled her for the crude lovemaking she encountered elsewhere.

During the progress of her affair with Bell, Phyllis ran around a good deal with young people of her own age. Among them was Bert, a young traveling man. Bert made violent love to her, and presently, whenever he was in town—about once in three weeks—their relations were of the most intimate sort. And under this arrangement they were both happy. They had no quarrels; they parted reluctantly; and Bert returned again to her happily after his trips.

While these two were apart neither tried to dictate to the other. Bert of course knew that she went out with their "set." He also knew of her already established affair with Bell, and that she confined herself to that. He knew also that other young men took her to dances and dinners. These things he took as a matter of course, and with no manifestations of jealousy whatever. She on her part never thought of restricting him in his association with other girls.

So far as their life together was concerned, marriage could apparently make no difference in it. Had they been married, their routine would have been practically the same, since neither wanted children. Marriage, however, would make the difference that they could live together openly, and that the tie would be recognized and permanent. Bert kept urging marriage, and Phyllis finally consented.

And now note what Phyllis said to me: "Before I married him, Judge, Bert was perfectly sweet and dear. I really loved him and he loved me, and we were ever so happy when we were together. But now we're miserable. He wants me to travel around with him because he's afraid I'll go out with other men. Last night I went out to dinner with two girls and two men and another fellow. There was nothing wrong with it. They were all of our old set. But Bert would be furious if he knew it. He says he'll kill me and himself if he ever finds that I have been unfaithful to him or that I have anything more to do with Mr. Bell. He never used to say such things; but now he watches me all the time, and he doesn't want me to go anywhere with anybody while he is away. He'd like to lock me in a room when he starts on his trips and keep me there till he gets back. And he insists that I must travel around with him. I don't want to do that. Why should I now, any more than before we were married? Why were we happy then and unhappy now?"

"Do you feel the same about Bert and other women?" I asked.

"Of course. Why, I'd just die if I knew of his having anything to do with any other girl. I never felt that way till we were married. And now I'm so afraid about Mr. Bell. Why, if I should so much as look that way, I don't know but what Bert would go and shoot him. And, Judge, one reason why it might be better for me to travel with Bert is that Mr. Bell is sure to call me up as soon as he gets back from this trip he is on—to New York. And if he does—well, I think as much of him as I ever did. He's different from all the others. Oh, if only I could have married him! And oh, if I hadn't married Bert! I'm so wretched. And now if I stay, and Mr. Bell comes back, and Bert ever finds out, he'll shoot—I know he will. If only he'd let me step out!"

"And what about you," I demanded. "Would you let *him* step out? Or are you two young fools engaged in watching each other, and preventing each other from doing what you each want to do? It goes without saying that you must keep away from Bell. When you married Bert, you knew he would insist on that; and unless you had an understanding with him to the contrary, your marriage constituted a clear-cut agreement to quit Bell.

"But Bert's insistence that you must not run around with your friends in his absence is all wrong. If he will have it that way, he'll drive you to things you would never have thought of. Your marriage must not begin on such a basis. If it does, you'll be on the rocks in no time. You and Bert must face this issue and be reasonable in your demands on each other.

"Since you both equally demand faithfulness of each other, you must both be prepared to deliver in that respect right up to the hilt. Your jealousy of Bert in regard to other women, coupled as it is with your speculations about going back to Bell, is a preposterous thing. If you two can't observe the elements of fair play and decency and honesty in dealing with each other, there is no destination for you save the divorce court.

"I don't attempt to tell you what you can and cannot do. What

arrangements you and Bert make between you in this matter is your own affair. But you must arrive at an understanding, of one sort or another, and then abide by it. It must be voluntary on the part of both of you, and you must carry it out to the letter, not because somebody else says so but because you want to. If you and Bert don't care enough for each other to be square with each other, then the sooner you go your separate ways, with divorce or without it, the better for both of you. I would think your present selfish behavior toward each other, each of you wanting to take all and give nothing, was little short of caddish if I didn't realize how bewildered you are by the situation, and by your own defective training and education in these difficult matters. I am sure that when you realize that all you and Bert need do is play fair, you will be far on the road to being happy together. Bring him up here and let's have a talk."

Later I talked with Bert. I found him a nice enough boy turned into a jealous young pup by the notion that, having married a girl, he must begin exerting the traditional authority of a husband. He had the support of our conventions in this, and it had never remotely occurred to him that he might be wrong, or that he could possibly take any other attitude. He accepted it unquestioningly. Phyllis, of course, had equal backing in her jealousy from a tradition only a little different from that which actuated Bert.

The situation amounted simply to this: Formerly these two had been happy because the conventions in which they live and move and have their being permitted them to be *free*. This didn't mean that either of them felt free to indulge in excesses, but simply that whatever restraints they chose to place on their conduct were of their own making, and in accord, more or less, with their own sense of what was fitting and proper. They may have made mistakes in deciding what was fitting and proper, but they at least made their own decisions, and their conduct flowed genuinely from that. Under this system of deciding their own conduct and making their own moral decisions, they got along, on the whole, pretty well. Moreover they were fairly responsible in all that they did. They were willingly subject at all times to the feeling *that among the things they must not do were things which evidently worked injury to other persons.* In matters where they thought no injury to others was involved, they generally did as they chose, and even violated the sex conventions without feeling that it did harm either to them-

This illustrative photograph specially posed by court attachés and friends of Judge Lindsey

Every day girls like these, who find themselves in "trouble" of one sort or another, come to Judge Lindsey for the help he so ably gives. On their stories he bases startling conclusions.

selves or anyone else. Such was their view as it worked out in practice. I don't mean that they consciously analyzed it as I have done, but that they acted on it, and that it worked reasonably well for them, without ruin or disaster or unhappiness. Very good. Such was the situation while they were unmarried.

With marriage this situation completely reversed itself. They became immediately unhappy. They immediately began forbidding each other to do things which formerly they had done as a matter of course, and in which they had never thought of restraining each other.

Photo by Frederick Pohle

DR. DANIEL BELL LEARY,
Noted Psychologist,
University of Buffalo.

"I want everyone who deals, directly or indirectly, with the young, to read it" ("The Revolt of Modern Youth") "at first hand. It has new ideas, new attitudes, new doubts and beliefs."

The convention of marriage, which they accepted at its face value as a thing to be acted upon without question or debate, created between these two an attitude of mind which proved destructive to their happiness. They didn't need such an attitude of mind; they had gotten along without it hitherto. But now they were both saddled with it. And it transformed what they had thought was good into something whose fruits were unmistakably evil.

On the one hand the "unwritten law" laid certain obligations on Bert. As a self-respecting male, it had now become his duty to defend his home and his honor; and, if anybody slipped past his guard, he must shoot things up. He didn't question this. Few men do.

Phyllis, on the other hand, was under a similar set of traditional obligations, somewhat modified. She had been taught, and had always taken for granted, that other women would rob her of Bert if he should pay too much attention to them. Bert had only so much love to distribute, and what he gave to anyone else necessarily meant deprivation for her.

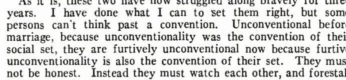
That there was something self-contradictory in this view of the matter she might have suspected from her own earnest affirmation to me that her liking for Bell did not make her think any the less of Bert. She really believed this; but she couldn't figure how such a thing could work equally well with Bert. She was more than willing to continue with Bell, but she was crazy jealous at the thought of Bert's taking a similar liberty, with some other woman. Bert was her husband, and she owned him and wanted exclusive possession, even while she resented his wanting exclusive possession of her. She would watch; and if Bert formed any outside attachments, she proposed "to raise hell." Those were her words to me.

So here they were, each longing like an imprisoned bird for something they had both given up. They wanted the old freedom, the old sense of personal independence which had formerly been as the breath of life to them. They wanted it for themselves though they would not grant it to each other. Something had stepped in and said: "No more of that! You own each other now; and all these things you have liked and enjoyed, you must henceforth *forbid to each other* regardless of whether you mutually, and of your own will, renounce them in your hearts or not."

I submit that the reaction against a thing like that is inevitable, natural and to be expected. It is utterly impossible to impose such restraints on people *from without* and not thereby create the internal feeling that the restraints are not reasonable. Resentment and rebellion are immediately in evidence, and these form a direct incitement to unconventional behavior.

Before marriage the personal life of these two was ruled, as I have said, by promptings and restraints that came from within and were voluntary. It was not perfect, but it was genuinely authoritative, so far as it went. After marriage Bert substituted his commands for Phyllis' internal system of self-control, and she imposed hers on him in the same manner. Thus an invalid and ineffective kind of restraint replaced what had, in its way, been an effective and genuine personal code—a code which was effective and genuine simply because it was created by Phyllis and Bert within their own hearts for their own personal use.

I am not saying it was an adequate code, or that it might not have been much improved. *I merely say that they obeyed it because they had made it. There is no other way in which human conduct can have any ethical quality whatever.* That any code, be it a marriage code or what you please, should thrust out of peoples' lives a thing which, though imperfect, is genuine, and substitutes something that is not genuine at all, is an outrage so unspeakable that I can find no words with which to denounce it adequately.



As it is, these two have now struggled along bravely for three years. I have done what I can to set them right, but some persons can't think past a convention. Unconventional before marriage, because unconventionality was the convention of their social set, they are furtively unconventional now because furtive unconventionality is also the convention of their set. They must not be honest. Instead they must watch each other, and forestall each other, while they each play the game of slipping by with something. And they do it. Phyllis went back to Bell, and Bert secretly carries on his own affairs; and so the tension grows. Each furiously suspects the other, and neither is willing fearlessly to accord to the other the liberty which was once as the breath of life to them.

I feel confident that if they had the courage and good sense to turn each other loose, so to speak, regardless of temporary consequences or of the first excessive rebound after so much restraint, they would presently find each other, no matter how many persons had apparently come between them.

But at present they are very far from this consummation. Their condition is quite otherwise. And marriage, *as we have it and as we conceive it,* has done this thing to two persons whose minds have not been keen enough to penetrate the fact that society has not really married them at all, and that it has palmed off a fraud on them. They wanted bread, and they've been given a stone. Society is doing this thing to thousands whose minds seem to be no keener. There are yet others, however, who are beginning to see that a cast-iron morality cannot take the place of genuine ethics; and some of these are repudiating the fraud and are experimenting with honesty and common-sense in its place. This does not mean that they are discarding marriage. We shall never discard marriage. But they are beginning to insist that the thing be real.

Please understand me. I am speaking of *honesty* and *common-sense.* I am not suggesting, directly or indirectly, that honesty and common-sense point the way to philandering in marriage. I merely suggest that honesty and common-sense are requisite, no matter what they lead to, and that they must be accepted unconditionally as a basis for effective marriage. They may turn the world upside down, for all I know; but I still maintain that honesty and common-sense have a first claim on human loyalty.

I suggest further that the proper view for society to take of this matter is to recognize that some persons have an inclination toward varied sex experiences, and that some haven't; and that it is no function of society to discriminate against those who have such inclinations *provided they duly respect and consider the genuine rights of other people.* Within that limit, their conduct is as much a personal matter, to be personally determined, as the choice of one's politics and religion. An honest personal code which duly considers the rights of other people, and which submits voluntarily to whatever internal restraints are necessary for the observance of such rights, constitutes a very large order, believe me. Such a code is about as far removed from irresponsible license as could well be imagined. Its tendency, based on the Golden Rule, would be to impose on the individual stricter and more genuine restraints than anything dreamed of in our conventions.

Let me now offset the story of Phyllis and Bert with the story of Phyllis' best friend, Esther, and of Esther's divorced husband Archie, and her second husband Bob.

Esther, Archie and Bob are intimate friends of Phyllis and Bert. The five of them run together inseparably. And the difference in their fundamental points of view is all the more remarkable on that account.

Esther married Archie at about the same time that her friend Phyllis married Bert. Archie, whom I have known for years, is a very fine boy, steady, hard-working, effective in all he does, well balanced, and gifted with a kindliness of nature which is a part of his stable and dependable make-up. In him Esther picked a winner.

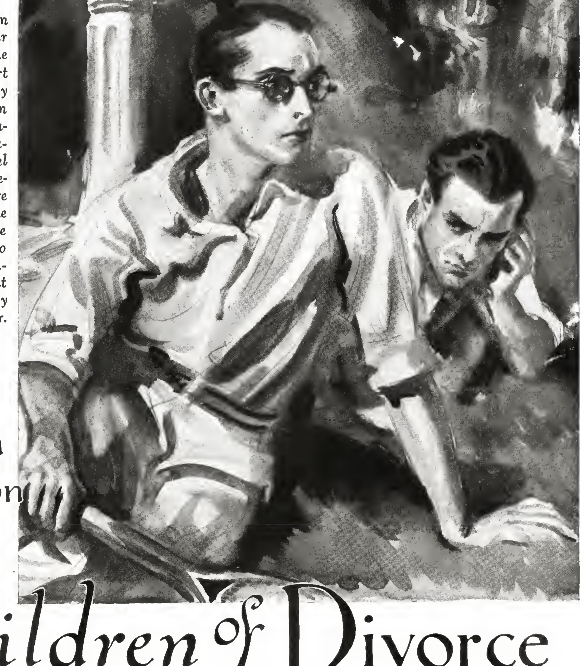
Esther knew this. She valued his fine qualities. She had chosen him in preference to Bob, who had also wanted to marry her. Yet after she married Archie, she began to repent. She realized that Archie was the finer of the two boys, and that he was in every way more worthy of her love than was Bob; but, as she told me later, there seemed to be a fundamental incompatibility which left her ill-at-ease when she *(Continued on page 140)*

This illustrative photograph specially posed by court attachés and friends of Judge Lindsey.

Judge Lindsey's great work is for the most part achieved in the privacy of his judicial chambers rather than in open court, for he deals in aid to those who find themselves in social difficulties rather than in the punishment of crime.

NO other American novelist is better qualified to write the novel of ultra-smart society in this country and in France than the distinguished author of "The Salamander," which novel was, indeed, the forerunner of an entire school of fiction. The present work is the most important to come from Mr. Johnson's pen since, and it is, we believe, a story of even greater power.

By Owen Johnson



Children of Divorce

Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

The Story So Far:

WEALTHY Jean Waddington looked forward to marriage as something very real, very vital, something about which she must make no mistake. For she had suffered much from those who had looked upon marriage as something casual, who had made mistakes: her father and mother. They had been divorced, Jean's father and mother, when she was a little girl, and each had remarried; and as neither was minded to give her up to the other, she had been brought up in a convent in Italy.

At fourteen Jean had come back to America, and on the boat she had met and liked Ted Larrabee—big, good-humored, sincere and serious-minded then. And Ted too was a child of divorce, for Colonel Larrabee's political enemies had "framed him" with a chorus-girl scandal, and his mother had seized the excuse the affair gave her.

Jean went first to her father—and found her stepmother impossible. And her own mother, now Mrs. Chastaine, had no desire to have her style in flirtation cramped by the presence of an all-but-grown-up daughter. So Jean finished her education in boarding-schools well away from her parents and afterward in very modern fashion lived in a separate ménage of her own.

It was long before Jean saw Ted Larrabee again, for the war intervened and he enlisted at once with the Canadian forces. And he had come home a different Ted, eager for relaxation, his serious young ambitions to be a great engineer forgotten. When he proposed to Jean, she put him off: she must make no mistake in *her* marriage. And other suitors, especially the attorney Daggett, were usually in evidence. Now, at Mrs. DeLancey's party, Ted sought her again. *(The story continues in detail:)*

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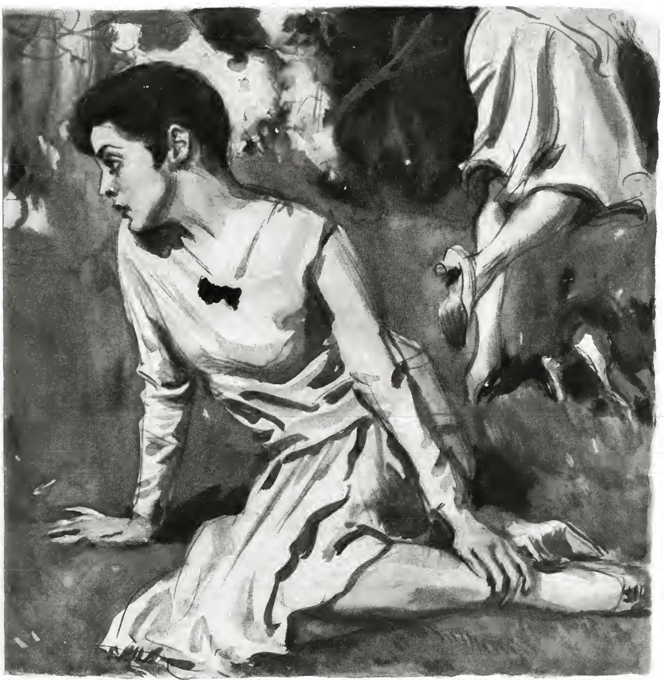


"That young lady's character interests me," said Daggett. . . . "She'll always hurt whatever she loves."

SHE slipped her hand inside his arm, suddenly quiet. They left the lights and the riot, passed out into the night and felt their way carefully along stone balustrades and down winding steps, lighted by stretching reflections. Down into the garden, arm in arm, without a word exchanged. Over crackly gravel walks, by sweet-scented dusky hedges, to a marble basin hidden by a clump of lilacs.

"Sit down here."

She put out her hand and stirred the stars that lay slumbering in the sleeping pool.

"Well, Jinny," he said suddenly, "I guess it's no use. I can't forget you. All you've got to do is call me. I'll come, any time."

"Don't you think I've suffered too?" she said.

"What do you want to say to me?" He waited a moment. "I'm not quick, you know. Stupid, I suppose. I've never understood—you know what I mean. Wish you'd make things plain to me."

The stars disappeared, one by one, in the ruffled water.

"Can't you, Jinny?"

"I loved the boy who built bridges."

"I suppose I ought to understand. I'm afraid I don't."

"I can remember almost everything you said to me on the boat. You had such big ambitions then."

"What did I say?" he asked curiously.

"The day you told me your plans for the future—a solemn secret it was, too; you said you were going to be an engineer, build bridges, dams, lay out railroads—big things."

"Did I say that?"

"You weren't going to sit around living on your parents' money. You were going out to meet life. Don't you remember?"

"Yes, I remember now." He sat staring at her pale hand tracing arabesques in the pool. "I'd have done it, too, if it hadn't been for the war."

"Why don't you now?"

"You can't catch up with five years gone out of your life."

"Why not?"

Long silence. Above, the sounds of music. A couple came down the crackly gravel, saw them indistinctly, and disappeared, laughing. She bent over the pool, watching the stars come back.

"Jean—let's talk over a lot of things. Will you?"

"I want to."

"Is there anyone else you're interested in?"

"Never for an instant."

"Well, I wouldn't have been surprised, you know. I know you disapprove of what I'm doing." He drew a long breath. "Jinny, I think you're wrong and I'm right. It's a man's point of view, but only a man would understand. There's a certain let-down, you know, comes after four years over there. You

can't help it. You don't want to do anything except relax, drift. You don't want to think. You don't want to plan out what's coming. You want to let go, wallow in just living."

"Yes, Ted."

"With me it's even more so. Other men have played about, seen life, had a taste of the world. It's all new to me."

"I've said that to myself, often."

"You know you have a different way of looking at things from other girls."

"Would you want me to change?"

"No!" He exploded so satisfactorily that she smiled to herself. "Jinny, I honestly think it's best for me to let off steam—play like hell and get sick of it. That's what I have been doing. 'Seeing life,' I suppose you'd call it." He began to flounder. "Sowing your wild oats."

"I can understand that."

"Wonder if you really do?"

"I know what's in your blood," she said quietly. "But until you have gone through this you must understand, too, why I intend to wait and see how you're coming out of it."

"So that was it?"

"Yes."

"There's one thing I can't stand for. I don't want you pitying me."

"Why do you say that?"

"I saw it in your eyes."

AFTER a pause she said: "There's one danger in what you're doing. 'Sowing your wild oats!' I may be wrong; I know men do go through such a phase. But most men, Ted, haven't your furious way of rushing to extremes. You're feeding yourself on excitement. Suppose it gets to be second nature? What then, Ted?"

"I see what you mean." He picked up a handful of stones and began to toss them into the night. "I do love to play—that's the worst of it; and sometimes it gets the best of me. You're right, Jinny."

"You mustn't be an idler, Ted. It wont satisfy you, and it wont keep you straight. Wait—don't stop me. You're a man of action. If you only had to fight your way, you'd do it magnificently."

Suddenly the sound of steps, and Kitty's voice calling:

"Jean! Jean!"

He closed his hand over hers.

"*Sh!* Don't answer."

Again the impatient summons, footsteps nearer, footsteps retreating.

"Go on now," he said, releasing her hand. "This is coming to me right between the eyes. Keep it up."

"Ted, marriage is terribly real to me," she said, turning to him with sudden energy. "For me it is final. I loathe the very word *divorce*. It sums up all the tragedy of my life. No matter what happens, I will never take that way out of a failure."

"So you're afraid of that?"

"Ted, don't be hurt. I'm trying desperately to make you understand. You *must* understand. Marriage that is just for mutual enjoyment hasn't a chance to succeed in this modern life. Playing together ends by playing alone. You've got to have something bigger to bind you together and hold you. That something, Ted, is the life-work of the man. It's got to be something real, vital, something terribly worth while. And I know you. If you have no object in life beyond seeking to have a good time, you'll drift back into the same pleasure-seeking crowd you're going with now—doing as they do."

"No."

"Yes, for that's the only way an idle man can get what you crave. You love excitement. All your life you've loved and sought it. And if you go back into that crowd, you'll end, little by little, in being one of them."

"Is that all? Sure? Sit quiet a moment."

SHE had said what she never thought to have said. He had taken it without flinching. A great wave of pity and tenderness came over her as she sat there waiting his answer.

"It's sort of an ultimatum," he said at length, with a queer laugh.

"Oh, Ted, you don't understand."

"Why not? You've a right to be sure of something. Besides, every word you've said is true." He paused. "I'm taking this very seriously. Don't make any mistake about that, Jinny."

"Ted, if you would—"

He drew a long breath.

"I've had everything in the world thrown in my lap. Damn it, that's been the trouble! If I couldn't get it from one, I'd get it from the other. What do you want me to do?"

"Do what you started to do."

"Engineering? I wonder if I could!" he said wistfully. "That means the nose to the grindstone. Cutting everything else out. I wonder if I could stick to it. Business? Politics? I used to dream of going in for exploring—digging up old burgs in Asia. Well, leave it there. You've cleared the air. Let me brew things over."

She put out her hand, and laid it in his, closed her eyes and breathed deep of the soft, vagrant breeze that stirred the lilacs about them.

"Now, another point," he said with a note of apprehension in his voice that she detected immediately. "What about us? Do I disappear for another six months?"

"No, no. That was different." She laughed nervously. "You dear, funny old Teddy Bear. You never would understand. That was for myself—not you."

"I don't understand."

She laughed again.

"I'm glad you don't."

His shoulder brushed her as he turned. She stood up with a nervous shudder.

"Look into the basin!"

"Hello! What a lot of stars."

"They're so near you can touch them. Think of being able to touch things you have always thought of as thousands of miles away!"

"That's a queer idea!"

She leaned over, shoulder to his, looking down.

"I'm just enough of a woman to be thoroughly, utterly illogical and inconsistent," she said abruptly, and closed her eyes.

He put out his hand and touched her shoulder reverently.

"You understand how it is with me, don't you, Jinny dear? No need of telling you, is there?"

"No."

She sprang back from his touch, laughed and ran out ahead of him.

Chapter Twelve

NEXT morning Brothers, the butler, came down with Mrs. Chastaine's invitation to dinner, as they came off the tennis-courts. Jean had no desire to go to her mother's, but Daggett being present, a refusal was awkward.

They had finished tennis and were sprawled on the hillside: Daggett by Jean, Kitty chasing Dingo; Ted basking in the sun, eyes shaded under one of his impossible hats, a brown felt, acorn-shaped.

"Funny old dear! I shall have to attend to his hats later," she was thinking affectionately, when Daggett said:

"How long have you known Miss Flanders?"

"Always. We went to the convent together."

"Oh, that's it!"

"What do you mean?"

"You are extraordinarily dissimilar. I can't make out the basis of the friendship."

"Kitty! Do let Dingo alone," exclaimed Jean sharply. "You're always teasing him."

Kitty, who had caught the terrier by the tail, was swinging him in wide circles. She let him go, sat down, coaxed him back, took him in her arms with exaggerated affection, and when she had lulled him to serenity, spilled him with a whoop and chased him across the lawn.

"That young lady's character interests me," said Daggett.

"What do you see in her?"

"I see her in ten years." He stopped. "I'm going to be impertinent. Do you trust her?"

"That *is* impertinent!"

"Well, don't!"

Her surprise got the better of her anger.

"Why do you say a thing like that?"

"She'll always want what you've got, and she'll always hurt whatever she loves."

"Because she teases Dingo?"

"Ah, but it's the way she did it. Did you see her eyes?"

"Rather far-fetched!"

Ted, stretched to the full length of his arms, looked at her. Daggett's back being turned toward him, he made a face expressing his complete impatience with intruders. She smiled back at him with a new radiance. Daggett continued:

"Ted, marriage is terribly real to me," she said. "I loathe the very word *divorce*."

"You smile. You rather tempt me to go on."

"Do."

"It's a type I'm rather familiar with. They make a lot of trouble in this modern world."

"What! A criminal type?"

"No—they drift too easily for that. The great sinners have a capacity for feeling."

"You score there," she said, musing. "She was that way even as a child. Neither sorrow nor happiness will ever touch her deeply. It's a rather fortunate nature."

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes." She paused; then, to keep the conversation from herself: "If you knew her parents, you'd understand her better."

"I do. Before I went into the district-attorney's office, our law firm handled her mother's estate. I can imagine what she has seen. I'm not condemning her. I'm only speculating. My experience tends to classification of types, you know." He stopped, considered Kitty returning, yellow hair in windy rebellion, and added: "Predestined!"

Dingo having fled to safety, Kitty, in search of more mischief, laid a warning finger on her lips and approaching Ted stealthily, drew a spray of grass under his nose. He sneezed and bounded up so indignantly that they all broke into a laugh.

"Were you very comfortable?"

"Damn!" He sank back, covered his face with his hat. "You're worse than mosquitoes. Go and bother some one else."

She stretched out at his side, delighted, her eyes sparkling, and applied herself to the torture. Something in the abandon of her pose, the careless display, her proximity to Ted, stirred a sudden feeling of irritation in Jean. She was conscious of a new emotion which surprised her.

"I wonder if I'll be jealous." And as the thought sobered her, she said, to dispel her mood: "What made you say 'predestined?' Predestined to what?"

"Two or three divorces."

She looked at him suspiciously.

"Kitty has been chattering to you. That's only a pose."

"On the contrary, she means what she says. She is a child of the time; you are not. You're a throw-back. You're the type that rebels, goes against the current, remember? She swims with it. There are hundreds, thousands, like her."

"There is something in her lately that I don't understand," she said, yielding to his direction. "Her visit abroad hasn't done her any good, I'm afraid. Can you blame her?"

"I'm only looking on," he reminded her. "I agree with you. She is not to be blamed for anything she does. Her mother—well, it's lucky her money is in trust. Did she see her while she was abroad?"

"Yes."

"That's rather horrible. Of course, you know the mother is utterly *déclassée?*"

"I wish you hadn't said all these things about Kitty," she said loyally. "She is like a sister to me; no matter what happens, she will always be that."

"I only want to put you a little on your guard."

"She gives a false impression. She's full of good impulses."

"That is youth."

He reflected on the devastation she would create when the child had become a woman and knew a woman's passions and desires. He did not voice this speculation, however, feeling that he had gone a little too far. Instead he turned the conversation. "Let's forget personalities and discuss the type. It's the type that will create the new society—the society of multiple marriages."

"Don't you think there will be a reaction?"

"No—not immediately. You know from time to time society groans and strains against its bonds. The fissures that an earthquake makes appear in the covering crust. The French Revolution—Russia! I see today all along the line the individual in revolt against traditional restraint. Democracy began it. Modernism has continued it. The attack is now centering around the home."

"How so?"

"The individual is now rebelling against being sacrificed. Marriage, as you know, has had at times something of the grim cruelty of infant damnation: widows burned on the pyres of their husbands and all that sort of thing! The old idea of the home was a kind of sacrificial stone upon which the members of the family immolated themselves, wives to husbands, children to parents, the weak to the strong. Duty—a beautiful word. Today the feeling seems to be about that a man's chief duty is to himself, that no one life should be sacrificed to another. Agnosticism, perhaps. Anyway, marriage has become an adventure, not a dedication or a renunciation."

"But isn't the corrective in learning not to go in blindly, in being educated to the real, the permanent, values of happiness?" protested Jean.

"Now, you're speaking of exceptional intelligences," he said, studying her ardent eyes. "The mass? Pagan. One life certain! Enjoy it to the fullest, avidly, selfishly. Home means sacrifice, and who wants to hear of sacrifice today? But I'm getting in pretty deep for this time in the morning, I'm afraid. Please forgive me."

"No, no. Go on."

Certain things he had said came close to her personal problem, interesting her in spite of herself. He was too shrewd not to realize the threat of Ted's presence. He began to make a conscious effort to draw her mentally to him, satisfied at the quick curiosity and the responsive imagination, astutely leading her to comparisons at moments which seemed to him favorable. If he had guessed the truth!

She raised one eyebrow in interrogation. "So the

She was smiling inwardly at the memory of Kitty's flippant estimate—"the husband you marry the second time." He interested her—yes. She felt in every attitude an intention to win her, not the light, passing attraction a boy might feel, but the grave and calculated purpose of a man. The events of the night before, which had brought her a new release of happiness, had left her with a feeling of sudden maturity. This sense of mental superiority made her see her lover through new eyes, with a defensive maternal instinct that henceforth would have to stand guard over her romance. She studied Daggett intently, to draw from him the things he could make comprehensible in life, to know what she would have to know to meet the need of the young Berserker who would always be, from now on, a little—her child.

Chapter Thirteen

JEAN came to the home of her mother reluctantly. For the public—yes, a certain show of appearances had to be kept up. But her pride shrank as she crossed the alien threshold, submitted to the surface affection of Mrs. Chastaine and quickly returned

American savage interests you, Marquis," she continued recklessly. "What a compliment!"

to the anonymity of the other guests. She had no illusions as to the reluctant motives which actuated her mother. Consequently she was surprised to find the Marquis de St. Polle had been relegated to a seat at her side at the table of the younger set. Mr. Daggett was at her right, Ted opposite. Kitty Flanders, surprised at this arrangement, raised her volatile eyebrows in expressive interrogation.

Jean herself wondered what it could portend. A quarrel perhaps? For she was in no ignorance of her mother's sentimental excursions. The situation was distasteful, her mood rebellious, and she awaited his addresses with premeditated malice. The Marquis, however, after a formal word of greeting, astutely began a light banter with Clarice Coster, whose appetite for compliments was sufficient to keep him busy.

Jean was irritated with Victor Daggett. They had met again at the club for tea, and instantly she had sensed a change. He had been cordial, sympathetic; but to his first determined approach to intimacy, an immediate end. She knew what had happened. Kitty had been indiscreet. Kitty had told him of Ted. Daggett was not a man to waste his time or his ammunition. She resented this. She resented being deprived of a mental stimulation. She did not wish to be isolated in her happiness. There were certain sides of her nature which friendship with interesting men would have to complete when she married Ted. The sudden withdrawal of Victor Daggett now when she was acutely sensitive to new needs left her with a sense of being unjustly deprived. To punish him, she began to flirt deliberately, transferring to him a little of the malice which she held in reserve for the Marquis de St. Polle. He was amused, puzzled, instantly mistrustful.

"What's the reason for this sudden affection?" he asked, laughing.

She laughed in turn.

"Modest?"

"Possibly, but not unintelligent."

"Perhaps you are the one who has changed."

He considered the point of his knife a moment, turning it slowly in his hands.

"I understood you were engaged," he said abruptly.

"Really!" she retorted. "And then?"

"That alters things," he remarked, lowering his voice.

"Engaged is not married."

"No—true. But with you I thought it was different."

"Must I be put in a convent for my sins?"

"You know, I was serious."

"So I thought."

He looked at her, plainly at loss.

"I thought I knew you."

"What, on one month's acquaintance?"

"Exactly. That was your charm."

"You remember the story of the Westerner, who told the

"And here is R. E. Morse sitting on the bed." She held up an admonitory finger. "Bad boy!"

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

woman he had proposed to for the twentieth time, that the only way to get rid of him was to come down from the altar with another man."

All this had been said lightly under cover of the babel of voices.

"What nonsense I am talking," she thought, "and how easy it is!"

He had been watching her meanwhile with a new intentness.

"You don't fool me one little bit. You are flirting entirely too deliberately. Why?"

"Because you are amusing to flirt with."

"Supposing I took you seriously?"

"Why not?"

A challenge in her eyes.

"I *was* serious."

"Was?"

"Is this playing the game fairly?"

"Do you deserve any better treatment?" she returned swiftly.

"What's this mean?"

"You have just informed me that if I am engaged to another man, Your Lordship does not intend to waste his great powers of attraction—"

"Oh!"

"Well, that's about it, isn't it? You are a realist."

"I am." He played a moment with his forks, meditating something, while she waited, wondering and amused. All at once he looked her in the eyes. "Thanks for your advice."

"Down from the altar?"

"Exactly. And I mean it."

He did mean it, and she realized it, a little frightened, pleasantly excited, marveling much. It was all so facile. The waiter thrust a platter between them. The Marquis de St. Polle said, suddenly:

"Charming Miss Waddington, must I apologize for being here?"

"Are you being punished?" she asked wickedly.

"Punished? What do you mean by that?"

"Sent to the children's table as a punishment."

He felt the ground dangerous and shifted.

"You know you were not very nice to me at the dance—oh, but not at all!"

"I don't remember."

"You wouldn't accept me for a partner. Why?"

"I never compete." The Marquis de St. Polle had little to learn of the ways of women, but this from a young girl left him in a quandary. How much did she know or suspect?

"Do you always have to apologize to a lady for being seated next to her?"

"Don't be angry with me," he said in his soft voice. "I ask only to please you. I wish to please you, oh, very much."

"So this is a professional. I wonder what his technique is like," she thought. Her curiosity excited, she resolved to draw him out.

"Oh, I am sure you do," she retorted, imitating his tone.

"Parce que Mademoiselle est en beauté ce soir, Mademoiselle se permets d'être taquin."

She bowed ironically. Not the compliment but the way in which it was said, half-mocking, half-caressing, interested her.

"You have converted me—oh, quite—to the bobbed hair," he continued. "Only with you it is different. It doesn't fly out so, like an angry cat. It caresses your head; it interprets the long line of the neck, which is so charming." She felt his eyes on her, critical and appreciative. "Your eyes are quite extraordinary. Why? It is not impertinent to say it, is it? They are so deep, so full of shadows. A little melancholy, way down, and the desire to escape from it."

"Splendid, but don't stop," she cried, with a levity assumed to cover her embarrassment.

"What no one had ever told you before? Strange men, these Americans! Ah, you must go to Paris to be appreciated. You would make an enormous success in Paris, enormous!" He lowered his voice. *"Permettez-moi de vous dire bien respectueusement, mademoiselle, que je vous trouve tout à fait distingué—mais tout à fait."*

"Paris is doing very well here!"
He smiled.
"Oh, there are still a few women left who remain women. But even there in Paris—your fault, you know—it is an art that is very sick. But you must feel quite lost here."
She raised one eyebrow in interrogation.
"You don't plant your elbows on the table," he continued, glancing around the table and serving up her friends to her, "or bend over in the back or break in the waist. You don't pull young men by the ears or roar at the top of your voice—and you don't have to go out fishing after the men."
"What an artist you are!" she commented, amused. "And in how many different ways you have learned to flatter us! It takes an education, doesn't it?" Her eyes sparkling, pleased nevertheless, she glanced about the table. Ted was watching her, his glance serious and full of wonder, giving little attention to the prattle Kitty Flanders was pouring into his ears. She felt, and she could not explain the feeling, a new excitement, that he was there as an audience, perceiving her value.
"So the American savage interests you, Marquis?" she continued recklessly. "What a compliment!"
"I am already," he said, smiling, *"très épris, mademoiselle."*
"I am so glad I understand French. So you are already bowled over, as we say in vulgar American, *'le coup de fondre.'* "
"But I beg you to believe it," he answered, bending forward.
"Of course I believe it! You always know when it's the real thing, don't you?"

She caught a look in his eyes, a fleeting, reminiscent look that was gone instantly, but she understood at once what had happened. The casual, mocking phrase she had used had recalled to him something her own mother had said in an identical situation. She drew back with a sudden distaste.
"Thanks for the entertainment. But you must not neglect your neighbor."
She turned, furious at herself, at her levity, at the irony of the coincidence, a little shudder between her shoulders.
At this moment a footman approached Larrabee and said something in his ear. She saw on Ted's face a look of surprise. She caught a quick glance in her direction and then a hurried departure from the room. Daggett was talking to her, but she did not hear him. Instinctively, she felt something ominous in the air. She could hardly wait through the long moments before he returned to the room. To her surprise, she saw him instead of regaining his seat, enter the big dining-room and speak to her mother.
"Something has happened, and he's got to leave," she thought. "What can it be?"
He came directly toward her, his serious face simulating a lightness of manner.
"It's for you, Jean. Can you come a moment to the telephone?"
"Of course."
She rose hastily. She saw at once that he was concealing something. In the dining-room Mrs. Chastaine was rising also—a little stir about her.
"What's happened, Ted?" she said, the moment they were alone.

"Bad news from your father."

Her mother and Kitty came through the door.

"Bad news? Father? Dead?" she said, looking in his face.

"No, not dead. Very critical—a stroke," he answered rapidly. "He has sent for you."

"I will go at once," she said calmly. "We'll have to motor, wont we?"

"Yes—I've got my car. I telephoned the house to pack your bag. We'll pick it up on the way."

Her mother and Kitty put their arms around her and kissed her. Why, she wondered. Perhaps he was dead, after all. A maid ran up with her things. There was a great deal of confusion, she thought, quite calm herself.

"Don't you want me to go with you, darling?" exclaimed Kitty Flanders, looking strangely frightened. "I'll do anything."

"No. Ted is all I need."

Her mother kissed her, holding her in her arms, trying to think of something to say, some message perhaps, she thought. More confusion. What a time to find Ted's coat! So, at the end, her father had sent for her! She heard through the open door a buzz of voices from the dining-room discussing the news, of course. And she distinctly remembered, as she went out of the door, her arm in Ted's strong grip, hearing her mother exclaiming to Kitty Flanders:

"Millions, my dear, millions!"

Chapter Fourteen

"NOW, give me the message exactly as it came," Jean said as they ran out onto the highway.

"Some man telephoned—not the doctor. Your father had a stroke this afternoon about five; there are complications. Bad heart, I believe."

"Serious?"

"Very."

"You mean—no hope?"

"No. You were to come as quickly as possible."

"How long will it take?"

"Six or seven hours."

She felt a numbness of sensations—wondered at it. It was as though a stranger sent for her. Still, in the end, he had sent for her. She was grateful for that, forgiving him much—a feeling of compassion, a realization of the weakness of his character.

"You said you telephoned to pack my bag?"

"Yes, it will be ready."

"It wont take me more than ten minutes to slip into something else. What do you think, Ted?"

"No. I told them to have a heavy coat and your hat waiting—I remembered the hat. I wouldn't lose any time, Jean dear. It may be touch-and-go—and if it were just the difference of ten minutes—"

"You're right—but you?"

"This coat's warm enough. I'll have my things sent down to New York."

She drew her arm under his, yielding her initiative, grateful for the quality of the man of action in him.

"It's strange. Hard to realize."

"Well, he sent for you—I'm glad of that."

"Yes, that helps."

She couldn't think of her father as yet. Her mind kept going back to her mother, recalling the strange hysteria which had seized her as she clung to her, trying to be articulate, to frame some message, perhaps, for the man who, after all, had been a part of her life, of her youth—who, in dying, took something, too, from her.

"Yes, but what could she have said?" she thought. "She was quite upset, though. Curious." Then an odd thought came to her. Would her mother dismiss the party? Ought she to do so for the sake of the proprieties? But what proprieties? Somehow she couldn't get this out of her head. Things were dreadfully mixed; yet there once had been a bond, no matter what had happened since. Then the absurdity of it struck her. With all the world torn by divorces, what etiquette could be established to prevail in such grim moments, when the father of your daughter lay dying?

Larrabee gave a warning shriek of the horn as they drew up before the Arbuthnots'. A maid was already at the door, waiting.

"Leave your wrap. Slip into this coat. Put on your hat."

She obeyed mechanically, shaking her head at the maid's hysterical inquiries, refusing to talk.

"In with the bag! Telephone in the morning. Look out—thanks."

They were off, sweeping down the valley in the race for New York. . . . .

The bells were ringing for midnight when they came to Stockbridge Square and turned south.

"Don't like those clouds. Looks as if we might get some rain," he volunteered. "We'll have to make time while we can. No chance at the ferry this time of night. I'm going to run down through Bedford Hills and Jerome Avenue, cross over by the Williamsburg Bridge."

"All right."

"If I hit it up too fast, just let me know."

"I'm not afraid with you," she answered simply.

"I wont take any chances. Cuddle up."

She drew her arm through his.

"Wont bother you?"

"Not for a minute!"

The long white road reeled beneath them like a great spool unwinding. A few solitary yellow windows in the farmhouses, an occasional rise of signal lights at the approach of a village, a blaze in the main street, then darkness again, and the feeling of boring through great masses which rolled forward to meet them like the surge of arising waves.

"It's strange. I'm going to my father's deathbed, and I don't feel anything. I can't feel anything."

The thought obsessed her. She couldn't put it from her mind. . . . .

Later she said, suddenly:

"Ted?"

"What?"

"You've told me the truth—all the truth?"

"Absolutely. You're not the sort you have to fool."

"He's still alive?"

"Yes, but it's a question of hours."

"I can't feel anything," she said miserably.

"Natural, isn't it?"

"I wish I could."

"I think he cared about you."

"I think he did."

He began to talk to divert her mind. She was grateful, though she didn't follow him. She was trying wearily to remember something to visualize her father—a day at the convent when the strange, tired, unsmiling man had taken her for an afternoon in the country, and later hurt her deliciously when he had taken her in his arms and kissed her. A man with a conscience—a sickly conscience that tortured him. How could he ever have fallen in love with her stepmother? That she couldn't understand. Very little had he received from that. Not a happy man, never a happy man, with all his riches.

RICHES? And now *she* would be rich. Things would change for her, a great change. She would have a great deal of money. She remembered her mother's parting exclamation without entirely understanding it. Was that the reason for her sudden hysterical display of affection, after the hostility she had divined on her arrival?

Feeling of loneliness. How utterly detached she was from the ordinary ties that make up life! In one night to enter her mother's home as a guest, and then to seek her father's as a stranger! In the whole world there was only the man at her side to cling to in her need. If there were not Ted in her life, what was there? What were the qualities of the intellect compared to the qualities of the heart in the great moments of life? He would always be more or less her child—that she fo[illegible]w. She would have to guide him and assist him, protect him from himself. There would be cravings in her which would remain locked up in her heart. But what did that matter? She still could see the light in his eyes as he had come to call her from the table. Big, kind, warm-hearted, dedicated to her—hers! Without Ted, what?

"Damn! Here comes the rain."

They came to a sudden stop.

"Ted?"

"What?"

"Take me in your arms a moment! Hold me tight."

She was on his shoulder now, trembling, horribly afraid. His hand closed gently over hers, his lips to her cheek, whispering comforting words in her ear. How simple it was, and how it answered all that had perplexed her! She felt so secure, entrusted to his arms, so far away from futile worlds, so blissfully protected,

She sprang up. "No, I will never understand that you could love me and yet say such things."

so like the little waif who had grown up side by side with his devotion and his chivalry, that all her being was ready for him, cleansed of doubts, ready to yield and to follow.

"No use trying to get away from it, Jinny—it *is* a shock!" she heard him say solemnly. "Let go a little. Do you good."

He had not understood. Why should he? She smiled, loving him for his simplicity.

"I say, Jean, guess we better put up the curtains."

The rain was beginning to patter down.

"All right, Teddy Bear, let's get at it."

She jumped out and busied herself with the buckles.

"Good stuff, old girl," he commented appreciatively. "Not worrying about your nerve! Ready with the hood? Up she goes! Steady. All right! Curtains in the side pockets. Jump in."

She had them out by the time he had tightened the clamps.

"Touch and go!" he cried joyfully. "All right, I've got it. Now let it come—what do we care? Snug as a bug in a rug!"

The shower broke over them, futilely drummed on the top, laced against the windshield.

"Wont last long," he commented, moving forward cautiously.

"Like a lighthouse in the night, in the storm. Safe," she thought.

The first rage spent itself. They began to see again as the wall of water thinned out.

"We'll run out of this soon," Ted assured her. "Tuck that arm under mine again."

"Sure I wont bother you?"

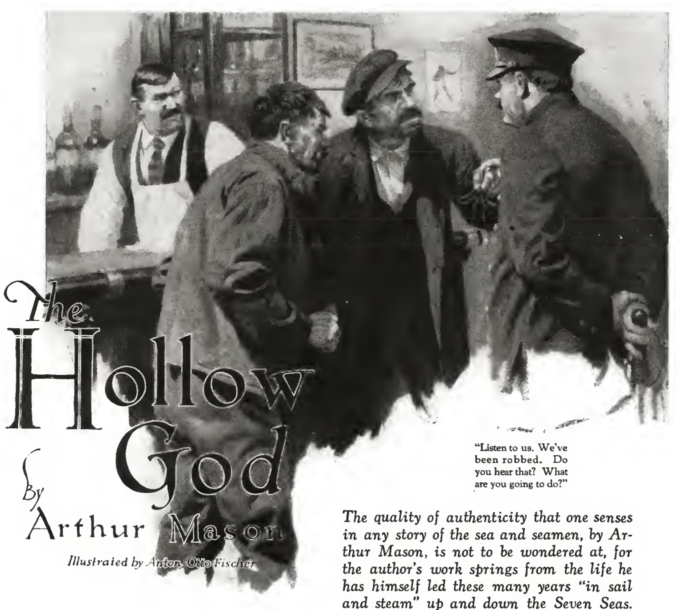
"Lord, no! Help a lot. If you want to cry, go to it!"

He hadn't understood. He had thought that she was thinking of the stricken lonely man, and she had been thinking only of herself, of her own imperiled happiness. It was wrong, unnatural perhaps, but so it was. If in the moment she had gone into his arms, he had taken her lips as her lips had waited for his in a poignant, enduring embrace! But he had treated her as a tired child, tenderly, putting out of his mind any other emotion but the safekeeping of her sorrow as he imagined it. He had not understood.

She revolted from this feeling, indignant at herself.

"How selfish I am to be thinking of myself at such a moment! His instinct is much finer."

But do what she could, it was only herself, her past, her future, which rose before her. She tried to think of her father and remained perplexed—the image was so indistinct. She wondered if it was because at heart she was still re- *(Continued on page 108)*



"Listen to us. We've been robbed. Do you hear that? What are you going to do?"

The Hollow God

By Arthur Mason

Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer

The quality of authenticity that one senses in any story of the sea and seamen, by Arthur Mason, is not to be wondered at, for the author's work springs from the life he has himself led these many years "in sail and steam" up and down the Seven Seas.

THE crew of the *Soaraway* was paid off in San Francisco. Five hundred dollars in gold each man got, the equivalent of over two years' sea work. It was the first time that Jack and Sam had passed through the Golden Gate, and as they made ready to go ashore, their shipmates advised them not to take all their money along. Those were the days when Frisco had neither lid nor lookout.

"It's all right," said Sam. "Jack and me knows our way about in the world. Us has seen a bit in our time."

Jack, who was pulling on a well-washed pair of dungarees, spoke up:

"What does youse think that Sam and me is, greenhorns? Tell them about that time in Port Saïd, Sam."

"I aint telling nothing. Come on, now—let's get ashore and buy a decent suit of clothes for ourselves, and have our heads and beards trimmed. Then us'll feel respectful again." Sam grabbed Jack by the arm. "No, youse needn't tell us to watch out for our money. We know how to do that all right—hey, Jack?"

"My bloody word, I'll say we do, after all us has been through."

Cautiously they made their way along the water-front. Arm in arm they passed windows where cooked crabs lay temptingly, and the odor from lager beer floated pleasantly to their nostrils.

"It's getting a bit warm," said Sam.

"Aye, 'tis. Say, Sam, suppose us take a beer apiece afore us buy our suits. It aint going to 'urt us."

They stopped while Sam wiped his brow.

"Well, we'll just take one to wet our w'istles. We're entitled to that. Come on."

The bartender eyed them for moneyed men. He cleared the flies from the top of the bar.

"What'll it be, gentlemen?" he asked.

Sam rested a blücher boot comfortably on the foot-rail while Jack ordered two beers. As they raised their glasses, Sam said heartily:

" 'Ere's to you, shipmate!"

One long gulp, and the beer was gone. They set the empty glasses down. Sam sifted the stray foam from his beard, making a noise as if he were cold.

"That tasted good, Sam."

"Aye. Suppose us take one more before us go and get rigged out."

"It wont 'urt us, Sam."

"No, we'll sweat it out, shipmate."

They drank two more, and the lager guggled down as before. Sam untied a reef knot from his handkerchief and paid for the beers with a twenty-dollar gold-piece. Then they lit their pipes and leaned their arms on the bar, as they would on the bulwark rail of a ship.

"Have a drink with me," invited the bartender pleasantly.

Sam looked at Jack. "Can we stand it?"

"One more is neither here nor there, Sam. Us don't come ashore often."

"That's true. Well, fill 'em up again."

The dusk of the June evening was sooting the city when Jack and Sam headed out into the street. Their legs were wide apart, but they were steady on their feet.

"I feel 'appy," remarked Sam. "The fust time in years."

"I aint out o' sorts meself, Sam. How about them suits? Will us buy them now, or will us go to the barber-shop first?"

"We'll do neither, Jack. There's time enough tomorrow."

"That's right, Sam. Then us can see the cloth in the daylight. As for our beards, they'll keep as they are. What us want now is to see something."

Arm in arm, on even keel they strolled along. Streets had no bearing for them, and as they headed north toward the glare of electric signs that beaconed them, they gravitated in the direction of Chinatown. There pigtailed Chinamen stood around. They wore calm faces, but their eyes were alert and shifting, scanning the street as if expecting some excitement at any moment. Jack and Sam nudged each other.

"They look like bad uns," said Sam. "I've 'eard tell how they wars on one another. There's somethin' doin', from the look of things."

"Let's get away," said Jack. "Come on. Let's find a decent place where us can get a drink."

Their course headed them into Kearney Street.

"Let's go in 'ere, Jack. It looks respectable, and besides, you can 'ear the music."

"Lead the way, Sam."

They sat down at a table and ordered bottled beer. When they had entered the place, only a few persons were there; a piano-player, a couple of waiters and a bartender. Presently, without knowing how it happened, Jack and Sam found themselves in a dispute with a couple of men who had come in immediately after them and sat at an adjoining table. Before they realized it, the two sailors were in a fight, and rolling *(Continued on page 94)*

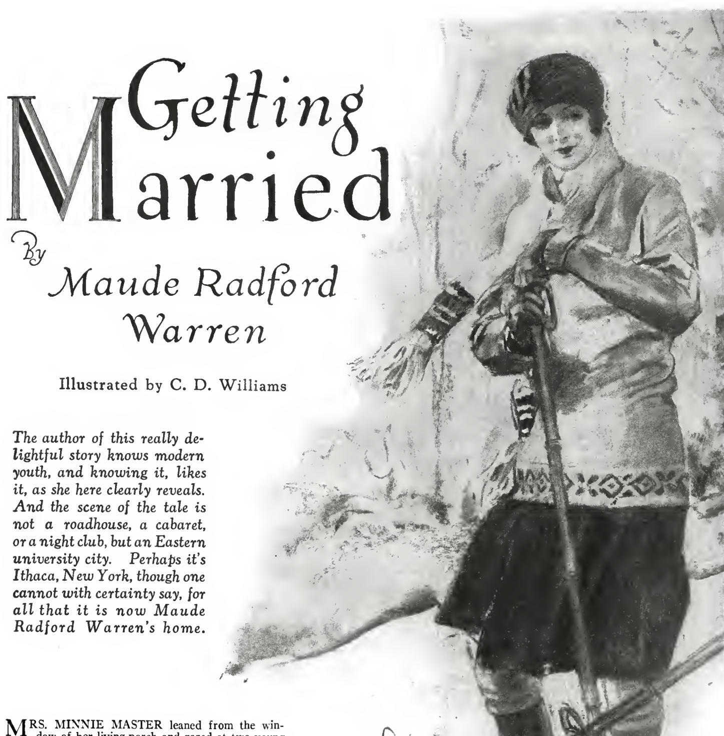
"'Eave 'im overboard, Jack. . . . . We'll row back to the wharf and find that blarsted Chink."

Getting Married

By
Maude Radford Warren

Illustrated by C. D. Williams

The author of this really delightful story knows modern youth, and knowing it, likes it, as she here clearly reveals. And the scene of the tale is not a roadhouse, a cabaret, or a night club, but an Eastern university city. Perhaps it's Ithaca, New York, though one cannot with certainty say, for all that it is now Maude Radford Warren's home.



MRS. MINNIE MASTER leaned from the window of her living-porch and gazed at two young girls strolling toward her down the elm-shaded street. One of these girls, Ellen Blair, was blonde, serious, wistful, appealing. Upon her Mrs. Master spent only a perfunctory glance, and then fastened upon her favorite occupation, looking at her daughter Carolyn. Carolyn was straight and slim and lithe, with eyes exactly the golden-brown color of a bee's body. She had dimples that came slowly and went in a flash, and a quirky, rapid little smile. Her lustrous blue-black hair was just graduating from a bob. She was the sort of girl that girls liked, that older women felt motherly toward, and that older men wanted to slip into their waistcoat pockets. As to young men—it struck Mrs. Master suddenly that Carolyn's eyes were alert, rather than mysterious; penetrating, rather than melting.

"All the same," reflected Mrs. Master proudly, "she can give that Ellen Blair cards and spades—whatever that may mean."

The girls said good-by at the Master gate, and then Carolyn raced into the house, kissed her mother breezily, and sat down to supper, which was awaiting her on the living-porch. All the real houses in Creston had living-porches because of the beautiful views the little city afforded of hills and valley, lake and gorges. If you were rich, you had a house that commanded all four features. If you were merely well-to-do, you omitted the gorges and perhaps either the lake or the valley. Everyone had the hills. The Masters had omitted the gorges.

As she ate, Carolyn looked down five hundred feet upon a valley smoke-blue in the early twilight, here and there touched with faint clouds of vapor from some building. On the north, the valley was graduated into an inlet that led to a lake walled by two long hills. On the south, the valley lost itself in a circle of hills lovely in curves and subtle outlines. The buildings scattered in the valley and on the hills did not have an artificial effect, because they were partly concealed by trees.

"From five hundred feet above all that, and a couple of miles

"It's great. Go ahead. Let's see you do it first!" bade Carolyn. She felt a touch of scornful pity for Ellen, who was looking fearfully down the steep slope.

west of it," Carolyn reflected, "it seems impossible that anything could inhabit it but happiness and peace and beauty. But if one came close, one would find anxieties and problems."

She suddenly became aware that her mother was silent. Usually Mrs. Master's volume of speech was as continuous as the fountain of steam from a thoroughly boiling kettle.

"What is it, Min?" Carolyn asked irreverently. "Why the choked cataract? Are you sick or sad?"

"I've been spending the afternoon rolling bandages for the hospital at the Red Cross rooms," announced Mrs. Master.

"Well, where's the bruise in that?" asked Carolyn. "It's a noble duty nobly done."

Mrs. Master changed from a straight chair to a rocker, a sign, her daughter understood, of deep earnestness.

"You see, some of the women got to talking," she began.

"You surprise me," remarked Carolyn.

"Yes, I know, but we said some things we really meant. I mean the sort of thing we'd go home and regret."

Carolyn pushed back her plate and leaned forward eagerly.

"Come across, Mumsy; tell me what they said."

"Well," Mrs. Master replied, rocking vigorously, "of course we began with the usual stuff about the way you young things behave. The newspapers and magazines have stopped talking about you, but we parents haven't."

Carolyn sighed in mock resignation.

"Yes," said Mrs. Master bitterly, so secure in a real friendship with her daughter that she could speak frankly without having to pay for it later, "yes, my dear, you'll be an everlasting subject till all of you have provided us with grandchildren. Do you know, Carrie, when your father and I became engaged, the hammock was a heavy factor in such matters. Of course we thought it was all right, but I remember, when you were a baby, once your father and I were sitting on the porch, and across the street was a house where a man was calling on a girl. We saw the dark bulk of him leave his chair and go over to the hammock where she was. We heard the hammock groan and the voices lower. I said then, to your father, that I was glad these porch swings were coming in; they seemed more respectable than hammocks. If I could only have looked forward a few years and seen the part automobiles were to play in your young lives—"

Carolyn did not bow her head in shame. She whistled a little and said:

"Now, as to that gossip over the hospital bandages—"

"And where does it lead you?" asked Mrs. Master vigorously. "When I was your age, I used to hear my mother sighing over wedding invitations and planning what presents she could give without danger of too many repeaters. Now my circle is quite as large as my mother's was, but I don't have as many wedding

presents to buy as she did."

Carolyn was suddenly very silent.

"You were asking about that talk over the bandages," Mrs. Master resumed. "Kate Blair began it."

Mrs. Master paused in her rocking and added in a tone elaborately nonchalant: "Kate said, by the way, that she had had a letter from James. He is in the Holy Land, and his firm has extended his leave for another six months."

"I'm glad some one has heard from him," said Carolyn carelessly. "Go on, Mums. And Kate Blair began it?"

"Kate Blair began it," resumed Mrs. Master. "It may be that I am talking like a cat, but I think she had Ellen partly in mind. She said she didn't see why it seemed so hard for girls to get married nowadays. It had not been so when she was young. Goodness knew, she had beaux enough, and so did all the other girls. Well, Kate Blair is older than I am by several years, but I know well enough that she had several disappointments, because she used to confide in my mother. She'd start going about with a young man, and Mother would say: 'Oh, dear, there's Katie beginning to raise her hopes again. Give her three months, and she'll be sobbing on my shoulder with her seven-times broken heart. She's got a gift for letting men slip through her fingers.' "

"I suppose your mother never lost a man?" asked Carolyn cynically.

"Since I'm telling you the truth," replied Mrs. Master, "she did. My aunt tells me that my father was the third prospect. But you ought to know by this time, Carrie, that a safely married woman hastens to forget all previous disappointments and humiliations entailed in this job of getting married."

"Yes," mused Carolyn, "on the principle that when you have a suitor, all men seem easy to get; and when you haven't got one, it appears to you that you are predestined to be an old maid. And did the bandage-tearing crowd let Mrs. Blair get by with it?"

"Well, of course. It was some moments after that before we spoke the truth. Anita Knight began it. She could afford to, because everybody knows that her daughter was snapped up at seventeen by a rich man. She was tactful, too; she didn't say a word about being pestered by telephone-calls from girls running after her son."

Carolyn compressed her lips, mindful of a telephone-call she had made that afternoon on Carter Knight.

"What Anita did say," went on Mrs. Master, "was that in the days of our mothers, the excuse made to save the face of a girl was that she didn't want to leave her parents; in my day the excuse was that she was taking up a career; in this day, your day, Carrie, the excuse is that girls have too good a time to want to marry, are too independent, too aware of the rewards of freedom. Then the floodgates of speech, as the hack writers say, were loosed, and we all told the truth. We said that the girls were every bit as anxious to get married now as they ever were, that it was better even to marry unhappily than not to be married at all, and that all this talk about men being too selfish to marry was nonsense. There are times in every man's life when he is anxious to marry, and other times when he isn't. That's why some engagements are broken. An engaged man gets one of these not-anxious-to-marry spells, and his girl doesn't know how to handle him."

"And now to the point, Mother," said Carolyn softly. "What did these gentle critics decide about us?"

"We said, and with truth, that for all your modern ways, you girls who don't marry don't know how to handle men as well as we did. You don't get permanently engaged and married, permanently or not, because you have lost your knowledge of real girl-craft. It isn't the war or the high cost of living or low salaries that prevents men from marrying. It's because you grasp the shadow for the substance. Too many of you are playmates who don't become wives. You are all beauties; you all have style; you all have pep; you all have individuality; and all you amount to is a beautiful background for us safely married oldsters. You seem foreground figures, and in one sense you are; but you are a beautiful spectacle to us, perpetual party-goers and masqueraders. You haven't got down to real living yet. In short, you are failures."

Carolyn was silent until her conflicting emotions were well repressed. Then she said:

"What is it, Min?" Carolyn asked irreverently. "Why the choked cataract? Are you sick or sad?"

"Mother, you are a widow of some years' standing. Do you think you could marry yourself off better than I could?"

"Much better, if I cared to try," responded Mrs. Master.

"And you'd have a better camouflage if you failed," Carolyn commented, "for you'd have the excuse of not caring to marry while you had me, and of preferring the freedom of widowhood. Question Two: do you think you could manage a campaign for me?"

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Master, "for I don't know the technique of you young ones."

"I thought," remarked Carolyn, rising, "that all this talk was to the end of a proposal of a campaign for marrying me off. Why did you tell me all this?"

Mrs. Master smiled deprecatingly.

"Because I thought maybe you were the one girl of the age that didn't want to get married, and I wanted to indicate to you that you would want to sooner or later. Because I felt that it was time—you're twenty-three—that is, twenty-three when we're telling the truth. I really wish you'd want to get married, Carolyn. If you don't—"

Carolyn walked toward the door. Then she said:

"Thanks for the gossip, Mums. Of course you don't really expect me to tell you what's in my mind."

She closed the door behind her and ran lightly up the stairs to her own room. On the threshold she paused and let her eyes ripple over various photographs of young men, placed here and there on mantel and table and highboy. She went slowly toward a bookshelf, meagerly furnished, which hung above her desk. On its top were two photographs, one of a Civil War great-uncle, and one of a modern young man.

Carolyn took this second photograph in her hands, sat down at her desk, and studied it intently. It represented a handsome serious-faced young man, with large, earnest eyes and a well-cut, inflexible mouth. Carolyn shook her head.

"So here you are still, James Blair, with not a word from you, and your holiday extended for six more months."

She stared at the photograph until it became meaningless, mere glazed cardboard. Then she tossed it into the waste-basket.

"Into the discard with you, James," she said. "And now for the real possibility. Hail, Carter Knight."

She moved over to the dressing-table and picked up a photograph at which she smiled genially. It represented a very modern young face, self-assured, slightly cynical, looking out authoritatively at a world that would, of course, come to heel at the proper bidding. Dark or blond, handsome or plain, you will see that expression in almost any place the country over—provided the owner of it be under twenty-five. The world has a way, after a person is twenty-five, of somehow not coming to heel.

Carolyn held the photograph consideringly.

"The question is, how to bell the cat," she said. "Carter is so used to feminine admiration, and then being a young instructor—"

Suddenly a delighted smile overspread her face. She leaped lightly to her feet, opened her door and called down to her mother, over the clatter of dishes in the kitchen:

"Mums, would you care if I took a job?"

The clatter ceased, and Mrs. Master said whimsically:

"There seem to be plenty of jobs right in this kitchen."

"Frighten you! How could I? I couldn't get away before."

"All right; leave them for me. But I mean it. A paying job!"

"We-ell," Mrs. Master agreed, "if you can't be happy just having a good time—"

"Next question: You like Carter Knight awfully well, don't you?"

"Of course," replied Mrs. Master promptly.

Suddenly, Carolyn executed a brief wild dance in the upper hallway. "I've an inspiration, Mother," she called. "You remember how, when I got back from school two years ago, Henry Swayne used to hang around a little?"

Mrs. Master's reply came more slowly:

"I seem to remember his being here."

"Of course, he's awfully old; he must be almost as old as you are—"

"He's forty," Mrs. Master said.

"Well, don't be surprised if he comes around again. I'm launching a campaign."

This time Mrs. Master's reply was rapid:

"How very interesting! Are you about to confide in me?"

"You may listen in on the lower hall telephone, if you like," conceded Carolyn.

Carolyn went to the telephone extension, searched out a number, dialed it, and fixed on her face a sweet, alluring expression. Presently, when a deep voice answered, she said:

"Mr. Swayne, this is Carolyn Master—if you haven't forgotten me?"

"No fear," said the voice robustly. "How are you? How's your mother?"

"Well. Why don't you come to see us?" pouted Carolyn. "We've missed you a lot."

"Delighted, sometime," Swayne replied.

Listening downstairs, Mrs. Master sighed so gustily that she hastily put her hand over the receiver.

"What I wanted to do is ask your advice and maybe your help," Carolyn said. "I'm sick of just having a good time. Just amusing myself doesn't mean a good time any more. I want a job. Now, since you're a dean in the University, couldn't you get me a job? Don't jump, Mr. Swayne. I don't mean teaching."

"Well, that's a relief," Swayne returned. "I was just framing a neat turndown."

Mrs. Master smiled while Carolyn continued:

"I was thinking of a job as filing clerk. I know how to typewrite, too, and there's a vacancy in the English Department. That building is so near home I could get back easily for luncheon. And there's a lovely view. I know the job isn't filled."

Mrs. Master smiled broadly. Carter Knight taught English. The filing clerk, naturally, worked in the office of the English Department, and Carter Knight necessarily came there for his mail, to meet his associates and for other headquarters reasons.

"Don't think I'm not serious," Carolyn went on. "I should want to spend the next two weeks practicing for the job at the business school, so as to be ready when college opens. This isn't a whim, Mr. Swayne. I'm very much in earnest."

"Your mother—" began Mr. Swayne. *(Continued on page 122)*

By Leroy Scott

"Mr. Clifford, I want to do everything I can for Hugh, but I may not be alive when his trial comes off."

The Mystery of Mollie Corbin

As the basis for these tales of Clifford—the Professional Friend—Leroy Scott employs the heart, so to speak, of numerous cases; but in no instance does he develop the tales as the police followed the actual affairs. Thus this story is a deft combination of three real cases in no time related in fact.

Illustrated by Lester Ralph

THE name upon the card brought in to him, "Miss Mollie Corbin," aroused no memory in Clifford; but when she fluttered tremblingly across the threshold of his inner office, Clifford knew her instantly as "the other girl" in the famous Emery murder, which a few months since had covered the front pages with its sensations, and which was scheduled again to cover front pages a few weeks hence on the opening of the trial of the alleged slayer of Ruth Emery. The newspaper pictures of Mollie Corbin, taken before the murder, had shown her, as the accompanying text had proclaimed her to be, "a beautiful young darling of fortune." Even at this present moment she was strikingly beautiful. But never had Clifford seen such fear and panic as stared at him from the girl's tense and pallid face.

She sank into the chair he offered, and at once words began to tumble incoherently from her lips, giving the curious effect of a parcel whose string has suddenly parted and whose assorted contents all go spilling in chaos upon the floor.

"Oh, I'm in such trouble, Mr. Clifford!" she gasped wildly, appealingly. "Oh, such trouble! I'm so afraid Hugh will be convicted when he comes to trial—I'm so afraid for my own life—and I haven't a friend I can turn to for help. Yesterday Mrs. Ardmore told me how you'd saved her. She said you were a detective who called yourself a professional friend—a friend any stranger could come to. Is that the truth? Oh, I hope it's the truth!"

"Yes, that is my business," responded Clifford, his heart going out instantly to this girl so obviously near the cracking-point. "I try to help people out of their troubles, and help them as their best and wisest friend might help them."

"Thank God! Oh, there was never a girl who needed a friend, a wise and able friend, as I need one now! Please—please—will you be my friend?"

"Before I can answer that, Miss Corbin, I must judge whether my services as a friend would help you in your particular trouble. May I ask just what it is? Is it connected with the alleged murder of Ruth Emery, and the coming trial of Hugh Kennedy for her murder?"

"That's a great part of it. There's another part that—that seems almost more terrible! But I'll speak first of the murder part. You see—you see,"—a faint flush rose through her pallor,—"though we had never spoken of it, I think Hugh Kennedy loves me, and I know I—love him."

Clifford stared at her in amazement. No wonder she was near collapse!

"Do you remember the case of Ruth Emery?" she went on. "I think I know all the police and newspapers know." For

quieting the nerves of an agitated client, Clifford had found that his best method was to relieve the client of all unnecessary talking and to force upon the client the concentration and control required for attentive listening. "Here is the gist of the Emery case as the police have it. Listen carefully, and be prepared to correct me and fill in details."

RUTH EMERY had been an orphan for ten years, he recapitulated, was in her early twenties at the time of her death, and was heiress to more than a million. Her father's will had constituted Langdon and Abbott, a well-known firm of lawyers, the executors and administrators of his estate, and the girl's guardians. They made a specialty of drawing up wills and administering estates for heirs, and among their other wards was Mollie Corbin. Since Ruth Emery's twelfth year she had made her home alternately with one guardian, then with the other, one being a widower and the other a bachelor. During the past year Mollie Corbin had shared this life.

Three months before, while Ruth Emery was staying at Mr. Langdon's New York house, and during Mr. Langdon's absence from the city, she had been found in her sitting-room dead from poison which had been administered in a bitter tonic which she had been taking. Hugh Kennedy, a young law graduate serving his apprenticeship in the offices of Langdon and Abbott, had been promptly arrested for the murder. It was charged that he had been paying court to Ruth Emery, his eyes upon her fortune, and that in his impatient money-mania he had induced her to make out a will in his favor. But she had learned of an embezzlement charge which had been secretly hanging over him, and this had led to other discoveries to his discredit. She had written him telling him that she had learned he cared only for her money, and in the letter had broken the engagement and had declared her intention to make a new will which would give him not a penny.

It was claimed against Kennedy that he had committed murder, first, in insane rage at having his love repudiated, and second to win a fortune by preventing the making of a new will. He had tried to make the death appear a suicide; but her suicide note was obviously a very clumsy forgery.

The chief elements in the evidence against him were: witnesses to the court he had been paying Ruth Emery; his love-letters to her; her love-letters to him, including the one breaking the engagement; her diary, filled with love of him until the last pages, where suspicion had been reflected; the will in which he had been named the chief beneficiary; a small unlabeled bottle which had contained aconite and which had been discovered beneath the flooring of his room; his finger-prints upon the medicine-glass from which a solution of the deadly aconite had been drunk. And even had Kennedy not been arrested, his crime would not have served him! In the few days between her breaking with him and her death, Ruth Emery had made a second will which left everything to the United Philanthropies Foundation.

Kennedy's response, in substance, had been a declaration of his innocence and ignorance of all that had happened, and a categorical denial of every specific charge. The police and the district attorney's office, and the great public that reads its newspapers chiefly for the sensations, did not believe him. He denied too much. And the case against him was too convincing. His posture of innocence was merely the attitude always assumed by the man who has slain the sweetheart who has scorned him.

"I BELIEVE," Clifford concluded, "that that is a fairly correct outline of the police's and the public's belief in regard to the death of Ruth Emery."

"Yes, that covers everything," corroborated Mollie Corbin. "But I know that not a single one of those charges against Hugh Kennedy is true!"

"What makes you so certain?"

"First of all, Hugh could not have killed Ruth for the motives they give. It was for me Hugh cared; his attentions to Ruth were just a blind which we all three understood. Under my father's will, Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott have charge of all my affairs until I am twenty-one, or until I marry. They have not wanted me to marry; they have discouraged all my friendships with young men. So I arranged with Ruth—we were very great friends—for Hugh to make his calls upon her.

"I believe my guardians found us out—or at least suspected the truth. I don't understand how it all happened—Ruth's death and the love-letters, I mean. But I do know that those letters are not genuine, although I have no proof. Mr. Clifford, I think—I think"—her voice sank to a thin, frightened whisper—"that my guardians are somehow behind it all!"

"You have evidence to support such a belief?" asked Clifford.

In the rush of her desire to set forth all her troubles, she seemed not to have heard his question. "Mr. Clifford, I want to do everything I can for Hugh—I had intended to tell my story and be a witness for him at his trial. But—but Mr. Clifford, I'm afraid I may not be alive when his trial comes off! That's why I've really come to you—to ask you to try to save Hugh Kennedy!"

"Afraid you'll not be alive! What do you mean by that?"

"I'm afraid something may happen to me very much like what happened to Ruth Emery."

"What is the basis of that fear?"

"Mr. Clifford, for all their respectability and fine standing, I've begun to believe that my guardians are very wicked men. Terribly clever, and terribly wicked! Tomorrow I shall be twenty-one. My guardians must then prepare to turn over my fortune to me. I'm sure they don't want to do that. I overheard them talking last night—just a few sentences. They said if some one were to disappear, and perhaps later be found dead, that would settle everything. I'm sure they were talking about me, and I feel that every day my life is in danger!"

Clifford stared at her in amazement. But he realized that Mollie Corbin believed thoroughly in all that she had said. And there was nothing incredible in men of high worldly rank doing murder for millions, particularly in an era when human life counts for so little that men can be hired to perform a murder for a fee of one hundred dollars or even less.

"What was the value of the estate left by your father, Miss Corbin, and what were the main terms of your father's will?"

"The estate was valued at two millions, and it was to be divided equally between my sister Jennie and myself. Jennie is now fourteen. In case I die without a family, all goes to Jennie. And if she also dies without family, all then goes to Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott. Father considered them his two best friends, almost as his older brothers. He was very sick his last two years. I think his judgment was failing him, and he took their word for almost everything."

"Then if you were to disappear permanently," summarized Clifford, "your disappearance would mean the removal of a possibly dangerous witness at Hugh Kennedy's trial, and the control of your father's estate for seven more years until your sister is of age."

"Yes. And it might mean very much more. For something might easily happen to Jennie during these years—and I'm so afraid for Jennie! There—you have all my troubles, Mr. Clifford."

In reply to questions, Mollie told him that her sister was living with their old family doctor in a small city in Connecticut. She herself had been living there until she had come down to New York a year before, at the instruction of her guardians. Jennie had never been in New York.

WHILE Mollie Corbin watched him, hardly breathing in her suspense, Clifford sat some minutes in silence arranging and examining the statements she had made and the problems they involved. His first move, and that an immediate one, must be to put Mollie in some place of safety where she could not be reached by the two partners. His second purpose had to be to try to save Hugh Kennedy—and saving Hugh Kennedy meant finding an entirely new solution to the mystery of Ruth Emery's murder. If he could only achieve these two ends by one and the same course of action!

Presently he began to see the shadowy outlines of a plan that almost staggered him by its daring departure from orthodox detective methods. He studied Mollie Corbin's person with a close scrutiny that recorded each detail with the accuracy of a camera.

"You are not very large, Miss Corbin—perhaps an inch over five feet, weight not more than one hundred ten. How do you and your sister compare in size?"

"Jennie and I are almost exactly the same. When she's grown, she's going to be much larger than I."

"Do you resemble your sister in looks?"

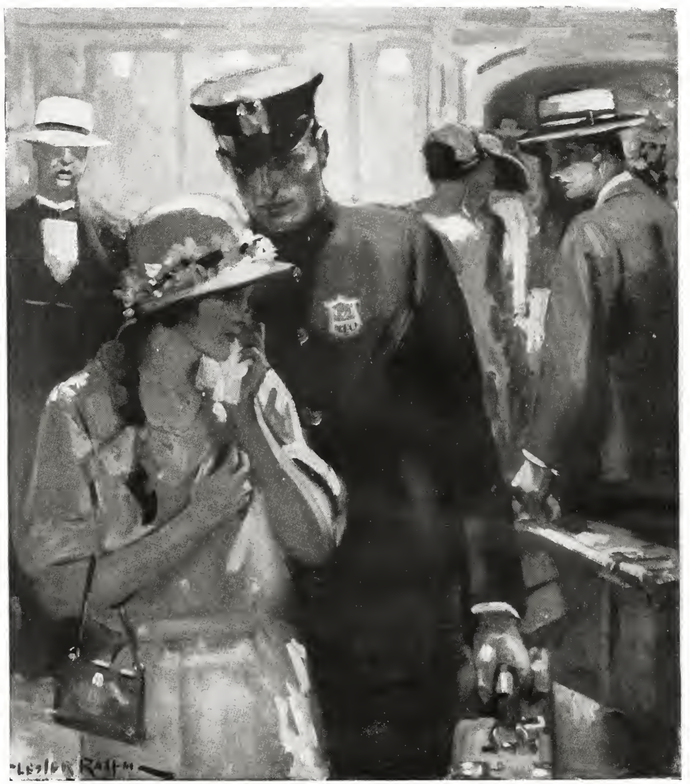
"Very much. We both take after our mother, and people tell us we are both pictures of her."

"I see you have not succumbed to the craze for bobbed hair. What is the color of your sister's hair, and how does she wear it?"

"Her hair is a dark brown, the same shade as mine, and she wears it in two braids, schoolgirl fashion, down her back."

Clifford rang for his secretary and asked for a comb. This he gave to Mollie Corbin.

"Will you please remove your hat and arrange your hair just as your sister wears hers."



"It looked to the policeman a matter for investigation, and he took her into custody."

She obeyed. A few minutes later she was standing for inspection before Clifford, her hair parted in the middle and hanging to her waist in two shining braids.

"Very good," Clifford approved. "Very good indeed. Can you act a little bit?"

"I played in the plays our school drama club put on."

"Very good," Clifford again approved. He turned to his desk and wrote carefully for several moments, then handed the sheet to Mollie Corbin. "That is a telegram I want you to send immediately to your sister."

Mollie Corbin read:

> Prepare to come to New York to visit me at once. Later wire will tell you what train to take. Will meet you at Grand Central Station. MOLLIE.

Mollie Corbin looked up from this message in blinking bewilderment. "I don't understand."

"Just send the telegram, please," directed Clifford, "and let me explain later."

"But why send a telegram? Why not a letter? Couldn't I say the same thing and more in a letter?"

"Write her a letter if you like. But send that telegram. The telegraph company may later be called upon to produce your telegram; the telegram will be indisputable evidence that is officially recorded. As such, the telegram will be far more valuable to me as evidence than any letter."

"But—but Mr. Clifford," she begged, "can't you tell me what you are driving at?"

"Not now. Frankly, Miss Corbin, I myself do not yet know just what my plan is. As soon as it becomes clear to me, I shall tell you everything, for we must work together in perfect understanding. Perhaps I can tell you in a few hours. At any rate, I want you to call up my office every three hours, for as soon as my plan is clearly worked out, we'll both have a lot to do."

"So you think you've got me, Langdon, with your plant and your lying evidence! When I know you're the guilty man!"

"You think," she breathed feverishly, "you think you see a way to save Hugh? And—and perhaps save me?"

"If what you have told me is correct, Miss Corbin, and if my plan develops properly, I think that there is a very good chance that all this mystery will clear itself up and that you will both be safe—and I hope will be very happy."

When Mollie Corbin had gone, Clifford sat motionless at his desk for almost two hours, developing his germ of an idea into a rounded plan. Then he had a session with his old friend Judge Foster, a former president of the New York Bar Association; their talk was chiefly about the nature of the business, and the nature of the methods, of Langdon and Abbott.

Next Clifford visited the Tombs and had a session with Hugh Kennedy. The substance of Kennedy's statements to Clifford was the same as had appeared in the newspapers—a denial of his guilt and a declaration of his complete ignorance of how Ruth Emery's death had been brought about. Clifford found himself believing and liking this fledgling lawyer of twenty-six, just as he had instinctively believed and liked Mollie Corbin.

There could be no doubt of Hugh Kennedy's love for Mollie. They would make a rarely fine pair—if ever they were maneuvered safely through their present dangers.

Ten minutes after Clifford left the Tombs, he was at Police Headquarters in the office of his old chief and very good friend Commissioner Thorne.

"General Thorne," began Clifford, "I'd like to borrow the Police Department for two or three weeks."

"Borrow the Police Department! What's the big joke, Clifford?" Then General Thorne perceived that Clifford was very much in earnest. "Just how will you use the Department if I loan it to you?"

"That's exactly what I'd rather not tell you in advance, General. But I'll tell you who the Police Department, if you make the loan, will be after."

"Go on."

"The Police Department will be trying to round up the real murderer of Ruth Emery."

"But the Police Department already has the murderer—that young Kennedy."

"He's not guilty, General. Not if I'm any judge of human nature."

"The case against him seems to be without a flaw."

"I've learned to have my doubts, General, about cases that are too perfect. I feel they are too good to be true—that they may be the inventions of astute minds—that they may prove to be adroit frame-ups."

"You think young Kennedy is the victim of a frame-up?"

"I do."

"Well—I've had my own secret doubts as to Kennedy's guilt. Who's the man you suspect?"

"I'm going after Ruth Emery's guardians, Langdon and Abbott."

"That pair! What's your evidence against them?"

"I have no real evidence as yet, only suspicion—a hunch."

Clifford gave the substance of his talk with Mollie Corbin, and then continued: "I believe that there are more crimes practiced against the persons and the fortunes of wards than the great public ever dreams of; they are the easiest of all prey. My hunch about Langdon and Abbott is this: I've just been checking up on them. They specialize in handling estates; naturally they draw up a great many important wills, and frequently they are specified as the trustees and guardians of minor heirs. One specialty of their business practice seems to be to ingratiate themselves with rich eccentrics, or people whose judgment has been impaired by illness, and who have few relatives. Naturally they dominate such clients, and dominate the drawing of the wills."

"I've heard whispers to the same effect," commented General Thorne.

"The result in such cases," continued Clifford, "is that, being trusted, Langdon and Abbott are given unusual control over their wards' fortune and future; and the naming of the philanthropy which shares in the estate, or ultimately gets it all, is left to their suggestion, and they themselves often benefit directly by a clause in such wills. I think I have said enough, General, to indicate the possibilities for criminal fraud, and worse crimes, and the large scale upon which these two operate. In my opinion they are perhaps the smoothest and most dangerous pair of respectable criminals in the country—for they have reduced to a science the heretofore haphazard business of robbing dead men of their fortunes, and disinheriting and removing heirs who stand between them and their desires."

General Thorne nodded. "I have long had my eyes on that pair. Just a few too many plausibly explained misfortunes have happened to their clients. But boy, if they are the tremendous rogues you indicate, you couldn't have set yourself a tougher proposition in all New York than to try to land that pair! They're far too clever to be caught by any ordinary police or detective methods."

"Just so. That's why I don't propose to use any ordinary police or detective methods. There's to be no trailing, no running down of every vague clue."

"Then how will you proceed? They themselves are probably the only source of evidence against them." *(Continued on page 147)*

We Live but Once

by

Rupert Hughes

Illustrated by Will Foster

The Story So Far:

VALERIE DANGERFIELD had tried to rid herself of this shopgirl interest in a handsome stranger, an interest that had obsessed her ever since she had glimpsed his face, with its strange shadow of sadness, as she was dining with her friend Lucy Livingston at a gorgeous California hotel. But he had somehow struck an unsuspected chord of interest—a suspended chord that cried for resolution.

In her excitement she forgot discretion and whispered:

"Lucy, did you notice the man who sat just back of me?"

"The one you were piking off in the mirror so cleverly?"

"Why, yes."

"Well, no, not particularly. Nice eyes, nice nose, pathetic mouth; shows taste in ties, has a good tailor, broad shoulders, graceful table-manners—but I didn't notice him especially. Why?"

"I want to meet him. Go get somebody to present him to you—then you introduce him to me."

"Well, I like that! Pick up your own, my dear!"

So that was that, till a little later she met him at a musicale, and learned that his name was Blair Fleming—and met his silly little overdressed wife, and thought she understood that look of tragedy in his eyes. Later Mrs. Fleming invited Valerie to a week-end party at the mountain resort of Arrowhead Lake. And Valerie so contrived it that she should drive Fleming up the dangerous mountain road in her own car the evening after the others had assembled. Halfway up the difficult ascent, they were caught in a terrific cloudburst, and barely escaped going over the precipice. All that night they sat side by side in the storm-girt islet of the car. When daylight and cleared skies woke them from a doze, they found the crippled car unmovable, and were forced to trudge side by side up the muddy road toward their destination. What, they wondered forebodingly, would Blair's wife Amy say? And what would she suspect? And yet there had been nothing—nothing, that is, except one kiss tempted from Fleming when Valerie had slipped near the cliff-edge and he had caught her.

A camping fisherman provided them with breakfast; his tent afforded Valerie shelter wherein to bathe and to change her bedraggled apparel; and his little car conveyed them the remaining distance to the cottages of the Arrowhead resort—and to Amy.

There fortune surprised and favored them. For Amy was out strolling with the Englishman Jimmy St. John; Valerie inadvertently and unobserved came upon them foolishly philandering—and realized that Mrs. Fleming was in no position to attack Blair and Valerie for their adventure. . . . . It was the following morning, as the various guests were packing up and saying good-by, that Fleming, passing Valerie, groaned without looking at her: "I love you! I love you!" And later Valerie said to him: "I heard you. And it made me very happy. For I love you!" *(The story continues in detail:)*

THIS remarkable story—of a so-modern young woman's frank, courageous and ruthless conquest of the married man with whom she fell in love—is the fourteenth novel Mr. Hughes has written, all of them published first in this magazine. It has already evoked widespread interest and discussion—naturally enough, for it is a story powerful indeed, and was conceived and written with the cumulative skill and understanding of his long experience.

"YOU fool—you fool—you blithering fool!" Valerie was whispering to herself as she strode about the room, sleep-walking with eyes wide, wrestling with the nightmare she could not escape.

No one had felt more scorn for the silly victims of love than she had. She had watched the plague strike down her girl friends one by one, and had noted with a physician's aloofness how the same symptoms preceded the onslaught of the disease and followed one another with unfailing regularity.

Girls differed in looks and temperament immensely, but she had seen them all variously delirious when love took them. She had laughed at their melancholias. She had railed at the ecstasies that made them deify the least important men. She had seen them sob because of an omitted endearment, go mad with anxiety over a neglected telephone-call or a few moments' delay at a rendezvous. She had seen their woeful faces lighted up with altar fires of adoration at the approach of the most ordinary cubs.

She had tried to reason with them when they were driven into frenzies of jealousy by a glance at another girl or a compulsory courtesy. She had found that arguments were only irritations. The objects of her argument always used the same condescending tone:

"Just you wait till you fall in love!" or some such nonsense as, "You can't understand, because you've never lost your heart," or, "When you fall, you'll fall so hard you'll break in two."

And now she had lost her heart, and she understood. She had fallen in love, and every bone seemed broken. She was sick, sick with mysterious miseries, sick with desire just to be near a man that she knew to be only a man but none the less imagined a deity.

Her plight would not have been so desperate if she had only made an engagement with him, if he were only coming to see her tonight—or next week. If he were on a long sea-voyage, or at war, or a prisoner in a foreign jail, she would not have been so frantic. At least, she told herself so.

But not to know when, if ever, she would meet him again; not to know how to find him; not to dare to be free of the maddening shackles that idiotic conventions fastened on timid conformers, shackles that could be broken as easily as withes of straw—not to hope, yet to need: it was unbearable. That was what it was, unbearable!

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"Valerie!" he groaned, and put his arms about her shoulders. She said with deadly calm: "If you kiss me, I'll cut your throat."

Then why bear it? What could be worse than this suspense? What law compelled her to endure it? He had groaned that he loved her. She had honestly told him that she loved him. What else mattered? What prevented their obeying the sacred call?

Amy Fleming? Poof! You could blow her out of the way as if she were a feather.

Where was the telephone? Where was the telephone-book? She rang for the maid. The maid came and stood outside and knocked like an imbecile—went on knocking, though Valerie fairly howled, "Come in!"

At last the girl made it plain that the door was locked. Valerie went to it and turned the key, made known her wants, was led to a telephone in the upper hall, was asked if the maid could not get the number for her.

"No, thank you!"

"Thank you!"

If another "Thank you!" were exchanged, there would be bloodshed.

Valerie took up the book and looked under "B" for "Fleming," then under "F" for "Blair." She thought a few fierce things about the lunatics who were entrusted with compiling telephone-books and other dictionaries. Her opinion of them was not improved when she realized that the error was hers.

She finally found the name, the beautiful name, "Fleming, Blair, atty. TUcker 7092." Beneath was the name again, "Fleming, Blair, *r.*"—"*r*" was for his residence, no doubt. And that was another knife in her heart.

She lifted the receiver from the hook and waited, listening to the buzz of space. Nobody answered. She waited, thought things about telephone operators, jiggled the hook; nobody answered. She thought worse things about telephone operators, before she noticed that it was a dial telephone. What she had thought was true nevertheless.

She managed, after a few false tries and two wrong numbers (with very discourteous nonentities at the other end of them) to dial the right code. Then a woman answered.

His secretary, probably. What was she like? Was she pretty? Why did he have to have a woman secretary? What went on in that office, anyway? Why was Amy fool enough to let her husband keep a handsome woman at his elbow? Of course, she was handsome—what other kind of woman would a man have at his elbow?

Miss Whitham had to speak twice before Valerie remembered to ask for "Mr. Blair—er, Mr. Fleming, please?"

"He's in conference. He can't be disturbed. May I take the message?"

In conference? With whom? Some woman client, probably. A divorce-seeker undoubtedly. Some languishing flirtatious siren, of course. What other kind of woman would be seeking a divorce?

Suddenly Valerie realized that the secretary was repeating: "May I take the message?"

"Oh, yes! I mean, no! It's a personal call."

Miss Whitham was doing a bit of thinking on her own. This

"But I'm at a cigar-stand," he protested. "I can't say much here."

was a new voice calling for her employer. Women drove him nearly crazy. What was this one up to? Why was there all this mystery?

"How long will the conference last? I say, how long will the conference last?"

Valerie had no sooner hammered the demand into the head of the secretary than she realized how fatuous a question she had asked. Miss Whitham realized it too, and tried to veil her contempt, which only emphasized it.

"I really can't say. If you'll give me your number, I'll call you when he is free."

"Never mind, thank you. I'll try again later. Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

If love brought wisdom along, Valerie would have studied her heart with horror at the amount of jealousy it had distilled over the matter of Blair's having a woman to answer his telephone and a client to confer with. She would have said: "Love, you promise too much trouble. You make me ill. You drive me out of my senses. So begone! If I love at all, it shall be somebody who calms and soothes me and sharpens my intellect."

But love has its own wisdom, or a maniac substitute, and the onset of green-sickness that made a parody of logic staggered Valerie.

She waited and waited and waited to give that conference time enough to end. She waited at least two hours. Her wrist-watch said it was twenty minutes. She must have the thing repaired. It did not need winding. It ticked and twinkled, but the hands made hardly any progress.

She called again. The secretary answered, recognized her voice, and triumphantly announced that Mr. Fleming had been called to court. She had no idea when he would be back, but, "If you'll give me your number—"

"Don't bother. I'll call again later. Thank you! Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

Valerie went back to her room and tossed her hands in air, caught them down and clenched them together as if she were trying to wring all the blood out of them.

Her aunt came in, and she had to curb herself. But Mrs. Pashley recognized instantly that all was not well with Valerie. The two women worked up a right vigorous quarrel over the matter, Aunt Ada insisting that Valerie was in distress about something, or ill or something; and Valerie dismally insisting that she had never felt better in her life.

Aunt Ada wanted to know what had happened on the Arrowhead exploit. Valerie said that nothing had happened except that she had been bored to death.

"Bored to death? In that storm?" Aunt Ada gasped.

"The storm? Oh, yes—the storm," Valerie babbled idiotically. Aunt Ada seized her and shook her:

"Come back to earth, will you? 'The storm? Oh, yes—the storm!' Didn't I try to telephone and learn that the wires were all down and the roads impassable? Where did you spend the night?"

"The night? Where did I spend the night?"

"Valerie, if you don't stop this insulting nonsense—great heavens, I want to—why, I could spank you this minute."

"Forgive me, Auntie. I was thinking of something else. I didn't mean to be impolite. Yes, the storm was terrific. I never saw a worse one. Mr. Fleming and I were caught in it and spent the night on the mountain-side."

"Good Lord! You poor darling, didn't you die of fright? You must have caught your death of cold!"

"No, we were very snug in the car."

"Oh, I see. You were in that little trap of yours all night with a strange man? But how—who—what—well, I never! You're lucky to be alive. I read in the papers about the havoc of the storm and—what on earth did his wife say?"

"Whose wife?"

"There you go again. You know perfectly well whose wife I'm talking about."

"Mrs. Fleming, you mean? You mean what did Mrs. Fleming say?"

"Valerie Dangerfield, I warn you!"

"She couldn't say much, because she had been clinging to her English cavalier quite as eagerly as—as—"

"As you had been clinging to Blair Fleming."

Valerie shook her head vehemently.

"Auntie, on my word of honor, there was not so much as a caress in the car."

She was a little too frank and sincere about it. Aunt Ada, who had been young once, said:

"*In* the car—but out of the car? Valerie, have you started an affair with that Fleming man?"

"Good heavens, Aunt Ada, aren't you ashamed of yourself! You'd better wash your mind out with soap, and gargle an antiseptic."

"And you'd better play fair with me. I always said of you, Valerie, from the time you were the tiniest girl: 'Valerie is a little hell-cat. She'll defy all the conventions and do just as she pleases all her life. But there's one fault she hasn't got. She doesn't lie or sneak or steal what doesn't belong to her.' Now, unless there's been a decided change in you, Val, do as my boy Tom says—come clean!"

The girl's soul was in such a vortex of bewilderment that her eyes seemed almost to swirl as she turned them to her aunt. She needed somebody, anybody, anything to seize and cling to in the maelstrom that spun her.

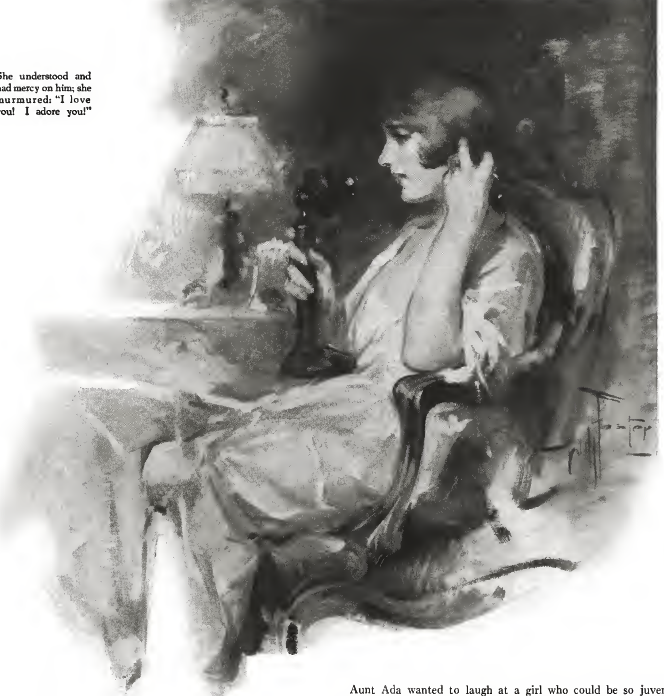
She flung her arms about Mrs. Pashley and became the child she was and needed to be; and she sobbed:

"Oh, Aunt Ada, I love him so! I love him as no woman ever loved a man before! I can't live without him—I wont try!"

Aunt Ada gripped Valerie's arms and whispered:

"Blair Fleming? You love Amy Fleming's husband?"

Valerie's head nodded as violently as a little girl's. Aunt Ada whispered: "Oh, my God!" and because she knew Valerie, was



She understood and had mercy on him; she murmured: "I love you! I adore you!"

the more terrified, the more despondent of the two. Valerie still had her hope and her zeal and her youth to sustain her. Mrs. Pashley was a fat old widow who had mothered a large and scattered family and seen her children and her many nephews and nieces knocked down by infantile diseases, adolescent disasters and grown-up passions.

Some of her near and dear were always in the hospital or the newspapers. And now Valerie was fallen ill of that plague which no scientist was even trying to explain, prevent or find a serum for. She could see black days ahead; for in Valerie's blood the fires of her father's and her mother's tribes were mingled.

What could an ancient lady do to hold this tigress of a Valerie? She must move cautiously, or everybody would be slashed to pieces and Valerie destroyed. She offered the girl the comfort of her arms and stroked her smoothly as cats must be stroked.

She warned herself to make no attack on Blair Fleming, nor try to belittle him. It was some time before she ventured even to say:

"You love Blair Fleming! But does he love you?"

Again that childish bobbing of the head. She advanced a little farther:

"How do you know he does?"

"He told me so."

Aunt Ada wanted to laugh at a girl who could be so juvenile as to offer a man's statement that he loved her as a proof that he did. She dared not confess her derision, but she was rash enough to say:

"Was that a nice thing for a married man to say to a nice girl?"

"He's not married to that woman."

This was startling!

"In heaven's name! You don't mean to say that all these years they've—"

"Oh, of course, they had a license and a ceremony and all that stuff, but that doesn't keep people married!"

"No? It used to, but of course, nowadays—"

"Nowadays, we're more honest."

"All of you?"

Valerie laughed at that, for it included Amy. But laughing and sobbing are so much alike that it was soon easy to know that her body was not throbbing with amusement.

She broke from her aunt, dabbing her eyes, to say:

"If that woman loved him, if she were true to him, I'd—why, before I'd take him away from her, I'd—I'd go jump in the lake! But she—why, I saw her flirting with a man outrageously, letting him hug and kiss her! Ugh!"

"You didn't let Mr. Fleming kiss you, of course?" queried Mrs. Pashley dryly.

"Well—"

"Oh, Valerie! Valerie!"

There was such disappointment in that outcry that Valerie was thrown into an attitude of resentful guilt.

"It was different with us."

"Oh, my dear! Honestly now! Play fair!"

"Oh, I know I look like a rotter, a common flirt, but if you could know the difference."

"Will the world see any difference?"

"The world—poof! I might have known you wouldn't understand."

"Understand what? Being in love?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've had five children. And I know what your kind of love is, too. I was young once, and slim. You'd never guess it, but I weighed less than you do when I was your age, and I was as big a—as big a—"

"A fool. Go on! Say it!"

"All right! I was as big a fool. I had a frightful crush on a married man. I tried to leave the country with him, too—if you think that your generation invented romance."

"What stopped you?"

"As he was riding to meet me and carry me off, the carriage horses ran away and—and killed him."

"Aunt Ada!"

"I've never told a soul but you. I didn't expect to tell anybody."

"You poor child—you poor thing! Did you grieve horribly?"

"I cried myself into a decline—as we called it then."

"You understand what it's like to love as I do. Why didn't your—your lover ask his wife for a divorce?"

"She was insane, and he couldn't get one."

"The cruel horrible laws! We're more civilized now."

"Yes?"

"Do you still love that man?"

"No! I don't know that I ever really loved him. I certainly never loved him as I did the man I married. I was simply—as you say—crazy about him."

"Well, I'm very wise about Blair. Times have changed, and he can get rid of his wife as easily as nothing at all."

"Has she said so?"

"Of course not. But she loves another man."

"How do you know?"

"I saw them together."

"You've kissed men in your day. Would you have married all of them?"

"None of them."

"Would all of them have married you?"

"One or two asked me."

"Has Blair Fleming asked you?"

"He hasn't had a chance."

"Well, hadn't you better wait until he does before you divorce Amy and marry her off to somebody else?"

"I suppose so. I intend to."

"Well, then, let's hope that this will blow over."

"Yes. Let's."

"Now you're my own sweet Valerie."

And Aunt Ada, whether from fatigue or conviction, or merely from her habit of escaping arguments as soon as possible, patted Valerie on the arm and went to order dinner for a number of musicians whom she had found at the committee-meeting and invited to the elastic table in her great dining-room.

VALERIE was glad to be rid of her. The gust of emotion had blown itself out. But it was the first flaw of wind preceding a gale, and the gale had not yet really begun.

She remembered that she had planned to ask her aunt for information about Blair Fleming, of whom she knew nothing except that he was the one man in the world for her, no matter what else he might be or do or have been or done, no matter what anybody else thought or said about him.

She looked at her watch. It had been getting along surprisingly. He must be out of court by now. The afternoon was already darkening toward evening. Through the tall window she could see the edge of mountains against the sky; and the strange glamour of desert twilight was already turning the crags to heaped crushed violets and the heavens to a lamplit vellum.

Mrs. Pashley was in her office talking over the dinner with the butler, and Valerie climbed the stair to the upper telephone. She dialed the number and was answered again by that woman. "That woman!" was also what Miss Whitham thought of Valerie, and while she did not approve of Amy in any respect, it pleased her to put a flea in the anonymous annoyer's ear:

"Yes, Mr. Fleming got back from court, but his wife called for him. He has gone home for the night."

Those two nouns were knives to Valerie. Miss Whitham added a postscript: "Do you want his house number?"

"No, thank you," said Valerie with bitter sweetness. "If I do, it's in the book, thank you! Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

Now the hurricane was coming on again. Her fury at Amy was visited partly on Blair. Why hadn't he called her? He said he loved her, and he had made no attempt to see her all day long. He knew where she lived. He must know Mrs. Pashley's telephone number. It was easy enough to find.

IF Valerie had suffered when she imagined Blair eager to talk to her, it was as nothing to the baffled humiliation of his neglect. She tried to tell herself that he was simply being cautious and considerate of her. But she did not want caution in her lover. And the consideration that she wanted had nothing to do with letting the hours fly with no message. If he had wanted to, he could have got some word to her.

Well, that was that! He had been merely flirting with her, as Aunt Ada had guessed at once. Let him go back to his deceitful wife, and let her make a fool of him. He should not make a fool of Valerie. What did she care where he went or what he did? Humph!

She began to take thought of the gown she should wear for dinner.

The maid came to say, "A gent'man wants you on the phone, please." Valerie's heart plunged like a startled bird, and fluttered up into her throat. She hurried to the telephone. A man's voice. But not his!

"That you, Val?"

"Yes."

"This is Pete. Lucy wants to know if you'll dine and dance with us at the Biltmore?"

"Sorry, Pete. Mrs. Pash has a flock of guests, and I've got to do the polite."

"Ah, cut it and come along."

"It can't be did."

The pest kept at her till she could have bitten him if he had been within reach. She finally shut him off and went back to her room in utter dejection, her heart leaden.

She began to make ready for the dinner. In her tub she longed to drown. Her arms were so weak she could hardly lift the filmy things she donned.

When she went down the steps, she expected to pitch headlong. The guests were people from a madhouse, the dinner a delirium of stupidity, the chatter and the music afterward as pleasant as whipping a chained dog.

She bore it as long as she could, and at ten told no lie when she said that she was ill and must beg to be excused. She had to hoist herself up the stairs by the banisters.

She found that maddening maid laying out her things for the night and was so pitifully jaded that she fell into a chair and giggled in an enfeebled hysteria. The old maid was perishing to ask what was so funny. Her curiosity was manifest in the very backs of her ears, but she dared not ask. If she had made the venture, Valerie would have answered:

"I'm laughing because I haven't got the strength to assassinate you."

At last she dabbed and patted the last thing and went to the door, pausing to inquire:

"Was there anything else, miss?"

"Nothing, thank you."

"Thank you! Good night!"

"Good night!"

As soon as the door closed, Valerie began to cry, letting her brow droop to her elbow and her tears stream down the arm of her chair. The maid knocked again.

"Please, miss, a gent'man on the phone."

"Is it the man that called me before dinner?"

"No'm. It's a different voice. Kind of deep, like."

Valerie went into the hall, whose air was beaten with music from below, a pianist tapping out a brisk toccata with tack-hammers.

"Hello," she sighed into the telephone. "This is Miss Dangerfield."

"This is—oh, my darling! I hope you'll forgive me for calling you, but—"

"Blair! It's you!"

"I couldn't stand it any longer. I'm in a drug-store, with a radio going. What's that music I hear?"

"I always said of you: 'Valerie is a little hell-cat.'"

"A gang of musicians downstairs. I had to make my escape."
"How are you?"
"I'm well—now!"
"You've been ill! You caught cold in the storm! You—"
Such alarm! Such sweet panic! She purred like a kitten:
"I was ill because I couldn't hear your voice. Now I'm in heaven."
"You forgive me, then, for calling you?"
"If you hadn't, I'd have died."
"So would I. I've been a maniac all day."
"Why didn't you call me before? I called you again and again."
"And every time I got a chance to be alone long enough to call you, your line was busy."
"Oh, how cruel! Did you honestly try?"
"Can you believe that I didn't?"
"All too easily. Why should you?"
"Why should a man dying of thirst in the desert—"
"Oh, you don't love me."
"As if anybody could help it."
"Nobody does."
"I do," he insisted.
"Of course you don't, but say it."
"There are three people waiting outside this booth glaring at me and gnashing their nickels to get in. But—" His voice fell so low that she couldn't make out the words. She made him repeat them till she heard the old trinity of monosyllables that lovers can never hear too often.

He made her repeat the formula though the music had stopped and the maid was hovering about and her aunt was telling her guests that she must go up and see how her niece was.

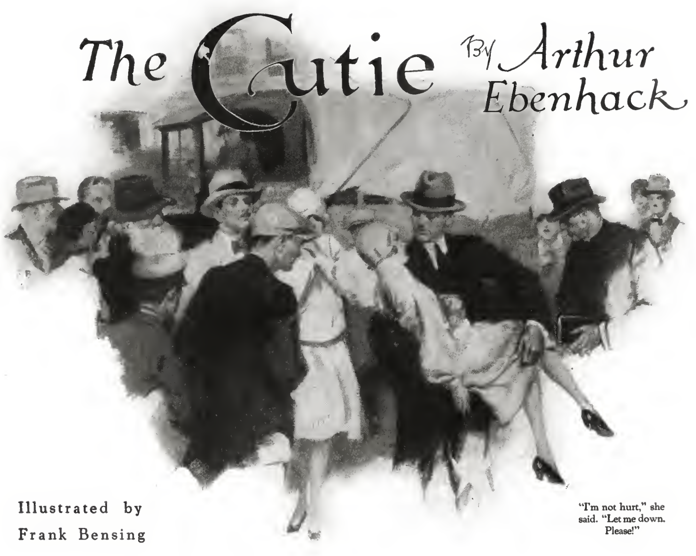
Valerie warned Blair that she must flee, made kissing sounds over the telephone and ran to her room like a thief for fear her aunt would catch her.

She dived into the bed and pretended to be asleep while Aunt Ada opened the door softly, waddled to the bed, put her hand stealthily on Valerie's forehead, found it as cool as a rose-petal, sighed with relief and waddled out again.

As soon as she was gone, Valerie hugged herself. The world was full of morning to her, and the lark was on the wing. As a matter of fact, the hour was nearing midnight and it was a mocking-bird that was talking to herself in the *(Continued on page 156)*

The Cutie

By Arthur Ebenhack



Illustrated by Frank Bensing

"I'm not hurt," she said. "Let me down. Please!"

HERE *is another of those five-minute tales that have helped to make The Red Book Magazine famous, a poignant story of the city streets and of a girl like thousands of others one passes every day and never gives a thought to. In the present instance, however, several men gave a great deal of thought to her—and from that fact develops this vivid story.*

THE cutie started across Forty-second Street against the traffic signal, and it was the rush hour, at that. She was wearing a smile and a few smart clothes. The way she wore those few ounces of clothes invariably received attention—even more so than the pansylike softness of her eyes. She was on her way to a beauty-shop on Sixth Avenue where a wave was to be purchased twenty-five cents cheaper than at any other first-class place she knew.

That fragment of flimsy cloth that pretended to cover her petite figure! The way she wore it belonged to her as much as if she had had it patented. No insulating qualities to it. Every inch of the garment magically vibrant to the touch of the exultant life-force beneath.

She had gotten almost a third of the way across the street. However, before following further the perils of this cutie trying to cross Forty-second Street during rush hour against the traffic signal, it is necessary to know something of her early life.

She had once lived in a small Pennsylvania town that had one hotel where the traveling men stopped. The hotel was on the way to the post office. The bigger part of the mail for that town was not "put up" until evening, about the time the traveling men had finished dinner and dumped themselves into the chairs out front. Almost every salesman who came to that town saw her go by—and sooner or later took his turn at following her home. She lived almost at the edge of the town. The strangers had plenty of time to pester her. But it didn't get them anywhere. It did get her somewhere. She had listened so often, without answering, to the line about her golden curls and big blue eyes, that by the time she got to New York it was merely part of the noise of traffic. Marcella couldn't dress the way she liked and walk a single block without having some one try to pick her up. And —she was rather proud of this fact—not one had ever succeeded. That is, up to the time she tried to cross Forty-second Street during the rush hour against the traffic signal.

Just as dancingly as she had started her precarious journey among unseeing automobiles, Marcella darted back from the path of a handsome roadster that was going much faster than the rest of the traffic. The retreat to the sidewalk was successful, but one of her French heels caught on the curb and tripped her. She dropped her bag. Almost any girl who was as quick as Marcella would have had plenty of time to pick up herself and the bag and be on her way to the beauty shop. But "the simp" was too quick.

"I'm not hurt," she said, a bit unnerved as she looked into his eyes. He was certainly not attractive, this man who had taken her up in his arms as the proper mode of helping her to her feet. "I'm all right. Let me down. Please!"

The fellow from the handsome roadster that had almost hit her was hurrying up. He had parked the car fifty feet farther down the street and had come back to see if anything could really be the matter with so beautiful a girl. An aristocratic-appearing

clergyman was waiting *his* turn, also. He had recovered Marcella's bag and did not think it proper to hand it to her while the audacious young man still held her in his arms.

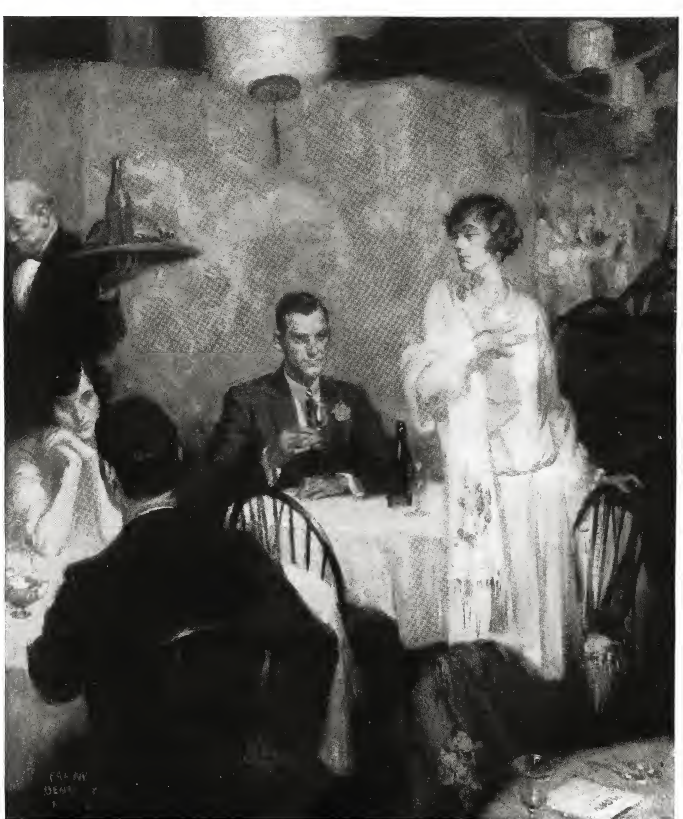
A crowd was gathering, and Marcella was anxious to get away. She took a step or two. There was a very slight suggestion of a limp.

"Oh, you must see a doctor. There's one just around the corner." The simp advised that.

"I think you should," the man from the roadster added. "I'll drive you there."

The three of them were about to get into the car when Marcella gasped: "My bag!" This was then handed to her by the clergyman, who, horror-stricken, had been intently contemplating her scantily clad figure. He had found time, though, to put one of his cards into the bag—with a message of warning scribbled across it.

The simp escorted Marcella into the doctor's office, while the other man remained in his car. The doctor put a bandage about her ankle and she paid him two dollars. The simp lived in this same house, it developed. His apartment was on the top floor. He was an author. He'd like to keep in touch with her. He was so busy telling her all this that he didn't notice that she was digging down into her bag for the very last two dollars. He was afraid that she might forget the address, *(Continued on page 96)*



"You'll have all the dresses and diamonds—" he whispered. She couldn't stand him a moment longer. She slipped out to the cloak-room.

A striking portrait of the noted society leader whose third remarkable article begins herewith.

This vivid photographic study of Rita Lydig is by Steichen.

Frauds of Smart Society

by Mrs. Philip Lydig

All over America people are imitating the conduct and ideals of the fashionable rich—the so-called "smart set"—of the East. I believe that those ideals are false ideals, tragic ideals, which it is disastrous for America to imitate. The conviction is my justification for preparing and publishing this series of articles on the futility of fashionable life.

Rita Lydig

IT was about twenty years ago that I first met—Mrs. Clammer, let me call her. I had gone to the Riviera very unhappy, and I was sitting, miserable, on a secluded bench, looking out at the water, when I saw a tragically ridiculous little woman, in dowdy black, coming staggering as if she were drunk, along the path toward me. I knew by her clothes that she was an American, and it seemed a national disgrace to have her exposed in that condition to the stare of the afternoon sun. I was wondering whether I should stop her—and ask her where she was living and have her taken to her friends—when I saw that she was weeping, blinded by tears; not intoxicated, but simply overcome with grief, and stumbling along in a fit of sobbing that had caught her while she was out walking, alone. I jumped up and took her by the arm. "Sit down here," I said, "for heaven's sake. What *is* the matter with you?" The sight of her grief had started my own tears, and that made me almost angry with her.

She was clutching to her breast a locket that was hung around her neck on a chain—or, not a locket, but a little portrait in a gold frame, a photograph of a baby's face, which she showed me with sobs, unable to make herself intelligible, and I understood that this was the picture of a child that had died.

She was a plump little woman who looked absurd in grief. It had bloated her features. Her eyelids and her nose were swollen. It had loosened her mouth like an infant's that is about to bawl. "'Smy baby," she kept blubbering. "'Smy boy baby!"

There was obviously no consolation that anyone could offer her, except to let her talk about the child and about her misery. Her despair was completely hopeless because she could never have another baby; a surgical operation had made that impossible. Her life was empty, desolate, wrecked. Her husband was making a great deal of money. He would not need her as much as he had when they were first married and struggling along together. Without children, she would be no good to anyone.

It seemed that she was a New Yorker, but of foreign birth, and she knew me by sight. I took her back to my hotel rooms, and gave her afternoon tea, and let her talk herself out. In the course of the conversation it developed that she and her husband had social ambitions but they had been unable to get themselves into what they considered "the smart set," though they had plenty of money to entertain. I was trying to think of some way in which she could occupy her mind and forget her baby, and I said: "If you have money, you can easily draw people to your home by making it beautiful with masterpieces of art which they will want to see, but to do *that,* you'll have to study and become an expert yourself, because of course you can't depend on art-dealers, and unless your own taste is good and you learn to know what is worth collecting, the dealers will simply make you ridiculous. Why not begin by going to an art school, now, in Paris, so as to educate your sense of color and acquire some knowledge of the foundations of art? Then, with good books to guide you, and the pictures in the museums to study, you can easily train yourself to know instinctively what is best. Take a course, at the same time, in interior decoration and learn about period furniture and all that sort of thing, and then, when you begin to collect, you'll have beautiful rooms in which to hang your pictures, and you'll make a home that your husband will be proud to bring his friends to. You'll find that you'll be of the greatest assistance to him socially. If you develop an eye, yourself, for the authentic quality in the old masters, you'll be able to pick up neglected treasures before the dealers discover them. A few finds of that sort will give you a reputation and make you sought out by artistic people who would never come to you otherwise. Best of all, you'll have a hobby and an interest in life that will give you the greatest pleasure."

I had no idea that she would really follow my advice. I was simply talking to distract her from her grief. But it appeared that as a girl she had always wanted to paint, and she had a cousin who was an artist, and she seized on the plan eagerly. When she left me, she was almost cheerful.

The celebrated painter Boldini executed this unusual picture of Mrs. Lydig when at the height of his fame, and it is considered second only to his portrait of Whistler.

I did not see her again till the following winter in Paris, when she sought me out at my hotel to tell me how she was getting on, and how delighted her husband was with the whole idea. He was living in New York, where his business kept him, but he made frequent trips across the ocean to visit her and he was trying to "read up" on art with her, and already he was buying modern paintings and becoming a sort of patron among the studios. She asked for some advice, now, on her clothes. She realized that she did not know how to dress with any distinction, and her husband's taste was not helpful. He could afford to give her plenty of money for clothes, but she was afraid that she might make herself ridiculous. Altogether, she was rather sweet and touching. I wrote her cards of introduction to a clever costumer who was on his way to becoming the fashionable rage of Paris, and sent her to a hat-maker who was an eccentric genius, and advised her never to buy or wear anything of which they did not approve.

A FEW days later an acquaintance said to me: "I understand that you've been befriending little Mrs. Clammer. Do you know who she is? No? Well, her husband's one of the shrewdest promoters in New York. He's made a fortune in the last ten years, speculating in real estate, and now he has a finger in every rich financial pie that's being baked in Broad Street. He'll be a billionaire before he's sixty if he keeps on, and I don't foresee anything that can stop him."

Nothing did stop him. He got into railroad financing, subway construction, electrical power development and what not, with real-estate projects as a sort of side-line. He avoided publicity, but one heard of him always as quietly gathering up the profits in the background of spectacular successes in which his name did not appear. I remember one financier complaining humorously that he had put a fortune into a railroad reorganization, with Clammer, only to discover that Clammer owned all the land on which the city terminals had been built, and the rentals that he charged absorbed most of the road's profits.

He did not avoid publicity as an art collector, however. He courted it. Here it was his wife who kept in the background. He became known first as a connoisseur of Dutch and Italian primitives and started a collection that is now famous. He bought a country estate in Westchester and housed his treasures in a modernized Italian villa where they looked at home. He added an art gallery to his New York house and specialized in Cézanne, as the forerunner of Matisse and the futurists, until he had a collection second only to the gallery of Pelerin outside of Paris. He was ably seconded, socially, by his wife, who now dressed in the smartest good taste, entertained cleverly, and surrounded herself with an interesting artistic and musical and literary circle.

I watched all this with a proprietary interest and amusement. It seemed to me that I had given good advice. But now they began to better my instruction, as the phrase is. Clammer, I learned, had secretly gone into partnership with an art-dealer, and he was getting his own purchases at inside prices and selling to other collectors at enormous profits. He had also begun a campaign to compete with the richest collector in America. Let me call this gentleman Masterman. He was the Man on Horseback in the Wall Street of his day, the uncrowned king of the banking interests, the greatest of American promoters in an era of consolidations and trust formations. He was also a Mæcenas of the arts, collecting paintings and china and jewelry and manuscripts, with a royal hand. He outbid all rivals, and few of them dared to compete with him. They preferred to let him have what he wished, without dispute, rather than run the risk of offending him.

CLAMMER gave the dealers to understand that he would pay more than Masterman offered for anything Masterman wished to acquire. With what seemed like the most idiotic egotism, he set himself up as a rival to the great autocrat. It was as if some saucy little street dog had set out to bark and snap at a man-eating lion, and at first Masterman ignored him. He refused to notice that Clammer existed. Then, when he had lost several paintings and manuscripts that should have become part of his collection, he became enraged and outbid Clammer in all directions, paying ten times what things were worth. In the midst of this costly battle he discovered that Clammer really owned many of the things that *he* had been buying. Clammer had been selling them to him through the dealer with whom Clammer was in partnership, bidding against himself so as to put the price up, and making a fool of Masterman. Masterman was furious. He set his agents to work to report on Clammer's finances, his investments and his business affairs generally, preparatory to moving against him all along the line.

Mrs. Clammer now went to Masterman. I don't know what she really said, but she always boasted that she "landed" him, as she called it, by addressing him as "Sire," and insisting that she felt as if, for the first time, she were speaking to royalty. In any case, she made peace between him and her husband. She became conspicuously a member of the inner circle of Masterman's personal friends, and Clammer began to appear as a public patron of art on all the boards and foundations which Masterman dominated. Clammer was a made man, and art profited by it. He had a real eye for a painting. He was not afraid to back up his opinion of an unknown artist by buying his work lavishly. He did not depend upon the dealers, and he did not confine his patronage to the accepted masters who no longer needed his help.

In that regard he was unusual. Most of the millionaires who collect paintings, or prints, or china, or armor and bronzes and tapestries and all the rest of it, have no æsthetic interest whatever in the beautiful things they buy. They would be collecting postage stamps if postage stamps could be made as showy and as fashionable. Even Masterman, who was the greatest collector of his day, showed no æsthetic appreciation of his treasures. He bought them without ever seeing them—without ever seeing them even after he had bought them. When he died, the basements of his residences here and abroad were full of packing-cases in which were stored thousands of *objets d'art* that dealers had bought for him, unseen by him—packing-cases that had never been opened. What he got out of collecting was merely a sense of power and a pride of ownership. He was like those rich men who buy the priceless violins of Stradivarius and lock them up where no musician can ever play on them. It is this that makes the peculiar futility of fashionable culture.

I REMEMBER dining once in a home that housed some of the most beautiful Rembrandts in the world. There was hanging over the dining-room mantelpiece one of Rembrandt's miraculous portraits of a pathetic old man in whose face the artist had expressed all the tragic disillusionments of a lifetime. Some one spoke of the picture to our hostess. "Yes," she said, "isn't he a nasty-looking old thing? I've been trying to get Bob"—her husband—"to get rid of him. I couldn't stand him in any of the other rooms. I thought we'd notice him least in the dining-room, but he's spoiled every meal I've had since we hung him here. Bob will just have to sell him. I can't have him around. He gives me the willies!" And that was one of the few times that I have known a famous painting to make any impression whatever on its fashionable owner. She was at least sensitive enough to feel an emotion—if only an unpleasant one—at the sight of a masterpiece.

Some of the most costly and beautiful paintings of Rembrandt and Velasquez and the Italian renaissance were collected by a mine-owner whose fortune was as bottomless as his mines. He built, beside his house, an art gallery, as big as a museum, which neither he nor his family nor any of his friends seemed ever to enter.

I had the bright idea of suggesting to him that he let me print some tickets of admission and issue them to art-students and poor young people on the East Side whom I could reach through a settlement house in which I was interested. "Open your gallery to them," I proposed, "once a month. Some of these pictures are an education in themselves. It's a crime to have them shut up where no one ever sees them." He scowled at me.

"What?" he said. "I pay half a million dollars for a picture, and then give it to these people for nothing! If they want to see pictures, let them buy them."

It was exactly as if I had suggested that he let them wear his wife's diamonds because she never wore them herself. His pride of ownership was outraged.

Upstairs, in his daughter's boudoir, hung with Fragonards, there was a set of Gobelin tapestry chairs which he wished me to admire. They had cost a fortune, and they were certainly the finest of their kind to be seen outside of some of the museum-palaces of France, but on every other chair some one had placed a cushion covered with the Yale colors and embroidered with a *"Y."*

I said to the daughter: "The chairs are lovely, but these cushions don't go with them."

"I think they're prettier than the chairs," she retorted. "I'd get rid of the chairs, only Papa paid so much for them I have to keep them."

I suppose no one will deny that in our daily lives the great aim and office of art is to console us with dreams and beauty when we find the ugly realities too harsh to bear. There is a saying of Goethe's to the effect that wherever you find music, you'll find slavery; but he might better have said that wherever you find slavery, you'll find music. Art is basically what the psychologists call an "escape." It is the dream of those sensitive spirits who take refuge in an imaginary world from the frustrations which are put upon them in their daily existence; and to enjoy art truly, one must have some of the artist's sensitivity and feel the same need to escape from reality which h has felt. Surely no one needs to be told that there is no such sensitivity among the devotees of fashionable culture.

I remember seeing, one day, in a fashionable decorator's, a lady who was consulting him about her library. She had bought an old English "wood room," with oak paneling and book shelves, from abroad, and she was confronted by the unforeseen difficulty of filling the empty shelves. Apparently she had never owned a library before. Certainly she had no books. She was merely setting up a fashionable house, and fashion required her to have a library. That the decorator was not prepared to supply. He was trying to convey to her tactfully that to ask him to furnish books for her shelves was like expecting him to buy clothes for her wardrobe. She spied a row of dummy books on a table—books that were merely covers bound on blocks of wood.

"What are those books?" she asked.

He explained what they were. They were used in the theater when the scene was set for a library. He kept them to fill out the ends of a shelf when he was decorating a library and the owner's volumes did not fill the bookcase.

"How many have you?" she asked him. He had hundreds. "They'll do," she said. "I'll take all you have. I'll keep the bookcases locked, and no one'll ever know the difference."

They *would* do perfectly. On the same principle, a Fifth Avenue art-dealer, who was put out of business some years ago, used to supply dummy masterpieces to fashionable collectors. He specialized in the Barbizon school, furnishing forged landscapes by Corot and Diaz and Daubigny especially. He made the mistake, however, of deceiving his clients, and he was finally prosecuted and disgraced. As a witty art-critic has said: "Corot painted 8,353 pictures during his life. Of these 31,427 are now in private collections in New York City." They are just as good to their owners as if they were authentic, so long as their market value is not ques-

Mrs. Lydig was a favorite subject of the incomparable Paul Helleu. Red chalk was the medium used to achieve the spirited portrait reproduced above.

tioned. They are prized as expensive possessions, not as works of art.

No. Fashionable culture has almost no basis in estheticism. And it gives its devotees no escape into dreams and beauty. Most of them collect expensive works of art, because they think it is "the thing to do." They buy masterpieces as Clammer did, in a campaign to conquer a conspicuous position in fashionable circles, or as Masterman did, to give themselves the egotistic satisfaction of owning the most costly and envied things in the world. They buy books which they never read, priceless first editions and historic volumes in languages which they do not understand. I once heard one of them, at the sale of a collector's library, complain to his agent: "But these books are ruined. They've been read. The pages have all been cut." And he was not joking. He thought that the bibliophile's definition of an "uncut" page meant a page that had never been opened by a reader—whereas, of course, it means a page the margin of which has never been reduced from its original width by trimming.

A few of them have come up from poverty and suffering with sufficient sensitivity to feel the emotions which the artists have expressed in their works. But most of them have been raised in a stupid conviction of superiority, with no imaginative sympathy, and consequently they have not the sort of mind that can respond to emotions of beauty or escape from unhappiness into the fairyland of an artist's make-believe. They do not even put their hands over their ears at Tschaikowsky, like a certain millionaire who disliked music, or avert their eyes from a tragic masterpiece because it gives them the "willies," like the hostess with the Rembrandt. They patronize all art with politely bored indifference, their minds occupied with the plans and worries and ambitions of their every day.

THEY patronize, just so, the church. I heard recently of an incident, occurring in New York, which throws the same light on fashionable religion that the career of the Clammers throws on fashionable culture. An ambitious, self-made and flamboyant millionaire from the West wished to join the congregation of one of the most fashionable churches on Fifth Avenue, obviously for social reasons. He and his wife were welcomed sweetly by the rector. They professed and were confirmed and entered into the communion of the sacraments and rented a conspicuous pew and gave liberally to the support of the work of the diocese out of a fortune that is notably large even for Manhattan. After they had been attending services and contributing piously for several months, the wife went to the rector to tell him how she and her husband had enjoyed his sermons and been uplifted by their faith. "But," she complained, "although we've been members of your congregation since last autumn, we haven't yet met any of your other parishioners."

The pastor was most apologetic. "Why didn't you speak of it before?" he said. "What an oversight! I'm entirely to blame. Forgive me, dear lady. Will you come to tea in the rectory next—say, Thursday afternoon? And I'll invite them all to meet you."

She accepted with pleasure. The invitations were sent out. She and her husband drove to the rectory on the appointed afternoon, saw the line of motors parked along the curb, entered smilingly and were introduced with unction by the rector to a collection of social climbers who had evidently joined the church for the same reason as they. There was not among them a single person whom any of them wished to meet.

Checkmate! The rector and his wife were hospitality incarnate. The tea went off suavely. Nobody made a wry face over the cup, and the most fashionable congregation on Fifth Avenue preserved its social exclusiveness unimpaired.

The point is that such a church is a fashionable club and very little else. The congregation does not primarily go there to pray; the religion is of secondary importance. The pew is merely a seat of envy in which the fashionable rich may feel complacent and superior.

I REMEMBER the consternation, in one of these churches, when a visiting clergyman delivered a radical sermon during the illness of the rector.

"It will ruin our church," one of the old ladies predicted, "if this sort of thing continues. The rector has been bad enough. *I* think he has been very indiscreet in many things he says, and what has happened? Fifteen years ago, at the eleven-o'clock service, there were twice as many carriages waiting in the street as there are now. Twice as many! If people are scolded and criticized from the pulpit, they go where they're more welcome. We used to be the most fashionable church on the Avenue, and we're *not* any more. We're dropping behind. We're losing our leadership in the diocese. Do you remember how often we used to meet the rector socially? He isn't invited half as often now. He has alienated a lot of our richest and most influential men, and sermons like this last one will drive the rest away. It's suicidal!"

She was one of a committee of women, appointed by the rector, whose business it was to watch for any socially desirable stranger who might happen in on the services and welcome the newcomer, and try to hold her, if she were a woman, by putting her on the visiting lists of the ladies of the congregation. It was exactly like being put up at a club. And not only that: These women, if they recognized a conspicuous stranger in the church, hastened to notify the rector, and he tried, in his sermon, to make some flattering reference to the visitor, as if by accident. I remember my own astonishment—coming to such a church to hear a famous 'cellist who had been advertised to play during the services—when the rector spoke admiringly of some charitable activity of mine that had been noticed in the newspapers. I could hardly believe my ears. I was the more astounded to learn, months later, that the reference was not accidental. One of his committee had seen me enter, and warned him that I was present, and arranged with him what to say.

In such an atmosphere, of course, the most devout young clergyman soon becomes worldly-wise. He learns to make his sermons inoffensive. He preaches a Christianity that says as little as possible about humility and poverty and the other Christian qualities that are not fashionable. He condemns only the sins of the criminals and the lower classes. He thunders against heresies and unorthodoxies none of his parishioners are guilty of.

The Reverend Dr. Carlington—let me call him—was the most fashionable of New York preachers a few years ago—a richly cultivated and genial type of sophisticated clergyman who could drink and ride and play billiards and take a hand in a card-game as companionably as any clubman in his congregation. His church was practically supported by one powerful millionaire who dominated the vestry and controlled the board of trustees. In this man's court of favorites Carlington was the king's confessor. It was his business to assure the forgiveness of God for everything his patron did. And he did not limit his pardon to a form of words; he gave the daily support of his practice and example. He accompanied his patron on his yacht with his mistresses, and set a pattern of conduct, in his own affairs with women, that was easy for his patron to live up to. All this was well known to his congregation, and it was a scandal to many, but nothing was done about it till Carlington made the mistake of stealing one of his patron's women. He was then quietly retired, in disgrace, to live on the income which he had saved from his days of favor.

CARLINGTON was typical, in my experience. He was more open and less hypocritical than most of his kind, but he merely filled for his patron the same office that the fashionable clergyman commonly fills for his whole congregation. He confers a religious respectability on them in return for their support. He flatters and defends them in his sermons. He attacks the enemies of the social system of which they are the flower. If one of the ruling families in his church is threatened with the whisper of a scandal, he visits conspicuously on their yacht. Best of all, he is usually considered guilty himself of the sins that are most fashionable among the members of his flock.

He comes to his pulpit looking rather blowsy and red-eyed, Sunday morning. The men laugh. "He had a bad night, last night, at So-and-so's." He preaches a dispirited sermon, down in the mouth. "Mrs. A— must have given him the air." The papers report the death of a bishop, suddenly, of heart disease, at his study desk. "He died in Lily B—'s bedroom. He used to go to see her every morning. They took him, dead, to the hospital and reported his death from there." Mrs. C— has killed herself. "There's a story for you. She married old C— for money when she was nineteen. Five years ago, she was so miserable that she went to the rector and told him her story. He has been consoling her ever since. She found out about Mrs. D— and Mrs. E— and Mrs. F—, a few weeks ago, and that finished her. She's the fourth of his own women, to my knowledge, that he's read the burial service over."

I do not wish to retail these scandals at length. There are enough of them to fill a book. And I do not wish to maintain that all of them are true. But whether they are true or not, the congregation believes them, and everyone knows that enough of them are true to make the rest credible. Sitting in the church are many tragically unhappy men and women who are in desperate need of the consolations of religion. What hope, what support can they derive from the teaching or example of such pastors as they believe these to be?

A dry-point etching of Mrs. Lydig, in which Paul Helleu shows his usual consummate skill.

I do not mean that all our fashionable clergymen, without exception, are like Carlington, any more than I mean that all our rich collectors are like Masterman or Clammer. I *do* mean that the ideals of our fashionable religion are as false as the ideals of our fashionable culture, and that the collectors and the clergymen who are not infected by these false ideals are rare. In time past, the religion and the culture of any epoch have been the choicest blooms of its civilization, and its religion and its culture have drawn their chief support from the aristocracy of the period, the ruling leisure class, the fashionable rich. What bloom, what fruit of culture and religion, can America produce on the inspiration and support of such people as these?

To sum up, they are born, in my experience, of a marriage of ambition, a marriage without love that is a suicide compact for husband and wife, a spiritual and moral and often physical death for both of them. As the children of such a marriage, they are raised without imagination, in a home without affection. They have no example of loyalty to make them true, and no tradition of courage and constancy to make them responsible. They develop a sex instinct that has no tenderness in its passion, and they indulge it destructively. They become tragically unhappy in all the relations of life from which happiness is normally derived, and they can make no escape into estheticism, nor find any refuge in religion. They fall back upon dissipation and the excitements of excesses and destroy themselves in a sort of madness which nobody can restrain.

This whole social disaster, as I see it, is due to ideals of egotism and ambition, the desire for the power and distinction of riches and conspicuous position, and the failure to understand the value of love and self-sacrifice and service and affection as the foundations of a happy life. I have wished in this way, publicly, to attack those ideals because I see them being imitated as aristocratic and fashionable ideals by many American people in other walks of life. They are, I am convinced, destructive ideals, and it will be a national calamity if their imitation increases.

(Next month Mrs. Lydig will present a characteristically illuminating article on another and even more interesting phase of ultra-smart society.)

Exiles of the Sky

By Samuel Spewack

THE man who writes this vivid tale of a pilot in the commercial air service of Europe today knows the scenes of which he writes and the spirit of the people who inhabit them, for, since the war, he has been one of the most active of all the American correspondents in Germany and Russia.

Illustrated by Rico Tomaso

HE walked unseeing into the Tiergarten. It was winter—the sunless winter of Berlin, when trees sway like despairing skeletons praying to the wind for snow to cover their bones.

The man pressed the collar of his sheepskin coat closer to his throat, shivering not with cold but with an aching sense of the world's injustice to man—to himself. He was dazed with constant rehearsing of the scene that had taken place in the director's office only half an hour ago. The scene itself had taken but a few minutes. Directors of passenger airplane services have very little time to waste, their secretaries will tell you.

It hadn't hurt so much until the director, big-jowled and thin-lipped, had taken up the red pencil and drawn a brutal line through the name: *Vladimir Uspensky.*

"We have no use for pilots who crash," the director had shouted, but those words had not hurt.

That ruthless scrape of the red pencil through his name *had* hurt. If it had been a blade tearing through his flesh, the pain could not have been more intense. Why hadn't the director put him up against the wall and shot him? That's what they did to soldiers who faltered. But shooting was an act of mercy compared to that red line.

True, he had crashed. But he had never crashed before. Why couldn't the director give him a second chance? Bookkeepers, captains of industry, doctors, editors and statesmen err, and are forgiven. And other pilots had crashed. Why, that Westphalian pilot had had two crashes and had not been dismissed. If only that little cowardly merchant had not complained! But who would have thought that he would? Instead of commending him for his skill and quick wit in preventing their all being crushed to dust, that damned little merchant had testified, unsolicited, that the pilot had had two glasses of vodka in quick succession in the flying-field waiting-room at Reval.

The wretched man began mumbling to himself as he plunged deeper into the park.

Yes, he had had two drinks. But a man could not get drunk on two glasses of vodka, particularly a Russian. He had crashed because the cooler had sprung a leak. The motor had stopped. But he had glided to earth. Was this not proof enough that he was sober? And the plane was not even damaged. Not even a scratch on her wings. And he had never had a crash before. He'd asked the director that, but the director had been too busy finding the red pencil to answer. Well, had he?

No. Never. Never! Nobody could say that Vladimir Uspensky had ever had a crash before.

Consumed by his misery, the man looked neither to right nor left. Yes, he had had two drinks.

"And after four years of service with us, are you still unacquainted with our regulations?" the director had asked sarcastically.

"And dumb beast that I am, I couldn't even answer him," Vladimir remembered bitterly.

Yes, he had taken two drinks. He'd taken them, too, because he was coming back to Berlin, when he longed with all his being for Moscow.

Vladimir Uspensky hated Berlin. It was such an ugly city, with a soul as cold and sterile as the Prussian soil upon which it squats. It was a city where men shouted and women whined, where the purple apoplexy of the struggle against defeat had displaced the grace of living. Uspensky knew all the capitals. For him New York had movement, Paris beauty, London age. But there was only one city that he loved, and that was Moscow. Loverlike, he credited to that blood-stained snow-mound the movement of New York, the beauty of Paris, the age and dignity of London.

It had been a sudden pang of homesickness, and had come upon him unawares. Vladimir had never before let homesickness interfere with the business of flying. But this time—it had caught him like the springtime desire of a young girl to be loved. . . . .

A park bench by a still, dirt-screened pond greeted the unhappy man icily. He had no sooner fallen onto it when overhead a metal bird hummed in flight. He looked up—a Fokker monoplane, blue and brown. He knew it. He knew the pilot. He had often saluted him in the air when their paths crossed between Amsterdam and Berlin.

The thundering thing came nearer, taunting the discredited pilot on the bench. "You, there," it roared, "you can never fly again."

Vladimir rose unsteadily to his feet. No—he could never fly again.

Suddenly he buried his head in his coat, and cried. An old derelict shuffling up looked at him anxiously.

No—he could never fly again. "Are you sick?" the stranger quavered.

"Are you sick?" the stranger quavered at Vladimir.

Vladimir looked back quickly.

"No, no," he coughed, clearing his throat. "I am not sick. Not sick."

The derelict hurried on. The metal bird had faded in the gray sky. One could hear only a thin, persistent thrumming. Vladimir put his hands to his ears.

He walked out of the park, through the rectangular streets that seemed to squeeze him like a giant maw. He paused at a dim Weinstube, hesitated and then entered. The plump barmaid brought him a vodka. He looked at it, and then at her. She edged away. His eyes frightened her.

Vladimir brushed the glass from the table. The crash startled the proprietor, who came panting from the kitchen.

"Another crash!" shouted Vladimir. "Do you see it? I am that glass. I crashed too."

"Crazy Russian," growled the proprietor. "Pay and get out."

"You think I am crazy? Perhaps you think I am drunk too. It is your city that crashed me, your damn' city without a sun, without a soul. I hate it. I hate you—all of you. You robbed me of my plane. You robbed me of my life—"

"If you don't get out this minute, I'll call the police." The proprietor moved to the door.

Vladimir surrendered. He threw a two-mark note upon the bar.

He lumbered up the avenue of commercialized gayety—Kurfürstendamm—where even in the mottled afternoon painted women sat together in the huge cafés, waiting. Orchestras played with Teutonic discipline one-year-old jazz, born of a primitive people and now, robbed of its abandonment, employed to stimulate these human automatons. Vladimir did not see, nor hear. He walked on.

Toward evening he found himself at Templehof—the flying field. What was he doing here? This patch of green in the wilderness of factory lands, where the flight of men began and ended, was his no longer. What matter if he knew it from the sky as other men know a beloved face? He was now an exile from the sky and from this field, which brought men to the sky. This field to him had become home when revolution had exiled him from his home. And now he had lost this too.

Even the night watchman—silly doddering old fool—had his place here. But Vladimir Uspensky, proudest of pilots, had none. Probably the night watchman knew of his disgrace, and would pity him. What irony! But wait. Perhaps he did not know. They would not tell him until the next day. Then—

The plan was born.

He slept in a draughty little hotel near the field. He rose at four. It was still dark. He dressed slowly, paid his bill, and found his way to the hangars.

The night watchman greeted him with customary obsequiousness. He did not know.

"I came out early to tune up the machine myself," explained Vladimir. "I don't trust these mechanics any more."

With the aid of the night watchman he rolled the machine out of the hangar, and started the engine. Vladimir listened carefully to the jangled symphony of the motor, noting beat and pitch with musicianly intensity. He was satisfied. The motor sang gloriously.

And the sole purpose of his flight was to convince the sneering director that Vladimir Uspensky was not through, that Vladimir Uspensky had been grossly libeled, that Vladimir Uspensky was not a drunkard but a careful, competent pilot.

He stepped into his flying suit, adjusted his helmet and his goggles, saw that the rolling map was fixed in its proper place. He looked at his wrist-watch. In another hour flying officials would begin to descend upon the field. He must be off. He clambered up the metal rests of the wings and strapped himself into the pilot's seat.

His eyes sparkled exultingly as he bent low. The plane rattled over the field, faster and faster. He turned. The motor subsided, and then leaped into hammering life again. He began to rise over the hangars, higher and higher. A thin morning sun melted the surrounding haze, and the mist on his wind-shield and goggles. Below, factory chimneys yawned, and the trains in the railroad yards turned and twisted like black snakes.

It was good to be in the air again! How he would laugh at them when he returned! Show them he had been to Danzig and back again, in schedule time, without a scratch. Could a drunkard do that?

East he flew, over the pines of Brandenburg, over the marshes beside the hard-won little fields and the precise farmhouses. He knew this land. He slipped lower in his seat and gave himself up to the blended roar of wind, motor and propellers, and the gentle heave of the metal bird. Thus for two hours.

He craned his neck over the wind-shield. He did not like the sky, nor the clouds, nor the fog spreading over the earth. But fortune was with him today. Fortune must be with him today. He would show them that even a storm was but a slight obstacle to Vladimir Uspensky. On, on! The speedometer quivered at one hundred and ten. The plane shook as if in fever. He sat bolt upright.

The wind charged him from the side, and it took all his strength to right the plane.

Now the fog choked him in gray darkness, and he had only instinct and a pathetically inadequate compass as his guide. A strange fear gripped him in this mist-woven wilderness of sky. Suddenly the image of the director drawing the red pencil through his name reappeared. . . . . But the fat-jowled, thin-lipped face had no eyes—just sockets.

To the fear-crazed pilot, this was the writing in the sky—the red pencil was Death and the eyeless face was Fate.

"A man can fight Death—but not Fate," shouted Vladimir, but no one heard. And no one saw when, slumping to his knees, he clutched the control lever as if in prayer. The plane with its unconscious burden crazily sank.

HE opened his eyes in a snug attic with a roof so low that he could touch it with his hand, if he felt like trying. But Vladimir didn't feel like trying. Didn't feel like moving at all. Underneath the warm feather-bed, his body lay stiffly tired. But his eyes roved fearfully from wooden ceiling to whitewashed walls and unpainted door. No thought disturbed the vacancy of his gaze.

Suddenly his ears caught the steady *clop-clop* of some one ascending stairs, and then the door opened and an old peasant with a long pipe entered. He took a deep puff and nodded several times. "How do you feel?" he asked.

Vladimir recognized it with difficulty as the German spoken in bleak Pomerania.

"Feeling better?" the old fellow repeated, louder and with a hint of irritation.

Vladimir nodded.

The old man regarded him for a moment, then puffed and spoke again:

"You're the second one that's dropped outside our door within the past two years," he announced. "That girl who found you was the first. She didn't fly to us. My wife found her exactly where that girl found you."

The old peasant looked at the pilot, sucked his pipe a moment, and turned to the door.

"That girl covered your bird with straw," he said, and left.

Covered his bird with straw? Why? The plane was probably smashed to bits. . . . .

"Excuse me for bringing my dirty shoes and your milk in at one time."

In amazement Vladimir looked at the barefooted peasant girl who had entered, for she spoke Russian, and a Russian with the accent of a *grande dame* of Petrograd. In one hand she held a pair of wooden shoes, and in the other a glass of milk. She smiled at him with her lips but not with her eyes.

"I daren't leave my shoes outside or the dog will run off with them. He's very strong." She smiled as she set the *sabots* on the floor and closed the door behind her.

"You are Russian?" Vladimir asked unsteadily.

"Yes, I'm Russian," the girl answered as she approached his bed. "I knew you were because when I found you, you cried out in Russian. And now no more questions. Drink your milk."

The girl lifted the pilot's head and supported it with a strong right hand, while with the left she held the glass against his mouth. The sick man drank obediently, but his questioning eyes never left her face.

It was a lovely face with dark eyes that brought back to Vladimir the sound of silver laughter, of troika bells, and the sight of gilt domes, the blue sky and snow-covered streets of Moscow.

"Most of us went to Paris, but I chose Pomerania," the girl explained easily. "And now sleep. Tomorrow we'll talk."

BUT the next day, the girl didn't stop to talk, despite her promise. She placed Vladimir's food on a stool near his bed and left, smiling her lip smile, as she slipped her feet into the wooden shoes at the door.

When he finished his food, he felt so much stronger that he arose and dressed. He found his clothes neatly folded on a shelf. Cautiously he stretched arms and legs and twisted his neck about. Miracle of miracles, he was all sound and unhurt. A deep, grateful sigh burst forth unbidden from his heart but died on his lips as that lost look which had shrouded his eyes in the fog crept back.

"What is going to happen to me?" he cried out in agony. "I'm afraid—again. Why couldn't I die when I crashed?"

His eyes suddenly caught the glint of a razor blade on the floor. Why, it was his own razor blade, evidently dropped from his pocket when he had dressed. His teeth bit into his indrawn lips as he reached for it. He would show them if he was afraid!

There was a sudden knock at the door, and the peasant girl entered.

"What!" she cried. "Up and dressed! Then you can have supper with us below. You'd better go down now. Food's on the table."

The razor slid from Vladimir's fingers and buried itself in the bed.

The man felt curiously ashamed of himself. Had she seen the razor?

He looked up anxiously at the girl. But her back was turned to him as she adjusted the little curtain to the tiny window. She had evidently not seen. He felt relieved.

"Thank you," he said.

"Better hurry," the girl advised, without turning around. "You'll find soap and towel near the pump outside."

When he had gone, the girl reached for the razor in the bed and hid it under a loose plank in the floor, for she had seen.

A moment later Vladimir, facing the old Pomeranian peasant and his equally ancient wife, heard the light *pat-pat* of the Russian girl's bare feet.

The meal of black bread and thick potato soup was eaten in silence. At its close the old peasant offered Vladimir a puff at his pipe, but Vladimir refused, remarking that he preferred a cigarette. The old peasant woman disappeared, and the girl in the far corner of the kitchen washed the dishes, putting them on the stove ledge to dry.

Having finished his smoke, the old man rose.

"There's still enough light for you to look around," he suggested. "My pigs are the best in all Pomerania. You must see them."

As Vladimir followed his host out, the girl called out in Russian:

"A few feet away from the barn is your plane."

When Vladimir did not return with the old peasant a half-hour later, the girl threw a shawl over her shoulders and ran out into the field. It was now completely dark. With difficulty she made out his figure, dim and uncertain in the distance.

She continued to run until she was a few feet away from him, and then she slowed down into a leisurely walk.

"The first evening I took my place at the table assigned me, was also a birthday for me—my nineteenth."

"Your plane all right?" she asked.

But there was no answer.

The girl's hands felt for the man's face.

"Why do you cry?" she demanded as her hands fell to her sides.

"Because I can never fly again." The man's answer was low and bitter.

"And why not?"

"You felt the answer with your hands. Can a man fly who bursts into tears like a baby?"

"You are afraid of something," the girl said.

"I'm afraid of myself," Vladimir cried. That confession wrested from him by the impersonal sympathy of the girl's voice now made him long to pour forth words of explanation, of supposition, of self-justification. But he found he could not, for his cracked and trembling voice hinted at a renewed outburst of self-pity.

"Did you ever crash before?" The girl's voice was still gently impersonal.

The man winced.

"Yes," he replied. "But only once before."

And in a voice as shrill as a girl's *(Continued on page 106)*

The Delectable Mountains

By *Struthers Burt* *Illustrated by Ernest Fuhr*

READERS *may be interested in knowing that the part of France, the precise places, indeed, pictured by Mr. Burt in this concluding installment of his remarkable novel, are very familiar to him, for it was at Hyéres—the one-time home of Robert Louis Stevenson, and later of Paul Bourget and Edith Wharton—that the Burts, both big and little, recently spent two delightful years.*

The Story So Far:

IT was at the home of his old friend and instructor the critic Vizatelly, that Stephen Londreth met Mercedes Garcia. And so began this strange romance of a ranchman and a chorus girl: of, first, Stephen Londreth, born of the wealthy old Philadelphia Londreths, who had fled a narrow life of old-family conventions for the solitude and freedom of a Wyoming ranch. When his sister Molly, who had made a failure of one marriage, wished to marry a very decent French nobleman and asked her family for the conventional European *dot,* and was refused, Stephen journeyed back to Philadelphia in an endeavor to straighten the matter out. And then had occurred his meeting with Mercedes.

Mercedes was the daughter of a janitor and odd-job man who had lived up to his name of Wiggins except when he married the daughter of a Spanish fruit-merchant named Garcia. The Spanish girl had become a Wiggins too; but the daughter Mercedes had eventually fled the janitorial ménage; and possessing much beauty and some brains had achieved place in a New York chorus. She lived with Hazel Tourneur, a sister chorister. And —as she demonstrated when a painter named Hastings became importunate—she had learned how to send men about their business.

"I—I'm stupid at this," said Stephen to Mercedes shortly after his first meeting with her. "I—I don't know where to begin."

And finally: "It's you I want," he finished breathlessly.

"For long?"

"As long as you want."

Her eyes were averted. She raised them suddenly.

"All right. . . . . You— Yes. . . . . All right."

She smiled at him, but back of her smile he could see nothing except a dumb and dogged sort of acquiescence.

"I don-don't believe you understand me," he stuttered. "I'm d-doing my best to ask you to marry me."

A few weeks later the marriage took place; and after perfunctory visits to the Wigginses and to Stephen's annoyed family in Philadelphia, Stephen and Mercedes set out for Wyoming.

But difficulties soon developed between Stephen and Mercedes. One evening on a camping trip, he was moved to say: "Look here. Do you love me? Did you ever love me?"

"Didn't I marry you?" she retorted. "Didn't I come out here? What more do you want? It's up to you now."

When they returned to the ranch, Stephen found a telegram from his sister's friend Mary Ward announcing her arrival that week for a visit. And Mary, so distinctly a girl of Stephen's own class, perhaps seemed to explain him to Mercedes. At any rate, after Mary had gone, Mercedes announced that she wished to go back to New York for a time alone. She refused the money with which Stephen tried to provide her; she wished to provide for herself as she had used to. And so the two, in entire outward friendship and in complete inward misunderstanding, said good-by.

Mercedes, however, found it difficult indeed to resume her previous career. Her old employers and the new ones she sought alike had no place for her in that October season. Eventually her old admirer the artist Hastings obtained a position for her through his influence with a moving-picture producer.

Stephen meanwhile had gone to Philadelphia and taken a position in an automobile concern in which his father was interested. Shortly thereafter the elder Londreth died—and it was learned that he had cut off Stephen's sister Molly from any share in the large fortune. For Molly, he had learned, was living with the French nobleman.

At length Stephen went to see Mercedes in New York, and there was a brief interlude of happiness for them. But Mercedes came to feel that Stephen cared only for her outward self, and said as much in a blunt, unfortunate speech that sent Stephen away again—this time to Europe. *(The story continues in detail:)*

SO here was Stephen on his way across the ocean, determined, among other things, to rescue his sister Molly, or to do something about it, anyway, just what at the moment he did not know. And here was Vizatelly not many hours after his return confronted with a problem more or less similar—a problem that he had feared, ever since Stephen's fatal visit a month earlier, would sooner or later require attention. Vizatelly, who hated busybodies and who had achieved through many comparatively blameless years a philosophy, satisfactory until tested—in the way of most philosophies—of complete unmorality. Not immorality; unmorality.

There were only two fundamental tests for all actions, he had told himself, whether they hurt you or some one else. But—maledictions on the intricate convolutions of individuality and relationship—what in the world could you do that didn't affect either yourself or some other person, and how could you tell whether the effect would be evil or beneficent?

Vizatelly had often reflected how pleasant it would be if Mercedes should fall in love with him. You cannot be continually in the presence of a pretty woman, and you cannot be a man, and therefore pursuingly vain, without occasionally indulging in such dreams, not unless you lie even to yourself. But he had always come to with a mental gasp of horror at the realization of what his embarrassment and terror would be in the face of such a nerve-shaking impossibility.

But on the other hand, academically, he didn't see why Mercedes shouldn't fall in love with some one else, now that Stephen

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"I understand life less and less," said Stephen. He put his arms around Molly's shoulders and kissed her.

was behaving so absurdly; and in case she did, he had a reluctance toward assuming the rôle of keeper of her conscience. People should take care of themselves. If they couldn't, they weren't worth wasting pains on. Besides, he wasn't a spoil-sport, and there was the question of that philosophy of his. But none the less he knew that when the occasion arose, he would accept the detested rôle, as he had been doing recently with Mercedes, as he had done at other times in his life. He supposed that it was due to some flaw in his character, some strain of Quaker self-righteousness—that, and his face and figure. The inexperienced always thought big fat men benign. He wasn't a bit benign.

The whole thing was perplexing and illogical and paradoxical and disagreeable. Sometimes he thought he would spend all the rest of his leisure with very old men and women, but when he saw something of old men and women, he found them if anything even more confused and confusing, demanding and egotistical, than the young.

Stephen's letter, discovered among his mail and read twenty minutes or so after his return, put him into a towering rage. Between Stephen and Mercedes all connection was being cut to an almost invisible thread. Vizatelly stamped up and down his living-room, talking to himself and swearing in a way that troubled Matthew, who was in the bedroom unpacking bags.

"The damn' fool! The utter benighted damned fool! He not only can't tell when a woman wants to care for him, but he deliberately avoids seeing me, lest I might say something sensible to him. Now he's gone where I can't get hold of him! Goes just at the moment when his wife's whole future lies in the balance!" He paused in his pacing up and down, and stared out of the window. "I don't care whether he's gone or not," he concluded gloomily. "Let him go. There's no use trying to patch up a complete misunderstanding. I hope she divorces him. I'll advise her to."

He remained in a temper the rest of the morning and well into the afternoon. He wrote a bitter and unfair review of a novel, a book which he afterward discovered, upon rereading, he rather liked, and he quarreled with a painter with whom he had luncheon.

After luncheon he called up Mercedes at her new address, and finding that she was out on Long Island, transferred his call to the motion-picture studio and by means of a prolonged wrangle

with the telephone-operator there, finally spoke to Mercedes herself. Acrimoniously he made an engagement to have tea with her at her apartment that afternoon. Shortly after half-past five o'clock, still in a provocative mood, he rang her doorbell, was admitted into the gray-paneled, black-and-white-paved hall by a neat maid, and brushing this young woman aside, strode into the pretty library, where Mercedes, stretched out on a lounge, was reading a magazine under a tall lamp. He thought she looked pale and worn; he thought her manner nervous, and he grew all the more angry.

"The perfect model," he snorted, "of a successful young motion-picture actress at home! 'Strange as it may seem, Mercedes Garcia, the popular flapper of that glowing description of modern restlessness, "Passionate Purity," detests parties. Her happiness consists in her dogs and her books.' Where are your dogs?"

Mercedes laughed, and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Aren't you going to stay?" she asked.

"Yes. Why?"

"Why don't you take off your coat, then?"

"I'd forgotten it."

"Do you want me to kiss you how d'y'do?"

"No."

Vizatelly peeled off his ulster, bundled it up and placing it with his hat and stick on the floor, sank gloomily into a chair.

"I suppose," he said after a moment's pause, "you know Stephen sailed for Europe yesterday?"

He was watching Mercedes' face, clearly outlined in the circle of light. Her eyelids fell and rose, but this was the only sign she gave that the news affected her.

"No," she said, smiling faintly, "I didn't. He doesn't write me any more."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Do? What is there to do?"

"I mean, are you going to divorce him, get a separation from him, or stay just as you are? You'll excuse me for asking, but we've been such good friends that I thought maybe I might be of help to you."

"You can ask me anything you want. No—" Mercedes, looking down, began thoughtfully to smooth the folds of her skirt. She looked up and directly at Vizatelly: "What's the use? I don't believe I'll divorce him. I'm comfortable as I am."

"You mean?"

"He sends me a big allowance now, and between that and what I make—"

Vizatelly glanced about the dimly lit room.

"This, then—"

Mercedes laughed. "There's nothing to worry about. It's Stephen's money that moved me from Mrs. Tatnall's here. What did you think?"

"Thank God," said Vizatelly with immense relief. But a new perplexity knit his brows. "I thought," he added, "that you had a strong prejudice against taking money from Stephen?"

Mercedes' mouth drew itself into a thin line.

"I had a good many prejudices, but I'm growing up," she retorted. "For instance, I wouldn't have been talking this way to you a few months ago. Why shouldn't I take his money, especially now that his father's dead and he'll be so rich?"

"No reason in the world," agreed Vizatelly blandly. "As a matter of fact, I always thought you were very foolish."

He watched attentively the maid who brought in a tea-tray and placed it on a little table and disappeared once more into the soft shadows of the hall.

"That's the first servant I ever had in my life," observed Mercedes contentedly.

Vizatelly crossed his legs and sipped his tea.

"Then you're quite satisfied?" he suggested. "Everything is quite all right?"

"Entirely."

"You've finished with Stephen? Done with him?"

For a moment the elusive reserve that had formerly distinguished Mercedes, the quick flight before direct questions, overtook her, but she recaptured her lucid hardness. She avoided Vizatelly's eyes, however. "I suppose so."

He sighed. "I'm sorry. If you and Stephen had had any sense, you might have been very happy. The trouble was that both of you had too much character and not enough unselfishness. Modern marriage has become a knock-down and drag-out affair. It's Elizabethan once more. Hardy and actual. It's not for weaklings nor self-worshipers. The man and woman take off their gloves and go to it bare-fisted. Round after round until the matter's settled. But it's worth doing, if they love each other. The difficulty is so many young people still fail to realize this. They have the point of view that invites punishment, and they give punishment, but they haven't got the nerve to take any in return." He put down his teacup. "Well, that's over. And we'll not talk about it any more. But if I were you, I would get a divorce some day. You're a young woman and may want to remarry."

Mercedes shook out the match with which she had just lit a cigarette, and leaning back, inhaled thoughtfully, her eyes turned to the ceiling.

"Never again so long as I live. Not for me."

"Never again? Never again what?"

"Marriage." Her eyes, cold and brilliant, met those of Vizatelly challengingly. "For Stephen, yes. He goes about with people who care. He can get a divorce as soon as he wants to, but not for me. I don't want another man thinking he owns me."

"In other words?"

In his nostrils was the faint perfume of the languid lady..... But Stephen was seeing pictures she would never see.

"If I fall in love, all right. No doubt I will. But it'll be so the man will be afraid each minute of the day he'll lose me."

Vizatelly's stare was stubborn. He sighed. "You have achieved, my child," he said, "a considerable amount of frankness, and for that you are to be congratulated; but don't let it make you brittle, although I understand why you feel that way." He sat up straight, gripping the arms of his chair. "What you've been saying means nothing, just absolutely nothing. When the time comes you'll want to marry, despite all you think you know and all your theories."

"Will I?" Mercedes' voice was defiant.

"You will."

She seemed to be on the point of some statement unvarnished and final, but she paused and looked away and then back again, her eyes losing their insolence and becoming timid and questioning.

"Would you mind very much if I met a man—and didn't marry him?"

"That depends."

"Would you hate me?"

Vizatelly laughed shortly. "No, of course not. I couldn't hate you, no matter what you did, but I might be sorry."

"Why would you be sorry?"

"Because, unless there were definite obstacles in the way, which there are not, some day you would be sorry too. Despite what anyone can say, as things are now run, marriage is still necessary. If not for the other person, at least for your own self-respect. It may be silly, but it's true."

"You think so, but I don't."

"You don't?"

"No; I can think of a dozen cases where it would be just the other way about, where your self-respect would lie entirely in not marrying."

"How?"

Mercedes leaned forward, her hands clasped between her knees, her unwavering gaze fixed on the glittering concealment of Vizatelly's glasses.

"Can't you imagine a case where a man loves a woman so that it makes him unhappy, but she does not love him and yet owes him everything in the world? Would you advise her to marry him?"

"Why not?"

"I'd call it unfair. Especially if the man does not believe in marriage himself, has had an unhappy experience, and yet is willing to marry the woman just to satisfy her prejudice." Mercedes caught one knee up between her locked fingers. "I think it would be rotten." She spread out her hands and sat back, rigid and drawn together, like some small priestess expounding a doctrine. "There's one thing, anyway, that marriage teaches a woman, and that is that the great sacrifice unmarried women think they are making amounts to darn' little beside other things."

Vizatelly had been listening intently, his head a trifle to one side, as if to hear overtones not intended to be heard.

"You are speaking of an actual case?" he asked quietly.

Mercedes hesitated. "No—not exactly."

"Yes, you are," said Vizatelly suddenly. He bent forward, his doubled-up right hand pounding his leg. "You're talking of your-

self and Hastings," he said with conviction. "You are—Are you—"

"No," said Mercedes. She waited. "Not yet."

"You intend to be?"

"Yes."

"He has asked you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"But you wont do it?"

"No."

Vizatelly flung back his head. "God help women!" he groaned. "They're fools in whatever position you put them." He reflected for a somber instant. "If you'd have used half of this knowledge of yours where Stephen was concerned, my child," he continued, "you might have made him a happy man. Well, most things take place too late. The only person I ever heard of who got a revelation in time was Paul of Tarsus. Now that you're partially broken enough for marriage, you wont accept marriage." His voice became less hopeless. "There is nothing, I suppose, that will change your determination?"

"Nothing."

"I wonder Hastings can consider such a present—he's not a bad fellow."

Mercedes softened. "He's lovely."

"But not lovely enough to marry?"

"No." She frowned, confused. "Because of him, you understand, not me—he's lovely enough."

"I understand." Vizatelly got to his feet. "I shouldn't go off on lecturing tours and leave things lying around. Not that it would have made any difference. Well, never mind. As far as you and I are concerned, my dear, it'll not make the slightest change. This has been an interesting afternoon. I've learned a lot. Among other things, I've learned once more never to argue with a woman. But if I were you, I'd divorce Stephen—he'll be a little bit old-fashioned about divorcing you, you see, and—I'm not sure about taking his money under the circumstances. It's a shade inconsistent."

Mercedes flushed.

"I've thought of that. Stephen wouldn't care. He doesn't care what I do."

"You're perfectly sure? Well, good-by. You'll come to see me soon?"

"Perhaps."

Vizatelly became grave. "Certainly," he insisted. "Certainly, and soon. If you give up studying, my child, if you feel any embarrassment about seeing me, then this will begin to hurt you at once and very deeply."

He collected his belongings, patted Mercedes' cheek, and massively departed. To the elevator-boy, whose manner he disliked, he spoke with a blaze of anger that left that impudent young man frightened.

"When you say, 'Watch your step,' to me," he hissed, "don't say it as if I were a horse, or I'll kick you. Yes, I'm big, and I'm strong, too."

Once out on the pavement, he stood for an undecided moment, and then set off briskly eastward.

He walked over to Fifth Avenue, turned north, and at the intersection of a street several blocks farther on, turned again in the direction of the Hudson. Presently he entered the Gothic doorway of a tall square building of brick, ascended three flights of stairs and rang an electric bell. A manservant opened the door.

"Is Mr. Hastings in?"

"He's not feeling very well, sir. He's lying down."

Vizatelly inserted his large frame into the opening. "Tell him it's Mr. Vizatelly," he insisted, "on a matter of the utmost importance."

He pushed his way into the brilliantly lighted living-room. Over the mantelpiece was a picture of Mercedes in the Spanish shawl she had worn a year ago in "The Irrationalities." Vizatelly looked at the portrait a trifle guiltily. "Wouldn't she hate me," he thought, "if she knew what I was doing!"

The manservant returned.

"Mr. Hastings is in his bedroom, sir. He says will you come in."

Vizatelly passed from brightness into shadows lit only by a reading-lamp beside an Italian four-post bed. Hastings in a dressing-gown, pillows tucked up behind him, was staring at him, a book open in his hand, on his lips an amused and slightly annoyed smile.

"What do you want?"

Two men on horseback, and a pack-

Vizatelly sat down squarely and deliberately, his cane between his knees.

"I want a lot," he announced.

"Think there's any chance of your getting it?"

"Possibly."

"What is it?"

"Well—and since you seem to be delicate, I'll come to the point at once—I'd like to talk to you a moment about Mercedes Londreth."

"Mercedes—"

"—Londreth. That's her married name."

Hastings drew back a little and looked Vizatelly up and down. Finally the dark eyes, narrowed and hostile, remained staring at the large imperturbable countenance opposite. In the shadows a cold indignation seemed to be walking noiselessly between the two men.

When Hastings spoke, his voice was calm but its tone was high and cutting.

"I hope you're not going to be a nuisance," he said. "I don't really know you awfully well. I don't believe I want to discuss my private affairs with you—if there's anything to discuss. I believe you've made a mistake."

Vizatelly's hands tightened about the curve of his stick.

"Don't be a damned fool," he objected. "I'm not here to waste your time or mine. I'm going to say what I want whether you like it or not. What the effect will be, I don't know. I just want to tell you that you're in love with Mercedes and she's not

horse. . . . . "I think he is coming now," said Laplace.

in love with you—she's in love with her husband; but she's willing to do anything you want because she's desperate and grateful—bankrupt spiritually. You probably know all that as well as I do, but you wont admit it to yourself. I'm just trying to put the thing to you objectively."

"And how do you know it?" demanded Hastings. "Did Mercedes tell you?"

"Again," said Vizatelly, "don't be a damn' fool." But he was breathing quickly, for hesitation would have been fatal. This was no time to explain to Hastings the feminine psychology that demands, as a rule, a father confessor both before and after dubious procedure. "How could I help but know? Do you think I haven't eyes or ears? I haven't an idea what you and Mercedes have done or intend to do, but all I have to say is that if you accept this gift, you'll have accepted something pretty damned pathetic." He straightened up. "Want it?"

Hastings twisted uncomfortably on the pillows.

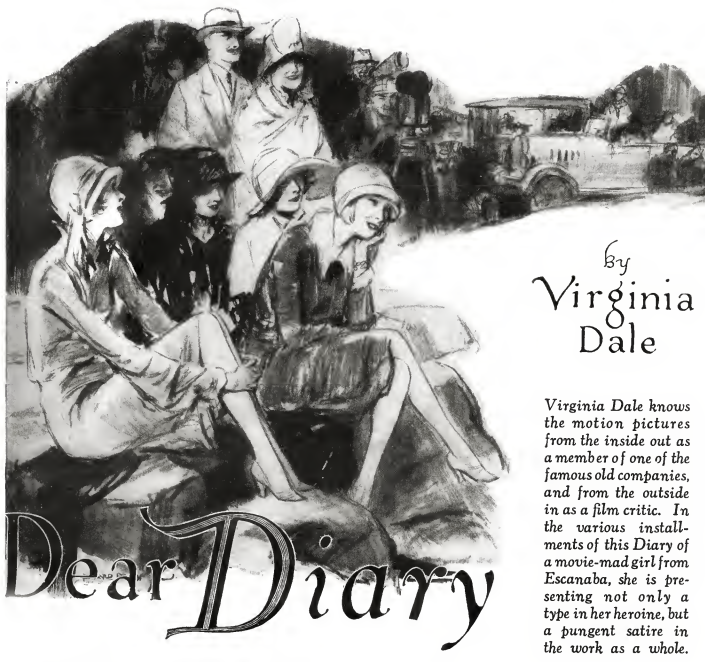
"I've asked her to marry me," he said.

"And you know perfectly well she wont, and that you don't want her to."

Suddenly Vizatelly drew his chair closer to the bed. "Look here, if this were any ordinary case, I wouldn't be talking to you. I'm no saint myself, and I'm not given to illusions, and I'm certainly in favor of all the incidental happiness that can be picked up in this world, but the catch is that this wont bring happiness for anybody concerned. If you really loved Mercedes, as you think at this moment you do, the question of not marrying her wouldn't enter into it at all, no matter what may be your skepticisms and beliefs. If you could marry her,—and you can,—you would. Don't fool yourself. On the other hand, if she loved you, she would want to marry you. All these high-flown notions of self-sacrifice would seem to her the nonsense they are. Now, let's look a little ahead. Suppose she consummates this sacrifice. You ought to know something about women; you've seen enough of them. How long do you suppose it will take her to hate you? You're not dealing with the usual little strumpet, my friend, nor with the weary mature woman."

Vizatelly stretched out a hand along the coverlet.

"If I may say so, I'm really pleading for your own contentment. You're an artist; therefore you're a sensitive man. Wait a little. Wait a year. This girl hasn't got over her first love-affair yet. Perhaps she wont have to get over it. It isn't hopeless by any means, although she thinks so. But suppose you interfere and ruin all these chances? There's a nice memory. Wait a year. At the end of that time, if she's forgotten Londreth, then in all likelihood she'll have fallen in love with you; and you, through waiting, will have actually fallen in love with her. Wouldn't that be worth waiting for? If that happens, I don't give a damn whether you get married or not—though you will. Good God, man, I'm not talking youthful idealism; I'm talking the most hard-boiled mature intelligence—the gist of experience. I've no doubt you've had to do with a dozen women,—most men have,—some of whom loved you and some of whom didn't. Did you ever look squarely and directly into their *(Continued on page 130)*



Dear Diary

By Virginia Dale

Virginia Dale knows the motion pictures from the inside out as a member of one of the famous old companies, and from the outside in as a film critic. In the various installments of this Diary of a movie-mad girl from Escanaba, she is presenting not only a type in her heroine, but a pungent satire in the work as a whole.

Illustrated by Edward Ryan

JUNE 1. Here I am out on the desert with Percy Lord, the biggest director of the Super Summit Film co. and I do hope I have not done to "daring" a thing in coming out here on the desert with him on "location," as we say in the proffesion. Of course there are about one hundred other people here too, so I do not feel as if anyone had any right to critsize me. But there are so many evil-minded people everywhere one can never tell, and I am always glad I am not the kind of girl which thinks evil like so many do.

As we just got here about five o'clock we did not start "shooting" but will tomorrow, and I am in a tent with three other girls so I suppose I am really safe enough, but who knows? Being on the desert with a movie director is a thing my family in Escanaba would never understand even though I suppose I am safe. I would not have Avery know for anything, for his Escanaba "view point" is not the same as mine after having been in Hollywood for three months. And even though Super Summit is a small company, I do not feel it is the sort of thing a girl should tell a man which she is practically engaged to, such as I am to Avery.

But from the first I have determined to give all that is in me to the movie "game" except such as "paying the price," such as I know most girls are willing to do out here. I could never do that, and when you are published, Dear Diary, after I am a star, everyone will know that my pholosofy of life was always to merely bend men to my will and afterwards to laugh at them, for I have always been determined to show the world that here is one girl which got ahead to success on merely pure merit. I have already learned that Sally, one of the girls in my tent, does not have the same philosefy of life as me for she is doing everything in her power to attract the 2ed asst. camera man, hoping to work up, I suppose, to Percy Lord, the director himself. Well, I am one which would never belittle myself to a 2ed asst. camera man. The girls are asking me to put out the lamp and I suppose I must humur them. Oh, how thrilling it all is to be out here on the sands far from civulezation with such a man as Percy Lord! I hope we may get well acquainted before we leave here. So far he has not spoken to me, but when he looks at me he simply devours me with his eyes, which makes me very uncomfortable. I suppose he thinks "Here is another girl waiting to sell herself for stardom's sake." But I will merely show him I am not that kind of a girl.

June 2: Did not start "shooting" today as it seems all the kaktus must be cut as we are not going to make desert scenes but snow scenes, as it seems that sand looks enough like snow to a small company like Super Summit and I am only sorry for the Eskimo dogs, for while the public may be fooled you cannot fool an Eskimo dog into thinking sand is snow, dogs being man's "best friend" as the saying is.

I hope none of the dogs go mad or anything, and I must say

He told me not to look back as he would call me when the scene was finished. I started toward the sunset.

it was very uncomfortable all dressed up in furs here on the desert all day. We did not work but Mr. Lord thought we should get into the atmosphere of the far north by wearing our furs as there is nothing like "realism" in the movie "game," and we proffesionals are willing to do anything to please our publics.

Sally has just said the 2ed asst. camera man said she would film like a million ($1,000,000) dollars, which is what one might suspect of a girl like Sally who is willing to make herself cheap to a 2ed asst. camera man simply to get what she considers a complement. Well, I am thankful I am not a girl like her. I started to talk to this camera man today, whose name is Lonny Fish, just to see what kind of a man he was, and certainly not because I thought he was good looking or influenshal or anything like that. And then I thought it would be just interesting to see what Sally sees in him. But I could not see anything in him. He would hardly say a word to me because I would not make myself cheap like Sally by running after him, and I am glad I am not the kind of girl who has nothing but men on my mind. I could not see anything in Lonny.

June Day is the "star" of this picture and she seems very nice, but of course who can tell? As the saying is. She is not high and mity like Gloria Swanson. Percy Lord almost spoke to me today and I know he would of if I had given him half a chance. I would never encourage any man even though he is a movie director, so I simply started to tell him how thrilled I was to be out here with him, but when he started to devour me with his eyes as he walked away, I did not say another word.

June 3: Work still held up. They have cut almost all the kaktus and started putting something on the runners of the sleds so they would not sink in the sand. Percy Lord was very tired today, due to his temperment, which no one can blame him for, and he suddenly remembered one of his assistunts had not remembered to bring along more than three of the studio musicians and he said that Miss Day could not work without six musicians and so I think they are going to send back to Hollywood for two more violists but I am not sure. He sat down near me today as I sat on the sand in my furs and he asked me of his own free will if it was not hot? And I told him that it was of course, but that I was one willing to do anything to get along in the "movie game," but when these words are printed I hope no one will think I meant what I did not mean, and I am sure Percy Lord himself did not think so either. He just put his hand werrily to his head, and when you think how much he has to put up with, with such girls as Sally and all, I felt sorry for him. I am certain now that if only we do not work for a few days more Percy Lord and I will be friends. Avery will just have to make the best of it, that is all. I will write to him frankly about it and remind him that I was never really engaged to him. I feel quite sure he is going around with that queer Millie Strong. Mamma hinted as much in her last letter when she said they had been to the Bijou Rose twice together that she had seen. I suppose Avery goes there to see my pictures but of course I am not so foolish as to not know he could go alone if he wanted to. And so I do not see where it is not all right for me to have my men friends out here as well as he has, and when Percy Lord asks me can he call, I will not feel it is even neccesary to mention Avery. So I hope they do not begin "shooting" for a few more days.

Later: What a terrible world it is, and how girls lure men! Oh "dear diary," I have certainly seen "life" tonight, and if I had not seen it with my own eyes I would hardly of believed it all. I have always known that the desert is the place where heads are lost and "passions burn high" as was said in "The Sheik's Love," which I saw so long ago in Escanaba. But I never thought I would see such things as I have just seen.

It was so hot in the tent after I had written before, and as Sally was not here, I thought it no more than right that I should go out and look for her. I should certainly not want a scandal to start out here so far from civulezation and be dragged into the papers because I was in a tent with a girl like Sally. I went out quietly so as not to wake up the other girls. I found Sally sitting on a rock with that 2ed asst. camera man as I had expected, and I could planely see that he had his arm around her and I knew how she had been leading him on. It gave me a terrible shock to find just what I had expected. It is girls like that which give the movie "game" a bad name, and if she thinks that letting Lonny Fish put his arm around her will get her anywhere, she is mistaken. So I just walked over and sat on the other side of Lonny to protect Sally even against her will.

I could see he was glad to have me, though Sally acted very cool. "I thought all good little girls were asleep," said Sally, thus giving herself away. "Most of them are," I told her evenly. And then nothing much more was said, though it was easy to see how glad Lonny was to have me, and one would have thought that Sally would of had the sense to leave us together as "two is company and three is a crowd," as the saying is. But she would not move until I said quite firmly "Come, it is time to go, or Mr. Lord might come out and find us," and Lonny was the first to agree.

So Sally and I went back to the tent and after she was in bed I just got up again and went outside to look at the moon as I am a great lover of lower nature and the moon on the desert is quite low and pretty. I certainly did not expect to have Lonny Fish hanging around, for I would never be the sort of girl who could be interested in a mere 2ed asst. camera man. But there he was, and the first thing he said was, "Did you get rid of that dumb Dora?" and I said "Yes," just to see what he would do. "Oh, it is you, is it?" he said. "Do not you ever sleep?" I told him I had had my beauty sleep and had come out to admire the lower nature. "You had better get some more sleep; you need it," he said witishly.

He went to his tent and I waited a minute and it was all very thrilling to be out on the desert waiting for a man. But Lonny did not come back, so I thought I might as well go to my own tent. And then I saw It! Oh, what terrible things are men and what a wild Bohemien life is the movie "game." I saw Percy Lord go into June Day's tent!!!

I expected to hear her scream. But she did not. It is almost

to terrible to write. To think how directors get girls "to pay the price" on the desert! I know I will never get over this awful sight and I keep reminding myself to be thankful I am not such a girl which would do such a thing, and how June Day will ever have the nerve to face good innocent girls in the morning with all her airs I do not know. Well, I am certainly seeing "life" far from civelezation, and I am certainly sorry for poor June Day.

June 4: I have had a long time to think over all I saw last night, as we did not work today, waiting for the property men to put up bear skins or something on the Eskimo houses, which was very hard as the sand kept caving in in a way a real Eskimo house made of ice never would. So I sat around in my furs trying to get into the "atmosphere" like Percy Lord wanted, and he came over again and asked was I hot, and there was such a look in his eyes! Oh, Dear Diary, he looked as if he wanted my help, as if he would like to confess all. And suddenly I knew last night was not his fault at all, but that he had merely fallen for a desining woman, for from the first I have suspected that June Day was a desining woman and would do all in her power to lure men to their domes or worse. I feel as if I must help Percy Lord, but how?

Sally is carrying on something fierce with Lonny, and he seems to like it. I cannot close my eyes to that. He hardly pays me any attention, you might say, which shows how helpless men are in the hands of designing women like Sally and June Day, and I should have known how helpless they are after having seen Betty Blythe and even Theda Bara so many times making them helpless at the Bijou Rose back home.

We are surely going to work tomorrow, even if the extra musicians are not here.

Later again: Well, I have taken things into my own hands! I could not bear a minute longer all these terrible things that are going on without doing my best to do something. The more I thought of it, all the more I knew that poor Percy Lord was merely caught by a wilfull woman and I knew that if he had the companionship of a good woman out here on the desert all would be different, and I will do all in my power to save him. And anyway that Lonny should be taught a lesson too. I have no use for 2ed asst. camera men anyway, and certainly not after the way this one has acted before my face with Sally. So I have just dug a deep hole in the sand and hid all the cans of film.

The film is supposed to be in Lonny's keeping, and now that it is hidden, work will not start until either more can be gotten from Hollywood or either they find this, and I do not think they will as I burried it quite deep, using my shoe horn to dig with. And now I will save Percy Lord by letting him see for once the example of a good girl before him, which will not be anything but a good pal to a man. I will always be thankful I am not the kind of a girl which would act with a man like June Day or Sally does, and if I can save poor Percy Lord by being different, I do not care how much it costs me. I feel sure that a few days out here on the desert when he has nothing on his mind like work, will show him that a good woman in his life is the best thing which could happen to him and he will forsake June Day.

June 6: Well, there has certainly been a great deal of excitement here the last two days. As I feared, Lonny was blamed for losing the film, and nothing he could say has seemed to help much. Everyone's tent has been searched, for as Mr. Lord says, film cannot just dissapear on the desert far from civulezation unless it is helped to dissapear, and I am happy to say that Lonny has had so much on his mind he has not payed any more attention to Sally, who seems to feel bad, which is the way a girl who is really not good at heart like Sally would feel. It is not very pleasant being in the same tent with Sally, and it is not at all pleasant being out on the desert, either, with everyone looking for film, and makes me wonder for a minute sometimes whether all my trouble has indeed been worth while. Mr. Lord has not spoken to me since, or to anyone except June Day, which shows what a hold she has on him. I saw him going into her tent again last night! I am trying to figure out how I can show him I am not such a designing woman, but when he will not look at me at all, it is hard to show him.

June 7: Percy Lord was sitting on the sands this evening. He was sitting just about where the film was burried, and so I thought it might be just as well to go over and take his mind off the film. And besides it would be a good chance to show him the sympathy of an honest girl, such as he has probably never had in all his life. So I walked over. "How terrible all this is for you," I said. And I added softly: "I am sorry. I wisht I could do something to make it all easier for you." He said that if he could just be alone it would all be easier, which shows that he is tired of June Day and her wiles, and one would think she would realize it and let him alone. "If I could do anything," was what I started to say, and then his foot kicked something, and if it wasn't my shoe horn! Oh, Dear Diary, I thought I would die there on the desert far from civulization. But in a minute I saw there was no way he or anyone else could know it was my shoe horn, so I just laughed and said: "Of course you do not suppose anyone would burry that film with a shoe-horn, do you?" He just looked at me a minute as John Barrymore looks in a close-up, and then he began to dig, and of course there was the film.

In five minutes everyone knew it had been found. Mr. Lord told everyone it had been my quick thinking that had found it, and praised me very much. I was very thrilled, and really glad it had been found, for I believe showing him I had "brains" will be a good thing. He will realize that a "woman with brains" can be a help to a man better than one with wiles, such as June Day. So it is all very exciting having everyone know I found the film. We are going to start work tomorrow and I would not be at all surprised if I had a really good part. It seems the least Super-Summit could do, and when I get the part it will be just another proof that a good girl need never "pay the price" in Hollywood, but simply by being good and using her brains, can get ahead.

June 8: We did not quite start work today as was expected. *(Continued on page 164)*

"I thought all good little girls were asleep," said Sally, thus giving herself away.

THE author of this tense and grimly realistic very brief story will be recalled as the author of a piece entitled "Hatrack," that some few months ago aroused widespread interest. Its author's first book, "Up From Methodism," was recently published.

Mrs. Maloney leaned over her eagerly. "Can you see, Bessie? Can you see?"

Spectacles

By

Herbert Asbury

Illustrated by J. Henry

MRS. JOHNSON'S little world had hardly quit crashing about her ears when Mrs. Maloney, wearing her best black silk dress, heaved her bulk up the four flights of stairs and into the dingy parlor. She panted from her exertions, but her tread was as solemn as the march of a chief mourner. For this was an occasion; Mrs. Johnson's home was now a house of sorrow.

"I just heard about it," said Mrs. Maloney, billowing into a chair much too small for her. "Is it true, Bessie? Jim and Nora both?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Johnson.

"Poor Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney. She fanned herself, sighing. "I was just talkin' to Bill," she went on, referring to Mr. Maloney. "He said it was terrible. And you with no husband, neither. You aint got nobody now, have you, Bessie?"

"No," said Mrs. Johnson. "Nobody."

"Poor Bessie!" Mrs. Maloney clucked sorrowfully. "And we've had such fine luck with ours. My Grace is getting big money in a swell job, and Harry—well, Bill says Harry'll be a big business man some day. It's awful the way your'n turned out. Poor Bessie!"

Mrs. Johnson knew that she should thank Mrs. Maloney for her sympathy, but the words would not come; she could think of nothing but her own Jim, who only that day had been arrested and now faced certain imprisonment for selling drugs; and of her Nora, who had eloped with a young Sicilian, fascinated by his black eyes and the fiery ardor of his wooing, but giving no thought to his wife and two children.

"Well," said Mrs. Maloney, "I guess I gotta go, Bessie. My Grace will be home soon, and I gotta get her a swell hot dinner."

She patted Mrs. Johnson on the shoulder, and kissed her, moistly.

"Poor Bessie!"

She lumbered from the room and down the stairs, sobbing sympathetically. For a long time Mrs. Johnson sat quietly in the dimness of her parlor, in dumb wonderment that life could

treat her so. She looked stupidly out of the window without seeing the teeming patch of living that is Mulberry Street. She listened without hearing the raucous noises; her ears were eager for the sound of familiar footsteps that she knew she would never hear again. . . . . Suddenly, without knowing why, she wanted to strangle Grace Maloney, and grind Harry's face in the dirt. She wanted to hear them cry out in agony.

THE next morning Mrs. Johnson had influenza; all night long she had sat before the open window. She was sent to Bellevue Hospital, and every day Mrs. Maloney took her good things to eat, and Grace read to her, for Mrs. Johnson had never learned either to read or write. Mrs. Maloney frequently expressed her sorrow that Mrs. Johnson did not possess these accomplishments:

"Poor Bessie!" she said. "My, I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't read my newspaper and the titles at the movies."

But even if Mrs. Johnson had been so gifted it would not have done her much good, for her illness left terrible marks. She could not hear very well, and the muscles of her throat were paralyzed. And her vision was not good; people across a room were just blurred figures. And she had no money and no place to go. So Mr. and Mrs. Maloney insisted that she go home with them.

"Poor Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney. "We'll take care of you, Bessie."

And they were good to her, too; they did everything they could for her. Grace even gave up her large front room and went to sleep in a small chamber which had housed a boarder before the Maloneys became prosperous.

"Grace don't mind being uncomfortable for you, Bessie," said Mrs. Maloney.

"I want to be uncomfortable if it will make you happy, Mrs. Johnson," said Grace, earnestly.

Each day Mrs. Maloney sat in Mrs. Johnson's room for several hours. Sometimes she talked; sometimes she just sympathized. And she never mentioned either Jim or Nora. She would just say:

"Poor Bessie! You've had so much trouble."

But, curiously enough, Mrs. Johnson was happy. She could not hear as well as the Maloneys thought she could, and Mrs. Maloney did not always talk very loud, so that she was conscious only of a vague murmur, not unpleasant. She could not see the Maloneys, but she could see her own Jim and Nora every time she closed her eyes. And they were beautiful. Jim was a much bigger business man than Harry Maloney would ever be; and Nora, in furs and silks, sat in a wondrous garden while happy children played about her knees. Hour after hour Mrs. Johnson sat with her hands folded in her lap, looking at the envisioned Jim and Nora, and at Nora's children. They called her Granny; all her life she had wanted to be called Granny.

Mrs. Johnson was very grateful to Mrs. Maloney for providing a place where she could dream her dreams and see with her poor eyes the things that no one else could see with the best of eyes. But Mrs. Maloney was to do even more for her; there came at last a day when Mrs. Johnson was escorted to a taxicab and whirled uptown to the office of a taciturn man who looked at her eyes. Then there was an air of great excitement about the Maloney household, and Harry and Grace frequently asked Mrs. Maloney when "they" would be ready. And Mrs. Maloney always replied:

"*Ssshhhh!* Don't tell Bessie. Mebbe tomorrow."

And finally tomorrow came; for people like Mrs. Johnson it always comes. Mr. Maloney brought home a small package, which he opened in a corner where Mrs. Johnson, with her poor eyes, could not see him. He did not know that she did not want to see him. Why should she look at Mr. Maloney when she could watch Jim in conference with other big business men, and Nora playing with her children? But Mrs. Maloney interrupted her.

"Close your eyes, Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney. "Bill's got something for you."

Mrs. Johnson felt something cold on her nose, and she opened her eyes and stared into something shiny, something that she knew was glass. And then the forms of the Maloneys became distinct, and she could see the embroidered wall motto across the room, above the overstuffed sofa, although she could not read it. It was *"What Is Home Without a Mother?"* She then knew she had spectacles. Mrs. Maloney leaned over her, eagerly.

"Can you see, Bessie? Can you see?"

Mrs. Johnson nodded, and Mrs. Maloney turned to her family.

"She can see!"

It was a solemn moment. The Maloneys wept over Mrs. Johnson, and hugged her, and told her they would take her to the movies.

"I'll read you what the titles say," said Harry, "and you can see the pictures."

"I'll teach you to read," said Grace, "and then you can read them for yourself. And the newspapers, too."

"Poor Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney, sobbing. "It's a shame you had so much bad luck."

Mrs. Johnson did not want to go to the movies. Nor did she want to read the newspapers. She wanted only to be left alone; she wanted to lean back in her chair and let her dimmed eyes fill with visions of Jim and Nora, and Nora's beautiful children. But when the Maloneys had gone, she could not see the things she wanted to see, although she closed her eyes so tight that they hurt. She was frightened, and when Mrs. Maloney came in after a while to see if there was any kindly deed that she could do, Mrs. Johnson's head was buried in her arms.

"Poor Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney. "You'll be lots happier now't you can see."

She hooked the spectacles behind Mrs. Johnson's ears.

"Now you just sit here and look out of the window, Bessie. You'll see lots of things."

And Mrs. Johnson looked. She saw people, and pushcarts, and dirt. She had seen them all her life; they were not beautiful, and she was dreadfully tired of them. She closed her eyes, but even then she saw nothing but people, and pushcarts, and dirt. And suddenly she knew that never again would she be able to behold Jim and Nora as she wanted to see them, as she had seen them before she got her spectacles. And, so knowing, she did not even bother to remove the spectacles; she just sat and stared at the never-ending procession of people, and pushcarts, and dirt. She was still staring when Mrs. Maloney came to tell her that supper was ready. She did not want any supper.

"Poor Bessie!" said Mrs. Maloney. "So happy to be seeing again she don't even want to eat! What're you lookin' at, Bessie?"

She peered out of the window, and turned up her nose in disgust. But not at the people, and pushcarts, and dirt. She did not see them. She pointed to a dingy, dilapidated building across the street, from which hung a sign, "Hotel—Transients Accommodated."

"It's a shame!" she cried. "The first time you can see, you have to look at a place like that! Look at it, Bessie! It's a terrible place."

She lowered her voice. She could not say it aloud, but she felt that Mrs. Johnson should know. And now Mrs. Johnson had that to look at—*that* and people, and pushcarts, and dirt. Now she understood why the men and women who went into the hotel were so furtive, and why they glanced over their shoulders, and then scurried quickly inside the doorway. But it meant nothing to her. Nothing meant anything to her, for she could see, and the things she saw were hideous.

But suddenly she saw Nora! Nora was coming down the street! Nora herself, the flesh-and-blood Nora whom she had held in her arms, to whom she had crooned lullabies! How pretty she was! And how well-dressed! But Mrs. Johnson began to be frightened when Nora stepped into a doorway and leered at the next man who passed. She was puzzled. Why should Nora do such a thing? But she understood when Nora spoke to him, and twisted her face in a ghastly smile. Mrs. Johnson leaned far out of the window. She tried to cry, "Nora! Oh, God, Nora! Don't!"

But no sound came from her dead throat. So she watched while Nora and the man went hurriedly into the place from which hung the sign. The door had hardly closed behind them when Mrs. Johnson tore the spectacles from her eyes. And now she could see nothing, yet her eyes and her mind were filled with that torturing vision—Nora and that man, and all about them people, and pushcarts, and dirt. She suddenly got to her feet and drew the shade. Then it was dark in the room, as despairingly dark as her heart. She began to weep. She wanted to die, and she wanted Nora to die. Above all she wanted Nora to die.

IT was an hour later that Mrs. Johnson heard an uproar in the street, shouting, and the clang of a gong. She thought there must be a fire, but she would not raise the shade; she was afraid that she might see Nora. She prayed fiercely to God that she might never see Nora again. But at last she had to look. She put on the spectacles. A green wagon with barred sides stood before the hotel, and policemen urged men and women into it. She saw Nora, struggling with men in uniform as they dragged her down the steps and hustled her across the sidewalk. She heard the jeering laughter of the crowd which had gathered, like buzzards come to enjoy a feast. She saw a policeman shove Nora into the wagon. She heard him shout: "Get in there, you!"

The word he did not speak came clearest to Mrs. Johnson's ears. She got to her feet. She hurled the spectacles to the floor. Then she dropped into her chair, and her head fell forward on her hands.

MR. MALONEY had gone to the movies; but Mrs. Maloney told him about it.

"She died peaceful," said Mrs. Maloney. "She just sat there and died, looking out of the window. Poor Bessie! It was a blessing she could see on her last day!"

A GREAT STORY

While in Europe last summer Harold MacGrath arranged to be present in Lourdes on the day of a great pilgrimage. What he saw there inspired him to write what in many respects is the finest story of his long and brilliant career. The tale will open the next — the January — issue of this magazine. Once you have read it you will long remember this remarkable story—

"THE FIDDLE STRING"

How often do you enjoy this delicious Vegetable Soup?

SOUP

and the new Idea

WHAT is soup? It is food in hot, liquid form. Why is it a food? Because it nourishes and invigorates. Why is it desirable for us to eat food in this hot, liquid form? Because it is so delightful and satisfying to the taste and because it has such a splendidly wholesome, healthful effect upon the appetite and the digestion. The old idea about soup was that it should always be served at formal meals and special occasions, but only every once in a while at the family meals. Soup was then considered as a kind of special luxury, a display dish when "company" came, or as an extra dish to be offered to the family only at intervals.

But nowadays soup is no longer just an occasional dish; it is a regular part of the daily diet, as it should be.

CONDENSED soups are responsible for this beneficial change. It was perfectly natural that the housewives of bygone days should avoid all the trouble and expense of making soup at home. The new knowledge of dietetics had not yet come to teach the importance of a healthy appetite and how to develop it. Condensed soups had not yet been placed on sale at every food store in such convenient already-prepared form that the service of soup became simply a matter of keeping the pantry shelf supplied.

Campbell's Soups can be bought in every food store in the United States and in every seaport in the world. This shows you how the new idea about soup has swept the country. Its use is now universal. These soups are scientifically made of the finest materials in kitchens famous for their French chefs and their strict standard of quality in every ingredient, however slight.

ARE YOU keeping in step with the latest, up-to-date knowledge of proper nutrition? Are you letting these great spotless soup-kitchens save you work and add daily brightness and healthfulness to your meals? If not, you will be doing your family and yourself a real service by starting today with the regular use of soup. Visit your grocer's. Become acquainted with the different kinds of condensed soups—not only Tomato Soup and Vegetable Soup, which are so familiar, but those other delicious kinds that help so greatly in giving variety and charm to your menus. Vegetable purees; hearty soups made with meat; dainty clear soups; soups splendid for the children; soups for formal occasions and the family meals. 21 different kinds. Serve these soups daily for the next two weeks and you will serve them always—for enjoyment and health both!

Campbell's CONDENSED VEGETABLE SOUP
CAMPBELL SOUP COMPANY CAMDEN, N.J. U.S.A.

12 cents a can

WITH THE MEAL OR AS A MEAL SOUP BELONGS IN THE DAILY DIET!

THE HOLLOW GOD

(Continued from page 53)

on the floor, between kicks and cuffs. Almost instantly a crowd was in the room—short-coated men, with caps drawn tight around their heads. Jack and Sam felt themselves surrounded as they struck out, but in a few minutes the men who attacked them had vanished and the crowd dispersed. The two shipmates rolled over on an even keel on the floor and stared at each other.

"Wot was the matter, anyway?" asked Sam.

"Gar blyme, shipmate, it was 'ell while it lasted."

Then they noticed that their pockets had been turned inside out. The bartender advanced on them angrily.

"Get up out of there," he growled. "What the hell do youse fellows mean, coming in here and starting a fight? Get out of here before you're kicked out."

Jack and Sam rose to their feet without a word, feeling of their empty pockets.

"Police!" shouted Sam. "Jack and me has been robbed! Somebody'll pay dear for this!"

"That cock-and-bull story don't go here," snarled the surly bartender. "You're a couple of crooks, that's what you are! You owe me for three bottles of beer. Pay up, or I'll turn you over to the police."

Jack and Sam stared at him speechless, staggered by his threat, pockets hanging out, their jaws limp and loose. Sam found his voice first.

"We aint going out of here till us get our money back, are we, Jack?"

Jack puffed defiantly. "I'll say we aint."

THE bartender blew a whistle, and a policeman appeared as if on call.

"Take them out of here!" commanded the bartender. "Crooks, that's what they are."

"What's the charge?" And the policeman yawned.

"Fighting, and getting goods under false pretenses."

"Wot is he talking about?" asked Sam.

Jack walked up close to the policeman. "Listen to us. We've been robbed. Do you hear that, now? What are you going to do? Get our money back. That's what you're 'ere for. If you don't, Sam and me will have the law on you. We're peaceful men. Aint we, Sam? But when us gets started, look out!"

The bartender nudged the policeman. "Can't you see they're drunk? They don't know what they're talking about. They're just alley bums. They come into a decent place and try to ruin a man's business. Take 'em out of here before I lose my temper."

"Come peacefully," said the policeman.

Sam, with straddled legs, stamped his foot. "We aint a-budging until us get some law on this thing."

The policeman's hand went to his pocket. He drew out some handcuffs and snapped them onto the two pals before they knew what he was doing.

"Come on now," he commanded, raising his stick.

"We'll go with you," said Sam quickly, "but all of youse will pay heavy for this night's work. Hey, Jack?"

"My word, there'll be suffering in the wake of this."

At the station they told their story. The desk sergeant smiled.

"Do you think we can believe that yarn here? Neither of you look like men that ever had a dime in your lives. Throw 'em into the dark cell till they cool off. No, never mind—I'll give 'em a taste of work. Have 'em whitewash cells Seven and Eleven. When that's done, heave 'em out. The city has enough expenses without feeding the likes of them. Go on, now—none of your lip!"

Helplessly they were led away.

IN the gray light next morning the jail door opened to release Sam and Jack. As they stepped out into the street they were a noticeable pair, spattered as they were with whitewash. It was in their beards and hair as well as splashed over dungarees and blücher boots.

"Don't come back here again," a guard called after them. "If you do, there'll be more coming to you!"

They walked along silently until they were out of sight of the station. Then Sam ventured: "This is a helluva country. The wust us has ever been in."

"Considering wot it is, Sam, maybe we got out of it better than most men do."

"Aye, us have that to be thankful for."

Blind instinct led them to the water-front. There they sat down on a wharf stringer. To the eastward the coming sun shafted up rose-colored rays. The harbor lay calm and peaceful. Little waves raced with the ebb. They sat and stared out to sea, wishing for a drink and a bite of food, and not knowing where to turn. So lost in gloomy thoughts were they that they did not hear a slithering step behind them, but Sam jumped as he felt a bony hand clutch his shoulder. Both of them turned to look. There stood a lean Chinaman bending over them, with a smile on his smooth olive face.

"You up ea'ly too," he said, looking the whitewashed sailors over from head to foot. "You make money alleady?"

"No, gar blyme, we aint made no money, and wot's more, we aint got any," said Jack.

The Chinaman lit a cigarette and inhaled deliberately.

"You flishermen?" he asked.

"We aint," answered Jack. "We're sailors, is Sam and me."

Sam brushed at his coat. "These aint fish scales."

The Chinaman nodded. The cigarette twitched in his fingers.

"You like make li'l money?" he asked.

"We do," spoke up Sam, "damned bad. If us can make it honest enough."

"You come 'long me." The Chinaman motioned them after him to a dock where a rowboat lay moored. They trudged along behind.

"Be careful, Sam."

"Come on, Jack. This aint the time to be splitting 'airs."

Quickly the Chinaman led the way to the boat. Sam stopped.

"Wot's that laying in the stern of her?" he asked.

"You see. I show you. Come on. You *sabe* soon. You no like make money?"

"Go on, Sam. Get into the boat. We'll see for ourselves."

They watched the Chinaman move to the stern. Carefully he lifted a wrapping of ragged silk from an oblong object. "See?" He pointed. Their astounded gaze fastened on an image carved out of wood—a crouching figure rolling in fat, with huge ears and grinning mouth. It must have reached fully three feet from the base of its crossed legs to the top of its polished head. Jack backed away from the slanting glance of its amber eyes, pulling Sam with him.

"Wait. You no *sabe.*" The Chinaman spoke hurriedly. "Him no good. See?" He kicked the god. A hollow sound came from it.

"What is he, wood?" Sam asked.

"He wood. No good. Damn. No good. *Sabe?* Play, play, allatime. No luck."

The two old sailors straightened up. They had been through a lot in their time, and the gods weren't always good to them, either. They sympathized with the Chinaman as they looked disdainfully at the wooden god in the stern of the boat. The Chinaman covered his god with the torn silk robe and held out a twenty-dollar gold-piece to Sam.

"You helly him deep. *Sabe?*"

"What?" asked Sam, reaching for the money.

"He wants 'im chucked overboard, Sam. Aint you on?"

"Velly smart man." The Chinaman grinned widely, showing his yellow teeth.

"But he'll float," objected Sam. "Aint he wood?"

"Him aw light. Me watch out." He made a motion with his hands to show that the god would sink.

"Oh, you got ballast in him?"

"You *sabe.* Belly him, deep water. Velly deep. Me no like see him again. No good for you. Velly bad for me."

"We'll scuttle 'im. Wont us, Sam?"

"Aye, that we will."

The Chinaman jumped out of the boat back upon the dock. He held up his hand. "You *sabe?* Belly him deep."

"It's all right," said Jack. "Me and Sam understands. Don't worry. You wont see 'im again—will he, Sam?"

"No," came bubbling out of Sam as he let go the painter, "he wont be bothered with 'im no more."

Again the Chinaman warned them. This time he held his pigtail at arm's-length. "God no good. Maybe Chinamen come." With that he hastily backed away.

"Wot's 'e talking about, Sam?"

"Get on the oars, Jack. That's enough, aint it?"

Silently they pulled away toward the Golden Gate.

"We wont row far with 'im, Sam? Gar blyme, I can't talk, me throat is that dry."

"We'll take him out a mile anyway, before us dumps him. Twenty dollars is good pay, Jack. With care, it'll last us a long time. There aint any crooks going to start a fight around this money."

"My bloody word, Sam, they aint. 'Old on to it, Sam, 'old on to it."

The rowers felt the heat from the rising sun. "Let's take off our coats—hey, Jack?"

"Aye."

AS they looked around them, Sam thought he noticed the thing in the stern moving.

"Did you see anything?" His voice sounded startled.

"No, o' course not," answered Jack, eying him.

"It moved! It *did,* I tell you!" Sam's eyes had a frightened look.

"Pull away, man. Wot's come over you? It's wood, aint it?"

"Aye, 'tis. But listen, Jack. Do you *'ear* anything?"

"Lord, Sam. I does."

From the stern came a scratching noise. The old sailors, resting on their oars, triggered their ears and stared at each other, taut.

"Wh-at can it be, Sam?"

"I aint stopping to think, Jack. He's going overboard, right now."

Sam took in his oar, stowed it, and crawled aft to the god. As he pulled off the robe, the god seemed to move, and the scratching noise sounded louder.

" 'Eave 'im overboard, Sam. That's a good fellow!"

"I can't," Sam cried. "I aint got the strength. Something tells me we're in for something again."

"Wot's got into you, Sam? This aint like you at all. Do you know what you're listening to, man? There's a rat in the god." But Jack's cackling laugh was not reassuring. He shook with fear.

" 'Eave 'im overboard, I tell you. Don't you know I'm 'ungry? You must be too."

"I aint. I wish I was a thousand miles away from 'ere."

In Canada too

at McGILL and TORONTO universities

this soap is three times as popular as any other

"College girls, with their youth and charm, their fresh lovely faces" . . .

EVERYWHERE — college girls say they find it "the only soap for their skin!"

At leading women's colleges in America—Smith, Bryn Mawr, Sweet Briar, Barnard, Wellesley,—from half to three-fourths of the girl students we questioned prefer Woodbury's Facial Soap for their skin.

At the five great universities of Chicago, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, California—Woodbury's is from 3 to 5 times as popular as any other toilet soap! Over 3,000 girls in these universities wrote praising its beneficial effect.

And in Canada, too—at her leading universities, Toronto and McGill, more than half the girl students replying to our inquiries find Woodbury's "wonderful," "the ideal soap."

"There are five girls in our family, we all use Woodbury's," wrote one Canadian girl . . . "A splendid cleansing soap, and an excellent aid in keeping the skin clear of ugly blemishes" . . . "Keeps my skin in such a wonderfully healthy condition" . . . "I use it because my skin is very delicate, and most soaps irritate it."—

These are characteristic comments.

A SKIN SPECIALIST worked out the formula by which Woodbury's Facial Soap is made. This formula not only calls for the purest and finest ingredients; it also demands greater refinement in the manufacturing process than is commercially possible with ordinary toilet soaps.

A 25-cent cake of Woodbury's lasts a month or six weeks. Around each cake is wrapped a booklet of famous skin treatments for overcoming common skin defects.

Within a week or ten days after beginning to use Woodbury's, you will notice an improvement in your complexion. Get a cake today—begin tonight the treatment your skin needs!

Your WOODBURY TREATMENT *for 10 days*

Now—the new large-size trial set

The ANDREW JERGENS CO.,
1723 Alfred Street, Cincinnati, Ohio

For the enclosed 10c please send me the new large-size trial cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap, the Cold Cream, Facial Cream and Powder, and the treatment booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch." *In Canada address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1723 Sherbrooke Street, Perth, Ont.*

Name......................................

Street......................................

City........................ *State*............

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Jack pulled in his oar. "I'll 'elp you, Sam. Come on, take 'im around the feet. I'll grab 'is 'ead."

As they raised the god to the boat gunwale, something inside moved. They stared at each other.

"Drop 'im over, Sam. Drop 'im over!"

They tilted him, about to let go and dump him. As they did so, a roar came out of the water. They stared into the grinning face of a sea lion. Jack and Sam let go of their hold. The god fell back into the boat again, face down. A feeble wail came out of it.

"That aint no rat's voice, Jack," said Sam.

"No, gar blyme, it aint, shipmate."

"Roll the beggar over on 'is back, Sam."

"I aint touching 'im. Do you 'ear that? I've 'ad enough of this country. I 'ave 'alf a mind to swim ashore and leave it all."

"Be sensible, Sam. Why, man, you could never make land, this far out. Think of me 'ere with *'im!*"

Another wail, a human cry, issued from the god.

"Turn 'im over!" Jack shouted. "'E's got something in 'im. Come on, Sam, lend a 'and."

As they turned him over, somehow the side opened up like the lid of a coffin, releasing to light and air a little Chinese girl between two and three years old. She blinked and started to cry afresh.

Sam reached for her and took her up tenderly in his arms.

"She's been doped, Jack."

"Gar blyme, Sam, she's 'ad a close call."

The fresh air and tender stroking of the old sailors reassured the frightened child, who quickly came to herself. She snuggled close to Sam.

"'Eave *'im* overboard now, Jack, rags and all, and be damned quick about it," commanded Sam as he stroked the child's head, which lay against his hairy chin. "We'll row back and find that blarsted Chink."

An hour later the two walked up from the wharf with the child toddling between them. They had hardly gone a block when three policemen rushed them.

"Put the handcuffs on the crooks," the sergeant commanded. "I might have known from the looks of them last night that they were up to something. Kidnapers, hey? Made away with Lee Song's daughter!"

Handcuffed again, they were led back to the same station they had left only a few hours before.

"Throw them into the dungeon. Hold on, search them first. Ha-ha! Cheap skates that you are! Twenty dollars for making away with a *tong* chief's daughter!"

As they were being led to the dungeon, Sam whispered to Jack:

"If us ever gets out of this bloody country, us'll spend the rest of our lives in the Solomon Islands."

"Aye, they're civilized there, Sam."

THE CUTIE

(Continued from page 71)

and so he wrote it down for her and she put that in her bag. It was most important that he see her, he assured her. He'd explain why when they met again.

"One Hundred and Fourth Street, just west of the park," she told the man in the car. He was going to drive her home.

At Eighty-fourth Street he turned west and stopped in front of a very nice-looking apartment house.

"This is where *I* live," he told her. "Hadn't you better come up and let me brush you off so your mother wont know anything's happened?"

"I haven't any mother, but thank you just the same," said the cutie. So there was nothing for him to do but drive her home. He told her that his name was Sam Halloway, that he was an automobile salesman, that he had to drive about quite a bit and that she was welcome to come along if she didn't mind his selling a car or two while they were out. Almost any evening. Marcella said, "Maybe, sometime," and let it go at that. He had already given her his phone-number when she refused to give him hers.

Mabel, her roommate, who had been in the chorus with Marcella, had a good laugh over the card that the clergyman put into Marcella's bag. The message on it read: "Soulless little girl! You will need help some day. Then come to me. L. C."

"The big goof who has his sermons printed in the papers every week," Mabel commented. "Say, how do you get them generous ones? All mine are tightwads."

Marcella was thinking. "Maybe—they were three very nice young men—maybe—no, that wouldn't do, on second thought."

JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

Has written another tale of that splendid young Virginian, Dreve, who, forbidden to return to his native State, goes around Europe seeking adventures of gallantry. No one knows Europe any better than Mr. Dwyer, who has spent the past sixteen years learning it; and rarely has a character appeared in fiction more romantically engaging than Dreve, who, if truth be known, is eight parts Dwyer himself and two parts fiction. The next tale — a story of Paris — bears the title: "For New England, Home and Glory."

They would be sure to think that she was "mercenary" if she tried to borrow any money from them.

WHAT a sermon! What a sermon! The Reverend Lawrence Condon surpassed even his own dreams of eloquence. His well-tailored flock was impressed more than usual. The point that Dr. Condon had made was a difficult one—but he made it very clearly. Not one of the expensively frocked ladies in the pews that morning left with a guilty conscience. And the whole sermon had been an assault in a most outspoken manner on the godlessness of the modern girl's wardrobe! Dr. Condon had chosen to attack the kind of wardrobe possessed by Marcella. In fact, he told of the incident which befell him on Forty-second Street that week. So diaphanous did he make Marcella's garment, that everyone listened intently to every word of the sermon. Almost inspired, the gaze of the clergyman was focused on a point in midair toward the rear of the church. Some turned around to see what he was looking at. Seeing nothing, they concluded that his mind's eye had caught in midair the image of the godless girl he was holding up as a lesson to all who sinned through the medium of their dressmakers.

After service that morning occurred the scheduled meeting of the board of trustees of the church. A motion had been on the table for several months to extend to Dr. Condon a call to become permanent pastor of the flock. At present he was serving in a more or less temporary capacity. The motion called for a considerable raise in salary. At three previous meetings the matter had been tabled. This morning it was agreed to unanimously. And while it was not mentioned in the discussion, it was rather freely conceded by all that the morning's sermon had really been the deciding factor.

"Where could such a girl have come from?" asked one of the trustees a bit wistfully.

BY the middle of the next week Percy Prosser—none other than "the simp"—had finished his story. He had accomplished that rare and difficult task of imprisoning a beautiful girl in a cage of words—as only inspired talent can do. He had rushed over to his favorite editor and—and also as only inspired talent can do—had obtained an immediate check for the story. About the time that he was bitterly bemoaning his negligence in not getting his heroine's address, that he might from her receive inspiration for another story, she showed up magically at his apartment.

Marcella hadn't wanted to come, but hard-boiled Mabel had practically forced her to. A man like "the simp" was harmless. That was the redeeming feature of the adventure.

"Of all the luck!" exploded Percy. He showed her the check. Told her all about the story and what a gorgeous inspiration she had been to him. This encouraged Marcella a bit. She almost had the strength to ask him. But he kept racing on in his mad inspired fashion.

"I can visualize you perfectly as a clothes-rack. I can see you vamping every old daddy from the aquarium to the zoo. But I can't quite get the expression on your face when you kiss the hero of my next story. Ah, would you mind—" With that, Percy kissed her; then, noting the effect, he hastily scribbled down a phrase or two on a nearby pad. "Also, there's a place in this new story where you get in a fight. How do you look when you're really angry? Ah, would you mind?" And he gave her a little slap on the cheek. "Fine!" he commented as he saw a blotch of red come to the spot where he had struck her, and a certain flame dart to her eyes.

"You see, I use the laboratory method in writing my stories," Percy explained. "I find it's the only way to achieve reality. What do you say we get a bite of lunch? The Automat's just around the corner."

Marcella declined.

AT a roadside inn in Yonkers, Marcella ate Sunday night dinner with Sam Halloway, the automobile salesman, and another couple.

"Dearie," whispered Sam to Marcella while the other two were dancing, "you've done me a good turn. I just sold him a car. I never would have landed him if I hadn't brought him out to some place like this. Three hundred berries commission. Not bad for Sunday night."

Marcella had lost her nerve when she had tried to explain the matter to Dr. Condon in his study at the church. Neither had she been able to put the proposition up to Percy Prosser either. But Sam was different. He was a regular fellow. And, Marcella considered, they had grown to be real friends in the course of the three or four evenings they had spent together. She'd ask *him.*

Rehearsals were four weeks off yet. Neither Mabel nor she could get an advance until rehearsals started. They owed six weeks' rent as it was. They had figured it out very closely. The least they could get along on before rehearsals started was twenty-five dollars apiece. "Don't worry about me, dearie," hard-boiled Mabel had told her. "I'll get my twenty-five. And if I can get twenty-five from the tightwad friends I got, why, you,

Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt
whose dark beauty and creamy skin have an exquisite setting in this white taffeta Lanvin robe de style, is as prominent in exclusive circles abroad as at home. She says: "Pond's Two Creams are wonderful."

Mrs. William E. Borah
wife of the United States Senator from Idaho, and a leader in Washington Society, is an enthusiastic user of Pond's. She may be seen receiving friends in her charming Washington apartment.

Just these Two delicate Creams—fragrantly cleansing and softly protecting—keep every normal skin in the pink of perfect health.

The crowding of the Social Calendar

calls for clear fresh skins

THE Social Calendar scribbled full! The shining hours of every day fitted together like gay mosaics in a brilliant pattern of pleasure.

It takes its toll of beauty—this life without rest from morning to midnight—smooth round cheeks begin to droop, little lines of weariness appear, unless the right care is given the skin.

Certain of the beautiful women of the Social World have learned it, however—how to keep dazzlingly fresh and unwearied despite this merry round. Wherever you see them you marvel at their clear smooth cheeks, snow white shoulders, firm round throats. This is how they do it:—

Before dressing for the evening and again before retiring, they pat over faces, shoulders, throats and hands, Pond's Cold Cream. They let it stay on until its fine oils sink down into the skin's deep cells and bring to the surface all dust and powder. With a soft cloth they wipe off cream and pore-deep dirt—and repeat, finishing with a dash of cold water or a brisk rub with ice. If their skin is dry, at night they apply more Pond's Cold Cream and leave until morning to smooth out unlovely lines.

AFTER every cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream, except the bedtime one, they smooth on a little Pond's Vanishing Cream. This gives their shoulders, throats and cheeks a lovely even finish, a soft glowing tone. And how white it keeps their hands. Powder and rouge blend beautifully and last long over this Cream as a foundation. Pond's Vanishing Cream also protects the skin perfectly from city soot and dust, winter winds and the strain of long, late hours.

Try this method used by the lovely women of Society. See how fresh and soft Pond's Two Creams will keep *your* delicate skin.

At the opera, at formal functions everywhere, you always see them looking their loveliest—skin as fresh and delicate as roses, satin in texture, youthful, firm.

POND'S TWO CREAMS *are highly praised by these beautiful and distinguished women:—*

H. M. the Queen of Spain
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The Princesse Marie de Bourbon
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FREE OFFER: *If you'd like to try, free, these Two famous Creams made by Pond's, mail this coupon.*

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133 Hudson Street, New York City
Please send me free tubes of Pond's Two Creams.

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Most Precious Christmas Gift, Say Pipe-Smokers

Letters to us disclose that while a pipe-smoker will thank you politely for the pink necktie, fancy garters or useless novelty—what really delights his heart is a jar of good tobacco.

That is why each year, more and more members of the Edgeworth Club make a practice of distributing their favorite tobacco among friends as a Christmas remembrance.

Often, Edgeworth happens to be the recipient's favorite tobacco. In other cases, the gift serves as a happy introduction and a means toward true pipe-enjoyment for the years to come.

The two favorite gift sizes of Edgeworth are the 16-ounce glass humidor jar and the 8-ounce tin. Both are provided at Christmas time with appropriate wrappings. Each size contains Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed, and each is packed in a good-looking decorated gift carton printed in colors. Prices — $1.65 for the 16-ounce jar. The 8-ounce tins are 75c each.

Please ask your tobacco dealer for the Edgeworth Christmas packages. If he will not supply you, we gladly offer the following service to you:

Send us $1.65 for each 16-ounce jar, and 75c for each 8-ounce tin to be shipped, also a list of the names and addresses of those you wish to remember, with your personal greeting card for each friend.

We will gladly attend to sending the Christmas Edgeworth to your friends, all delivery charges prepaid.

Personal: Perhaps you yourself are not acquainted with Edgeworth. If so, send your name and address to Larus & Brother Company. We shall be glad to send you free samples—generous helpings both of Edgeworth Plug Slice and Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed.

Edgeworth is sold in various sizes. Both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed are packed in small, pocket-size packages, in handsome humidors, holding a pound, and also in several handy in-between sizes.

For the free samples, kindly address Larus & Brother Company, 8-X South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Edgeworth Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

On your radio—tune in on WRVA, Richmond, Va.—the Edgeworth station. Wave length 256 meters.

with a preacher, an author and an auto salesman—say, any of them would lend you a hundred if you told 'em the facts. It's only a loan, anyway. You can pay them back the first week. Aint as if you were gold-digging."

But when Marcella had tried to explain to the Reverend Dr. Condon, he became abstract. He spoke about a mission where she could stay until he sent a wire to her relatives for railway fare home.

"But I haven't any relatives," Marcella insisted.

New York was a wicked place. Dr. Condon thought that Marcella should go home. Deep down inside, a wee voice was whispering to him: "Blessed sinner, you have been the inspiration that has made me the saint people think I am." But he had long ago learned the neat little psychic trick of not listening to that voice. So he sent the godless girl away.

As for poor Percy, he was two months behind with his own rent, he told her. He could loan her some money *next* month. She told him she could loan *him* some *then*.

But Sam would be different. So she thought until she asked him.

"Now, don't you worry about money, sweetie," he whispered. "You and me are going to be pals and you'll have all the dresses and diamonds—"

Marcella didn't want dresses and diamonds. She was a plain chorus girl who made her own way. Except for occasional luncheons and dinners, she had earned everything she spent since she left home. This was the first time in three years that she had been broke.

The leer in Sam Halloway's eye was illuminating. She couldn't stand him a moment longer. So she slipped out to the cloakroom, got her hat and wrap and beat it. There was exactly ten cents in her pocketbook. That was used up in street-car fare to achieve the end of the subway line.

What to do? What to do?

A man with a rather honest-looking face, standing near the cigar-store, was looking in her direction. She smiled at him—then asked him for the money.

"This is too good to be true," the man said to himself. For, you see, he was a detective, and "the Chief" had emphasized only the evening before, the necessity of cleaning the streets of mercenary women. "She looks the part, all right, but I guess it would be a little raw, pinching her on so little evidence," the man further said to himself. So he made her the loan she had requested—a nickel for subway fare home.

DINNER IS SERVED

(Continued from page 35)

appalling. Besides, its purpose appeared obvious. My mind instantly sprang to that institution of the Continental *ménage*—a lover. And I resented being used as a cat's-paw.

"Please—" she uncannily read my refusal. "I have no one whom I can trust. If you refuse—" She paused, a sense of such terror coming from her, that mechanically I pocketed the ring, realizing that I might find myself in a French jail as the result.

Her hand clasped mine, nothing more. A touch of such appeal, such a strange hopelessness, that jail for an instant seemed slight chivalry.

"Wont you," I burst out inevitably, "talk to me frankly? You seem so—so—"

"So terribly afraid," she added hastily, as my French halted, unequal to the occasion. "I am—every moment."

"Of him?"

"Yes."

"Is it—pardon me, and don't answer if you don't choose—is it physical fear?"

"Yes." Her eyes went back to the darkness outside as if she dared not let me read them.

"Then why not—leave him?" I was astonished at my own intrepidity.

"I cannot."

"But we're living in an age when women refuse to endure—"

"I must. You do not understand." Then in a smothered tone: "I hated him when I married him. But I had to have his power—his wealth. Oh, not for myself! And for that, he is punishing me—so cleverly. I am kept here like a beggar, like a—" She stopped, the same swift abruptness with which she had opened the door of confidence. "Do not try to inform me about the ring. Simply get what you can and deliver the money. Have you the address?"

I nodded.

Voices had cut through the quiet. A fat, well-fed laugh; another, harsh; still another, sleek, which I knew as Lambert's.

She moved swiftly from me. In some uncanny way I got the message that she wanted me to leave the room, to give the impression that she had been there alone. I made for the small corridor, waited until the others were well settled.

When I entered, she was sitting in their midst—those fat faces closing in her delicate one. I watched Lambert's as, at his request, she gave us some of the legends of the Château de Grange. Once again I noted the fascinated fear that fell upon it. Her far voice, the long silent hall peopled with ghosts, the man clutched by superstition. A strange picture to carry away.

In half an hour or so she rose, smiled "Good-night," and hoped we would be their guests another week-end. It was perfunctory—meant really nothing.

I watched her the length of the room. My eyes clung to her—almost against discretion. Odd, elusive woman. Unforgettable.

SHORTLY after that, I went out to China. The East got me. Until last February I had not even a glimpse of Paris. I had heard no word of Lambert or his wife.

The ring I disposed of to an American jeweler I knew, explaining that it belonged to a friend, hard up, who wished to remain anonymous. I realized my risk in doing this. But risks were not a new experience, and I had an insane curiosity to see what would happen when I delivered the money in its blank envelope.

Nothing did! Across the Seine, past the spires and grinning gargoyles of Notre Dame, through thin streets that branched from one another like arteries, puzzled to confusion by our route, I finally found myself out of the cab and crossing one of the cobbled courtyards of oldest Paris. I pulled a bell imbedded in the dusky dark; when the door opened, I made out the face of an old man. He bowed, without a word—took the envelope. The door closed. That was all.

Frequently during the years in the East, I puzzled over that episode, so poignant because, on the surface, so undramatic. I had been in Paris on my return, therefore, only a day when I telephoned Henri Lambert. He was not at his office. His secretary said that he came in only once a week, which astonished me, having known him as an indefatigable worker. I left my name. A few days later a note from him invited me to Château de Grange for the week-end.

That was last winter, you understand. He did not call for me—I drove out alone in his car. The valley of the Chevreuse lay somnolent under a recent snowfall, like a lovely woman, recumbent under softly enveloping white blankets. And again I felt that reverberating silence: the quiet that whispers.

"I urge young housewives to use Fels-Naptha because it gives *extra* help"

"My husband tells me," said a grocer's wife, "that if I were in the store all day he never would sell any household soap except Fels-Naptha. I like it so much myself.

"I've tried almost everything in the soap line—from home-made soaps to chips, powders or what not.

"All of them have washing value, of course—some more than others—but not one of them gave me the *extra* washing help I get from Fels-Naptha. I always urge mothers, especially, to use Fels-Naptha. Children's dresses are so hard to get clean and sweet and white that mothers need all the *extra* help from soap they can get.

"Fels-Naptha makes my own wash come clean so easily, quickly and safely that I just can't help urging other housewives to use it."

Millions of women wouldn't be without this *extra* help of Fels-Naptha in their homes. Thousands of them came back to Fels-Naptha after trying "almost everything in the soap line," in chips, flakes, powders and bars.

Fels-Naptha is more than soap, more even than just naptha soap. It is unusually good soap and plenty of dirt-loosening naptha—two safe cleaners combined for perfect teamwork in one golden bar. That's why it gives **extra help you would hardly expect from just soap alone.**

Fels-Naptha cleans easily, quickly, safely . . . whether you boil your clothes or wash them in cool or lukewarm water—whether you use a washing machine or a washboard.

Get a golden bar from your grocer today and prove it, or write Fels & Co., Philadelphia for sample, free.

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Better Shaves!

Williams lather soaks the beard soft

NEVER force your razor stroke. If your beard is properly softened, the razor will glide through without effort.

First, Williams lifts the water-resisting oil-film from the beard. Then its abundant moisture *saturates* every bristle through and through—soaks the beard soft so that your razor will glide through its job.

Williams lather gives a treatment to your skin—it makes it feel comfortable, soothed and toned up.

Send for a week's trial tube—FREE. Send the coupon or a postcard *today*. Williams costs 50c in the economical *Double Size* Tube. It holds twice as much as the large size tube at 35c.

Aqua Velva is our newest triumph—a scientific after-shaving preparation. We will send a generous test bottle FREE. Write Dept. 1012

The J. B. Williams Co., Dept. 1012, Glastonbury, Conn. (Canadian address, 1114 St. Patrick Street, Montreal)

Please send me free trial tube of Williams Shaving Cream.

R. B. Dec.

No one but the old servant met me on arrival. We went through the great hall, and I felt an odd chill, like old dampness, sweep over me. This was due, perhaps, to the fact that only half the candles were lighted. They made the shadows longer, the gloom intense. More than ever the place seemed ageless. The cloak of tragedy settled upon its shoulders.

In my own room, more intimate and warm, I managed to shake off the impression. The servant—Jean, I believe his name was—poked at the coals in the ancient fireplace with its blackened stone depths, unpacked my bag and asked if he could do anything for me. I inquired for my host and hostess. Monsieur, he informed me, would see me at dinner. There were no other guests. He said nothing about Madame.

I dressed eagerly, with the hope, unconfessed, that I might meet Madame la Comtesse before her husband arrived on the scene. But the hall downstairs was empty, and I regretted my haste as I sat waiting in that vast stillness.

PRESENTLY a man came down the vague length of the place, seeming at first nothing more than moving shadow. As he drew nearer, I experienced a shock that took me abruptly out of my chair.

It was Henri Lambert—but shrunken to half his former powerful build. The man had changed so completely, so forcibly, that I felt I must be addressing another person. Not only the fact that his dress was careless, his walk shambling, the hand that shook mine, trembling—not only these outward manifestations, but the realization in a flash, that this man before me was in the throes of a terrific transition. The Henri Lambert, so powerfully sure of himself, was torn by fear. His low, halting tones told me, the way his glance went covertly over his shoulder every moment or so, his anxious scrutiny of the place. But afraid of what? And, oddly enough, whereas in the past Lambert had an irritating manner of looking past the person he addressed, his gaze now riveted to mine as if he did not want to let me out of sight.

We sat down, talked casually about my travels in the Orient. He apologized finally for this quiet week-end, explaining that he had a particular purpose in having me alone. But was I quite comfortable? Did this room, for example, feel cold? They were having some trouble with servants. Difficult to keep them—winter in the country, you know.

After a time—endless, it seemed—the doors swung softly wide. The old major-domo's voice reached us:

"Diner est servi."

In a sort of horror, Lambert's eyes turned from mine. He drew himself slowly, as if against his will, from the chair—with step obviously hesitant, approached the balcony. I saw him start to mount. He fairly crept upward, like a hound fearful of shadows.

At last I heard his knock. Not thunderous tonight—rather timid, in fact. Yet the door opened instantly.

"Dinner is served."

I knew the words, though they were so muffled as to be inaudible.

Then Henri Lambert backed quickly toward the stairs, and was at my side before Madame la Comtesse appeared.

I HAVE never seen anything lovelier or more appalling than the woman that night.

Quite white, a pallor intensified by the gloom, and a gown that melted into nothing, so that, coming down those steps, one seemed to see only head, shoulders and arms—no body. It was terrifying.

I started toward her, but Lambert held me back.

"Does she seem strange to you?" he whispered.

"Like a ghost," I muttered.

I heard a gasp beside me. "She wears black always—now," came, choked.

We followed her as she moved into the adjoining room without even attempting to greet me. I was stupefied by her rudeness, but felt sure there must be some reason. I must find an opportunity to see her alone after dinner.

However, none came. She sat at the far end of the long table, her face gleaming through gloom, a set smile upon it. Not a word from her, not a sign that she so much as knew me. Lambert made no attempt to draw her into conversation. In fact, he scarcely spoke—just sat staring as if he could not drag away his eyes. I had an insane impulse to scream, like an hysterical woman. The weight of quiet, the shadowy, silent figure, that staring man: it was unhearable.

One thing I knew definitely: I could not endure another night of it. The atmosphere, in spite of all that cold vastness, was stifling. The chill reception accorded me by a woman who had intrusted to me a vital mission was an insult. Repelled beyond words, I wanted to get away. Even concern for Lambert, curiosity as to what had caused the shocking change in him, both were supplanted by the feeling that I could not breathe here.

The Comtesse left the table before us. Lambert explained that she always went to her room immediately following dinner. And this was something of a relief, for as soon as she had glided out of sight, he seemed more human.

Throughout the evening, he did not refer to her. I remarked that he was looking thin.

"I am not sleeping so well," he ventured, half hesitant, "and that pulls a man down."

"Why don't you go away, then? The Riviera—nothing like it for relaxation."

"I cannot."

I was startled by the tone in which he said it. Exactly the same his wife had used when, five years before, in this room, she had spoken the same words.

"Why not? Get away from everything—"

"If I only could!" He gave a sudden sob. "But I am a broken man. You can see—afraid of my own shadow. I—" He stopped short. His lips tightened in supreme effort at self-control. "Please—do not allow me to speak of it."

ATTEMPTS to sleep that night were useless. I lay, struggling through the long hours to drown a strange throttling horror, motivated by forces intangible.

Next morning I left for Paris. A trumped-up excuse—fake phone-message from the editor of an American press syndicate—got me out of it. Lambert exacted a promise that I would return in time for dinner. Which, of course, I had not the slightest intention of doing—in spite of the fact that he clung to my hand like a child. It would be easy enough to phone and ask him to bring my bag on his next trip to town.

Immediately on arrival, I called on the syndicate editor and asked him to take me to lunch.

"Any place where we can see a crowd and hear plenty of noise," I suggested.

He gave me a queer look as we stepped from his office building into the lively traffic of the Avenue de l'Opéra.

When we had given our order in the seething midst of a restaurant patronized chiefly by Americans, he leaned across the table.

"What's wrong? You look—well, as if a good night's rest would help a lot."

"It would," I vouchsafed. "But I don't feel I'll get it until I know what's happened to Henri Lambert."

"Happened to him? Nobody knows.

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NOT a "cure-all," not a medicine—Fleischmann's Yeast is simply a remarkable fresh food.

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Never see him any more. Believe he spends most of his time in the country."

"I know. I've just heen there. He's a wreck, poor fellow! And his wife—well, I can't make it out."

"Wife?" The editor was half out of his seat.

"Yes—the lovely Comtesse. She always was odd, aloof. But now—she's so changed, somehow."

"My God, man!" he cut me off. "You must be crazy. Henri Lambert's wife died six months ago."

FOR a moment I sat hack, staring at him. There is no way of expressing or analyzing the reaction in a normal man to realization that he has touched the supernatural. I was as positive that I had looked upon the gleaming white throat and shoulders of a living woman as I was, that second, of the man facing me.

Yet there swept shudderingly over me a sudden thought. Even as she came down the short flight of steps from the halcony, she had seemed hodiless. Was it possible that I had given tangible substance to a ghost? I had not even touched her finger-tips. Neither had she spoken to me. Only a vague, moving figure had glided to the foot of Henri Lambert's table. Pallid, and in hlack like the shadows themselves. Flickering candle-light might have heen deceptive. The long spaces of that great hall. Lambert's terrific fear. Had they all hypnotized me?

"Do you mean to say," I heard the editor insisting, "that you thought you saw a dead woman walking round the place?"

"I sat at dinner with her," I answered.

He chuckled.

"Well," he observed, "Lambert's wine-cellar is as famous as his wife's jewels were."

Somehow, I was relieved to know that he did not take me seriously. For instantly I realized that nothing, not even my own dread, could keep me from returning to the Château. Like an explorer who would chart unknown seas, I was impelled to go hack. Beyond my own desires, the horror, the fascination, were irresistible.

I met Lambert's car at my hotel as I had promised, toward twilight. Once more I drove through the valley of the Chevreuse.

Tonight it was stark and cold. The snow, glazed hard, did not even crunch under the wheels. Branches of hare trees, hroken by their weight of ice, cracked, crashed to the ground. Against the dark, hloodshot gray of sky, they looked like a skeleton army collapsing one hy one. There was something inevitable and grim about the way they went to pieces, as if the inescapable finger of death were slowly snapping them.

I lay hack, trying to compose myself to handle sanely whatever experience was ahead of me. When we arrived at the Château de Grange, and Lambert greeted me, the light of intense relief in his pathetic eyes, I laughed and told him we must liven up the evening with a game of bridge. Could he get hold of a fourth person?

"We shall be only two," he whispered.

"Nonsense! You and Madame and I—can't you call in a neighhor?"

"We shall be only two," he repeated with the expression of terror that never seemed to leave him.

"Oh, then the Comtesse doesn't play?" I put. "I don't seem to recall whether she did on my last visit."

WE had gone to my room. He sat on the edge of a chair. I made the gesture of feeling perfectly at home hy hoisting myself to a deep window-seat uncomfortably high above the floor. But all the while, my hands and feet were like the ice pendulous from the casement.

He leaned anxiously toward me, voice still hushed as if he no longer had power to raise it.

"The woman you saw here is dead. Yet she comes to me—that way—every night."

I managed a laugh.

"But, my dear man, that's impossible!"

"I thought at first that I alone saw her. Yet the servants—I cannot keep any, save those who were here hefore I came. And now—you too! There is a tale, you know, of another Comtesse de Grange—Vera, the same name—who returned, just as she does, to haunt the man who had heen cruel. He went mad." Lambert scarcely uttered the words. They were no more than a hreath. "When that moment arrives—for me, I shall put a hullet in my hrain."

With the utmost quiet, it came. Almost with relief. I recalled the hold of superstition on the man's mind—like grasping fingers, squeezing it dry of reason. Instantly I realized that only some actual revelation could save him. But, after all, what could I do—who also had seen what he saw? I, with neither fear nor fantasy to stir imagination!

I DRESSED early and went down to the main hall. There was at least an hour hefore dinner. I walked the length of the place several times. The clusters of candles, flaring under sudden gusts of cold air that seeped through the windows, sent grim dark arms climbing up the walls. They seemed to reach toward that balcony door.

With no definite plan I found myself following them. Up the hrief flight of steps, without giving myself time to retreat, until I stood hefore it.

I gave a glance over the balustrade. Full of a mystery undefinable, the great hall of Château de Grange lay beneath me. Silent, cold, holding the manifold history of those who had trod there, yet yielding nothing. Sacrilege, what I was about to do! Would the dead of many centuries revenge themselves? The hand I had raised dropped abruptly.

A wave of terrified recoil got me. Then, in defiance of my own fear, I lifted my hand and deliberately imitated Henri Lambert's knock.

For a space there was no response. I repeated it with a low phrase in French, precisely as he had whispered it the night before:

"Dinner is served."

Immediately the door swung wide as if hy invisible hands. I hacked hehind it.

She came slowly from the room. No sound—no actual sign of movement. Just the sense of pallid arms, throat and face—the rest of her floating hlack. No form —no outline.

I admit that I was petrified. I have known enough danger in my day. But that one moment when I seemed to touch the intangible, returns in its vividness as no other in my life.

You have wondered why I look upward when a phrase that means nothing is spoken. It is automatic, a reaction to the vision it calls to heing: of that strange, phantom-form coming from mystery, going into mystery—with eyes that could not he distinguished as anything but black blots in a hlur of white. The feeling that she might vanish into whispering corners. The growing conviction that I was in communion with the dead.

I forced myself to move from behind the door. You can have no idea what terrific effort it required, what dread had hold of me. Gropingly I reached out hoth hands, expecting them to close upon nothing.

But they held the flimsy fabric of a woman's gown.

At their tug, she turned ever so slightly —stood quite still. I could not tell whether her eyes looked directly into mine. I moved closer, conscious only of tremendous release. An entity. A human being, palpitant, like myself. The lurking fear of the unknown

In 16 years we have not published *a more dramatic story than this*

THIS is the story of a man who almost threw $10,000 into the waste basket because he did not have curiosity enough to open the pages of a little book. (How much curiosity have you? Have you read one single book in the past month that increased your business knowledge or gave you a broader business outlook?)

The scene took place in a bank in one of the southern cities of California. The Vice-president, who had sent for a representative of the Alexander Hamilton Institute, said to him:

"I want your help in making a little private experiment among the junior officers of this bank. We have got to appoint a new cashier. I hate to bring a man in from the outside, and yet I am not at all sure that any one of our younger men is ready for the position. Here are the names of five of them. I want you to send a copy of "Forging Ahead in Business" to each one, but without letting them suspect that I have had a hand in it. Then call and tell the story of the Institute's training to each one separately and let me know how he receives it.

"I enrolled for your Course in New York years ago," he explained. "It gave me my first real knowledge of the fundamental principles of business. It meant everything to me, and I have an idea that there is no better way to test a man's business judgment than to see how he reacts to the opportunity it offers."

The five copies of "Forging Ahead in Business" were mailed, and a few days later the representative of the Institute called. One of the five men was on a vacation; three had tossed the book into the waste basket. They "knew all about it already"; they were "not interested." The fifth had his copy on his desk unopened. To that fifth man the Institute representative said:

"You may not suspect it, but there is a check for $10,000 in that little book."

"Don't kid me," the other answered.

"I'm serious," was the reply. "I'll see you to-morrow."

The following morning the Institute man was called on the 'phone. "I think I found that $10,000 check last night," said the man at the bank. "If you're down this way today, drop in. I'd like to enrol."

A few months later the directors of the bank appointed him cashier: his upward progress had begun. One of the first friends whom he notified of his promotion was the Institute representative.

"It gives me a cold shudder," he said, "to remember that I was just on the point of throwing that little book into the waste basket—$10,000 and all."

Few men realize how eagerly business leaders are looking for the heads that stick up above the mass—for the men who by any sort of special training or ability have marked themselves for larger things.

Do you want more money? Ask yourself this: "Why should anyone pay me more next year than this year? Just for living? Just for avoiding costly blunders? I am devoting most of my waking time to business—what am I doing to make myself more expert at business?"

Here is the Institute's function in a nutshell: It first of all awakens your interest in business, stimulates your desire to know, makes business a fascinating game. And second, it puts you into personal contact with leaders, thrills you by their example, makes you powerful with their methods. Is it any wonder, then, that Institute men stand out above the crowd?

Thousands of men will read this page. Hundreds will turn aside, or cast it into the waste basket, as those three men in the California bank threw their copies of "Forging Ahead in Business" into the waste basket. But a few hundred will be stirred by that divine emotion—curiosity—which is the beginning of wisdom. They will send for "Forging Ahead in Business"; they will read it, and like the fifth man, will find a fortune in its pages.

The fee for the Modern Business Course and Service will be advanced on January 1.

In common fairness, we feel obligated to give all those who have been intending to enrol but have put it off, the opportunity to do so now at the old rate.

If you are one of these be sure your application is in our hands on or before December 31, 1926.

"I said to him, 'There is a check for $10,000 hidden in that book.'"

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Even hair that looks healthy *needs this care*

YOUR hair *now* may be thick, clean-looking, strong. To keep it, guard against two threatening ills—either of which will lead to ultimate baldness.

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Both can be prevented. In most cases they can be *overcome* even when long established with this quick treatment:

EVERY MORNING moisten hair and scalp generously with Ed. Pinaud's Eau de Quinine. Then with the fingers pressed down firmly, move the scalp vigorously in every direction, working the tonic thoroughly into every inch of the scalp. Comb your hair while still moist. It will lie smoothly just the way you want it.

This simple care prevents and destroys dandruff, stimulates scalp circulation, strengthens your hair. Make it a part of your morning routine—like brushing your teeth!

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ED. PINAUD'S
Eau de Quinine

was at least dissipated. Whoever she might be, there was the certainty of flesh and blood.

"I must speak to you!" As if it were not my own, I heard a voice make the demand.

No protest came. She simply retraced the few steps she had taken. I followed into the room. The door closed with a gentle click.

IT WAS in a long, low apartment that might have been a convent cell. It was arched of ceiling, with a window at the end approached by two steps. Like sentinels on guard, tall white candles stood at either side. In one corner was a narrow bed. Close to it, a *prie-dieu* above which rose a crucifix of luminous silver. Devoid of all adornment, the place yet held a singular beauty—an aloof, an exquisite purity.

The woman motioned me to the one small chair, but I made no attempt to take it. She came closer. Her vague features took form, though the light was faint. So like the Comtesse, yet not she, I saw that the eyes were the same as those I had known. But a febrile vitality glowed from the depths of them.

"You are the American," she said abruptly in English, "who brought the money—from Vera."

"The Comtesse intrusted a ring to me to sell—several years ago. I delivered the amount in a blank envelope—"

"To me," came a soft interruption. "She was—my sister."

I recalled the story that Lambert's wife was the last of her line, and shook my head.

"But—"

"Yes, I know. You believed she had lost both brother and sister in the war. So does all France. But only one of us knew the blessing of death. The other—"

"You were a prisoner?" I prompted hastily, as her voice came to a sudden stop.

"If it had been only that!" she brought out. Then slowly: "My sister knew about me, where I was. Lambert kept her fully informed. He was one of the enemy brought up in France to betray us. He told her he could have me released—at a day's notice—and promised her this if she would marry him. We had been so close always—with the love that only two who have suffered together can know."

Her eyes, their somber depths burning, turned toward the *prie-dieu*. Her lips moved without words. Her fingers tensely interlaced.

"If I could have spared her the horror of that union! And it availed nothing."

"You mean, he broke his promise?"

"Oh, no—he was too clever for that. The day she became his bride, I was brought back to France. I saw her just once—before she went away with him. I was quite ill and allowed to see no one else. So I went to live with two old servants—a husband and wife who, like Jean, had been with us for years. But I never saw Vera again."

"What?"

"He kept us apart. He knew that I would have found some way to help her escape his brutality."

"But surely when she was alone, she might have reached you!"

"She was never alone. He paid a woman to be here—watch her constantly. I wonder she endured it so long. Eventually—it killed her." The deep somber eyes lifted to mine. "That is what he is paying for now. I have made him believe I am the dead Vera."

"But how?" I mumbled, the sensation of horror returning. "I don't understand how you managed."

"*I* did not. It was some power beyond me. I had no thought of such a thing when Jean hurried to Paris the day she died. He told me my name had been on her lips at the end. She had wanted to see me just once more. I returned with him that night. It was late—everyone had gone to bed. Not here—but in her room next to Lambert's, I knelt beside my sister. There was no light other than the candles burning at her head and feet. We were alone there, in communion at last, when the door opened and Henri Lambert entered. Perhaps it was the shock of movement in that dark chamber, perhaps because he had not seen me for years, and we were so much alike. As I rose softly, he gave a cry—her name—in utter terror. At once I realized his mistake. But it was exactly as if a sudden light had come to me, and I knew I held his life in my two hands. The physical brute is always a mental coward. I moved slowly toward him. He backed away, pleading forgiveness, one hand across his eyes to shut out the sight of me. But I whispered that I should be with him always."

"My God!" came from me. "You haven't kept up a thing like this six months!"

"Jean told me his habit of calling her for dinner. She used to come to this room—to pray. It was her sanctuary—her only escape from him. He hated it. He would not dare to enter now. So I live here—Jean takes care of me. And each night, Henri Lambert comes in spite of himself—and calls me."

"Hypnosis!" I explained swiftly. "His fear. And superstition—I've had evidences of its hold on him. But what a terrible thing—to victimize him through them!"

The gaze raised to mine did not flinch. "Why?" she said quietly. "He must pay—until the debt is wiped out."

I looked down into the eyes burning with the white fire of an ascetic. That suggestion of blind, fanatical self-immolation.

"My dear child,"—I caught up her hand,—"don't you see that it's not Henri Lambert alone who will suffer through this? You are the important one. You can't go on."

"I must," she told me.

There was no sign of the spirit of revenge. Rather did she take the view of a mission, sacred, regardless of the cost. To me, it seemed far more tragic than the spectacle of the man whose life she was breaking.

"Suppose I put a stop to it," I hazarded. "I can, you know."

"How?"

"By telling him the truth."

"You think that would avail anything?"

"Once the spell over him is broken, you'll have to leave. He'll put you out. Can't you see that?"

An odd expression I could not read came from her eyes to mine.

"Try it," she challenged. "Try it now. And if you fail, promise to leave here—at once."

"Please," I protested, "don't mistake me for an enemy. But I would rather strangle him with my own hands than see you both put through this torture. Can't I make you understand, my dear, what the nerve-strain will eventually do to you?"

"I do not matter," she told me, and in her eyes were the depths of suffering. "It is for her—who met agony through him."

"Do you count yourself as God?" I put.

"God has directed me," she said simply, and believed it. "Please go now."

She dropped to her knees before the *prie-dieu*. I left her, with the vision of her white face lifted toward the shining cross.

AS I closed the door and went down the stairs, I tried to formulate some plan that would not react against her, yet could think of none. Once Lambert knew he had been duped, nothing would hold him back from the extreme of vengeance. If I told, I must immediately get her out of this place.

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A task which, at the moment, did not seem extraordinary. My one thought was of her. But the responsibility was enormous.

Waiting for my host, I dreaded the revelation I had to make.

And when the time came, I could not make it. He was in a particularly morbid mood. During the few minutes we had together before dinner, he sat in the chair at my side, staring silently at the balcony door. There seemed definitely no way to introduce the subject, perhaps because I actually feared the outcome.

"Diner est servi!"

He dragged himself out of the chair. I caught hold of his arm.

"Wait!" I whispered. "When she comes out of that door, touch her!"

"Mon Dieu!" His whole body shook with terror. "Why do you want me to do that?"

"Because you believe her to be a ghost. She is a woman."

His furtive gaze came round to me.

"That, of course, is not true."

"Do as I say," I begged.

A look of hatred struck across his eyes, like lightning across a wild sky.

"Are you making sport of me?"

"You'll find out," I assured him.

But as I saw that trembling figure swerve toward the stairs, I actually dreaded what I had done. How did I know he would not kill her without pause for words?

I followed hastily, stood on the top step to be close at hand.

His knock sounded on the door. He spoke the phrase he used each night:

"Dinner is served."

Through the open doorway came that floating figure—out of faintly illumined shadows, into darker ones.

Had I not known, I would have believed as Henri Lambert did.

He cringed against the balcony balustrade as far as he could get from that gliding, wraithlike form. I could almost feel him summoning effort, courage, to do my bidding. As she approached the stairs, I backed down them and waited at their foot.

I saw Lambert move stealthily after her, like a stalking animal, afraid of its prey. She heard him, of course, yet gave no sign. I think I have known no more terrifying sight than that silent pair: the woman whose feet made no sound on the stone; the man with shaking hand outstretched to grasp her.

She moved past the landing, close to the wall, then turned. He had drawn nearer, but was still some paces away. And as she stood perfectly still, looking toward him, I swear I saw the impossible happen. How she arranged it—whether she arranged it at all—I do not know.

Perhaps it was the servant Jean, concealed somewhere in the darkness with a lifted candle. Perhaps merely optical illusion. Perhaps, mesmerized by the influences about me, I saw what did not exist. But out of the deep clustered shadows behind her flowed a faint light. It rose slowly, gently, until it encircled her head. Back of her, surrounding her, blackness. And from it, from nowhere, it seemed, that rim of radiance.

Transfixed by the complete sense of an apparition, I could not move. All knowledge of surroundings vanished. Only the unreal at that moment was reality.

Piercing this dreadful calm came a cry. It was low, yet more ringing than if it had been shouted. Torn, it seemed, from the throat of the man crouched close against the balustrade.

"You—you!" he wailed, his shaking hand pointed at me. "You—liar!"

He leaned far over the rail, staring eyes upon mine, his fingers clutching desperately at the tapestry that swayed from the balcony beyond his reach.

"You," he cried, "get out—get out of this house! You have desecrated its dead!"

That was my last impression of Henri Lambert. A soul racked to madness, ordering from his roof the man who had tried to restore reason.

PHILIP NORTON'S husky voice ceased. He had been telling me the story with gaze ahead, as if no woman were seated beside him listening, as perhaps he had repeated it to himself many times.

He turned slowly, and I saw that my hand was gripping his arm. The fingers were rigid, tense, and as I raised them, numb.

"Do you mean to tell me you went away and allowed that thing to go on?" I demanded, completely incredulous.

"What was there I could do? His inherent superstition has absolute sway. He is too far gone for any remedy."

"But that girl?"

"Yes—that girl."

"Did you think you could forget her?"

"I didn't think about that end of it. At the time, my one idea was to get out of the place as quickly as I could. And now—" He paused.

"Yes—" I prompted.

"She haunts me the way she does him."

As he spoke, his eyes lifted again to the tapestry-hung walls and I understood suddenly the tragedy in them.

"In spite of which," I suggested, "you're going to do nothing about her."

"Yes," he answered softly. "I am. I'm going back next week."

EXILES OF THE SKY

(Continued from page 81)

he told her of the little merchant, the director, the dismissal—everything!

"I stole the plane to prove to them that I could fly her at her record speed and bring her back safely," Vladimir concluded bitterly. "And what did I do? I crashed again. I am a wreck—a ruin. I have no right to live."

There was no murmur of pity, no cry of scorn from the girl beside him. She stood there silent, almost lost in the darkness.

"You see you turn away from me," Vladimir was moved to cry out.

There was a long silence; then the girl spoke. "You have suffered," she said. "You say you are wrecked, you are ruined. Do you think you know what it is to be wrecked? To be ruined? You say you can no longer fly again—the sky is barred to cowards. . . . . Do you know that I too once flew? Not in a plane, but in dreams. I flew so high I never touched earth—until the revolution came. My father died. My mother followed him. My brother was killed. And I ran away.

"I should never have run away. Hunger, death—what does it matter? A Russian should never desert Russia. I ran away. I told you before that instead of fleeing to Paris, I made my way here. That was a lie. I wanted to get to Paris, but my money gave out when I reached Berlin. You've walked in the Tiergarten on a muggy November day. So have I. Not just one day. One night, I slept on a bench there. The next morning when a man spoke to me on Friedrich Strasse, I went with him. He fed me. He maintained me for a month, and then he brought me to a friend of his, the proprietor of a night club on Kurfürstendamm. The first evening I took my place at the table assigned me was also a birthday for me—my nineteenth. That is how I celebrated."

Vladimir wanted to cry out for the girl to stop, but his voice stuck in his throat.

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The colorless voice suddenly broke.

"Don't cry," the man begged.

"I'm not crying," the girl replied. "I think all my tears dried up inside of me when I sat at the table in that red plush seat. Three months after my horrible birthday celebration, I woke up in my room with the noon sun on my face. I'd forgotten to draw the curtains the night before. I reached for my hand mirror and looked at myself, and then I got down on my knees and prayed.

"In the afternoon I sold my three evening dresses, the cheap perfume and the imitation jewelry. I bought a pair of heavy shoes, the dress I have on now, and a warm jacket—all secondhand. I walked to the railroad station and looked on the board for the list of departing trains. A train for Pomerania was leaving within ten minutes. I showed the ticket-agent the money I had left and asked how far that would take me. He sold me a ticket to this village. With all my money gone, I could not turn back, you see. These peasants took me in. They are not our people. I cannot talk with them. But I have enough to eat and I am warm."

Suddenly Vladimir found a limp square of paper slipped into his hand as the girl whispered:

"For remembrance from one who can never fly again, to you who tomorrow return to the sky."

And she was gone.

Vladimir tried to follow, but his feet were unused to the stubble of the field. By the time he reached the peasant's house, there was no sign of the girl.

By the light of the lamp Vladimir looked hard and almost grimly at the faded snapshot of a laughing girl in white. What the girl must have been at fourteen—when she had flown.

Reverently, Vladimir, to whom the wrecked woman had given back his manhood—reverently, he brought the snapshot to his lips.

He rose with the dawn the next morning and hurried down. The girl was already in the kitchen. To his greeting, she replied in a murmur and avoided his eyes. She handed him his coffee in silence.

When he had finished, he held out his hand.

"Good-by," he said.

She extended hers timidly. Her hand trembled.

"You're flying back?" she asked.

"Yes, back to Berlin," he said, taking her hand in his.

"They may arrest you for stealing the plane." The girl's soft dark eyes searched Vladimir's face anxiously.

"I've considered that." The man nodded gravely. "I shall probably go to prison." His grip on her hand tightened until it hurt her. "But if I knew you were waiting for me—Tatiana, would you trust yourself to fly with me?"

Their eyes met.

"Yes," the girl answered.

"It may mean death, if I crash."

"But you will not crash," the girl made answer.

Twenty minutes later the aged peasant heard what seemed to him to be the bellow of a released wild beast. He saw the machine skim across the field and soar into the sky until it melted into a gray speck and was lost to sight.

That was two years ago.

Today, should you fly between Moscow and Odessa, you may have for your pilot Vladimir Uspensky, and you could wish for no better. Should you land in Moscow, you may even meet the sky bride, Tatiana.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

(Continued from page 51)

sentful, still bitter. At such a moment one forgave everything surely, to one's father.

"So I am going to be rich!" said a voice inside her. "I can do anything I want." She wondered how rich. A million, perhaps—her father would leave her that much, surely, no matter what else he put into his will. "Even that she will begrudge me," she thought, thinking of her stepmother. "Why do I think such thoughts? What makes me?" she continued, struggling to shake them off. "It's inhuman, horrible! People don't think of such things at such a time! What is the matter with me?"

The strong black night began to ebb away as the sickly vapors of the dawn distilled through the country-side; the dawn, that moment so much to be feared in the sick-room. Perhaps even now. . . . . She sat up.

"Ted?"

"Present."

"I've got to talk to you. I can't sit still like this. Ted, I don't understand what is wrong with me."

"Wrong?"

"My imagination plays such tricks!" she said desperately. "It's terrible, but no matter how I try, I can't realize what's happened."

"Perhaps you do," he replied. He leaned over and drew his arm around her. "It's a nasty sensation, death. The first time you come up against it, it certainly shakes you up."

"You've felt that way?"

"Taken sick at the stomach. Besides, it's the thing you're getting ready to face, the thing you don't see yet."

"No, it's not that," she objected obstinately. "The horrible thing is, I can only think of myself, how it's going to affect *me*. I hate myself, but I can't help it."

"Oh!" He didn't answer directly. He too had been uncomfortably aware of what the death of the father would bring in sudden change. "After all, Jinny dear, I guess it's natural. You're not feeling any different from others."

"You think so?"

"Sure."

She was silent. If she could feel this way, what thoughts must be obsessing her stepmother?

The storm and detour had delayed them. It was after five when they ran into the great stone silences of New York and over the bridge on their way to Locust Valley. The air was cool and fragrant, the sun well above the horizon; yet the world of men was still asleep.

As they approached their journey's end, a calm returned. Now no longer a question of herself: things to be done mechanically, an attitude to be assumed, the frightened incredulity of the living approaching the mask of death.

"First road to the left now, Teddy."

"That's so—I'd forgotten."

"You can go around, but this is shorter."

Chapter Fifteen

AT last they were at the lodge. Faces at the windows, wondering, one, a man's face, half-covered with lather. The great iron gates still open. Long wide avenues turning toward the gabled roofs. They ran through groves of birch and maple with long stretches of immaculate lawns, past gardens with their elaborate fountains and marble vistas, and so, finally, to a stop before the great Gothic château with its towers and slate roofs, its simulated bastions, its great esplanade. Three or four automobiles against the balustrade, the chauffeurs worn out with waiting, asleep. Ted was out and at the step before she had time to move.

"Stiff?"

"A little."

They found the great glass doors closed. Inside, the vestibule lights were still blazing in the long vigil of the night. Larrabee rang once, twice, pounded against the rattling glass. The footman dozing in the great chair sprang up hastily, rubbing his eyes.

The door swung open, the footman, still drowsy, barring the way, cautiously.

"Doctor?"

"No, damn it, of course not!"

The guardian of the door glanced at Jean suspiciously, perceiving her evening dress.

"What's your business?"

"Don't stand there gaping like a fool! Open the door at once!" He shot it forth sharply with a flash of indignation. "Don't you understand? It's Mr. Waddington's daughter!"

"Oh!" Confused, he backed away. The doors opened wide and they passed in. "Beg pardon, sir, I didn't know."

How should he know?

It was thus that Jean returned to the home of her father.

THE hall was littered with coats and hats, hastily thrown down. They went up the great marble stairway with the famous Twelfth Century ramp from the Veragua palace in Madrid. A maid, heavy-eyed and frightened, sprang up from the chair in which she was dozing.

"Where is my father?"

She stared uncomprehendingly.

"My father—Mr. Waddington?"

"Beg pardon. In the infirmary, miss."

They continued through long corridors. Footmen, housemen in half-dress, chambermaids wandering helplessly; a pervading feeling of disorder, panic; the breaking-down of a well-regulated machine. The infirmary was in a far wing up another flight of stairs. At the top Manning, one familiar face.

"God be praised you're here at last now, Miss Jean."

Tears in his eyes, thirty years' service to a good master; tears—genuine tears at last, without afterthought.

"In time, Manning?"

"Thank heaven, yes, Miss Jean."

"I want to go in to him at once. Where's Mrs. Waddington?"

"This room, Miss Jean."

They went into a large, sunny room, the bed still in disorder. By the window a group in excited conversation—a doctor, three other men, one tall, gray-haired, in evening clothes; two young men sitting apart, lawyers' clerks, holding black leather folders; her stepmother. The end of a conversation.

"Quite impossible. He is not able to sign a paper."

"Couldn't you try again?"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Waddington, not a chance. The end is very near."

At Jean's entrance a sudden embarrassed silence.

"Jean, darling!"

Mrs. Waddington advanced hysterically, scantily covered, a dressing-gown loosely thrown over her bare shoulders, a glimpse of a filmy nightgown beneath, a woman at bay, staring into defeat.

"I want to go in to my father, please."

"Yes, Jean, yes, of course." She had her by the hand, clinging to it desperately. "Terrible, terrible—who'd have thought! You must go in, of course. Dr. Seton, my daughter." She burst into tears, hiding her head on Jean's shoulder.

Jean put her arm around her stepmother stiffly and looked over at Dr. Seton.

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"Can I go in now, Doctor?"

He nodded, motioning her to follow him.

"I'm going in," she said, trying to detach the arm which clung to her. "Will you come?"

"No, no. Oh, I can't. I can't bear it."

Larrabee stepped forward and drew his arm under Mrs. Waddington's; and Jean, thus liberated, went into the hall.

"He has been waiting for you. He is very weak."

"Is he conscious, Doctor?"

"At times, but he cannot speak. The end is very near, Miss Waddington."

Dr. Seton started to steady her, but she shook her head, very calm.

"Thank you. I don't need that!"

They came into the infirmary, the magnificently appointed infirmary with its skylight, its operating table in the rear, everything that science could provide, ready against every emergency, except the last inevitable one. Trained nurses moving swiftly, a group in consultation, a young doctor at the bedside staring intently at the stricken man. Instinctively all knew who she was, who came in thus, at last, by right.

She went to the foot of the bed and stood looking down at him—father and daughter, the old shrunk and feeble, the young branch brilliant in her evening gown; youth, beauty, life. Father and daughter of the same flesh and bone, the same continuing blood. Only they two counted now, in the great house, belonged to each other, belonged, despite everything, by right, by instinct, by nature.

She stooped down and touched the cold hand with her lips. Some one placed a chair under her. She sat down. The eyes fixed themselves, stared, recognized her—understood, never left her face. Tears gathered in the sunken eyeballs, spilled over and trickled over from the eyes which alone could speak. Father and daughter. Others might come and go—transitory relationships: the woman outside thinking only of a last attempt to protect herself against defeat, of papers which, if signed, might save a few thousands; the woman outside who had been another man's, who in all probability would go to a new husband; the woman, his wife, too terrified to pass the threshold. This at the end of life alone was his, the breath of his body, blood of his blood, that part of him that would survive.

AN hour later Jean came out of the infirmary. Mrs. Waddington gave a shriek.

"Dead!"

"He is in a coma now," Jean said quietly. "If you wish to go in—"

"Oh, I can't, I can't!"

"As you like."

No time for weakness, no time for hysterics. Two types of woman. Mrs. Waddington shrank away. Larrabee came up to Jean.

"Here's a cup of coffee. Drink it down. You need it."

"Thanks."

He put his arm around her, drawing her into an embrasure. She drank slowly, staring out of the window.

"He knew me."

"I'm glad of that."

"You had better telephone Mrs. Chastaine."

"I've already done so."

"I guess I needed the coffee."

"I'll have breakfast ready soon."

"Why were all those men waiting, when we came?"

He did not wish to tell her the truth just then.

"Doctor's assistants, I suppose. They'd been giving him oxygen, probably."

"Oh."

"Will you stay here afterward?"

"I don't know. I suppose I ought to. What do you think?"

"I would. I have your room ready."

"Some one will have to take charge. She's the sort that will go to pieces."

"Don't worry. I'll handle everything. I've telephoned to town for your clothes."

"You're a great help, Ted dear."

"That's what I'm here for."

A sudden nervousness seized her.

"I feel I ought to go back."

She went into the infirmary. . . . . In an hour, it was over.

Larrabee had attended to everything. Mrs. Waddington had assented hysterically, gratefully, prostrated now in charge of a trained nurse. He had given orders to the servants, recalling them to their discipline with sharp commands, sent off the guests, the lawyers with their futile papers waiting in their black folders, had breakfast ready for the two specialists and nurses, telephoned the newspapers, faced the reporters. Two questions always: the exact hour of the end, —as though minutes were of any importance, —the size of the fortune. Fifteen—twenty—twenty-five millions, would he say?

"Don't know—find out in New York," said Ted shortly.

"Who gets it?"

"How do I know?"

One better informed than the rest spoke up:

"Estate's in trust to the daughter, but how about the place?"

"You know more than I do, then. How do you know that?"

"Looked it up in the morgue. It was twenty-five millions in 1895, all in trust."

He knew that Jean would inherit largely, but he had not realized the extent. Perhaps they were wrong. Still, the suggestion disturbed him, unpleasantly, ominously.

"Could we see Dr. Seton?"

"Dr. Seton has left. His assistant is here. He'll give you the details. Sorry I can't give you any more information."

BREAKFAST in the little sitting-room he had chosen for Jean. Not much conversation. Long silences.

"Tired, Jean?"

"Dreadfully." She began to think of the preparations ahead. "I suppose I must see her. We must decide on the day of the funeral."

"Will you leave that to me?"

"I suppose she'll want it in the city."

"Probably."

She rose, and coming to him, put her arms around his neck and laid her head on his shoulder, seized with a sudden nervous shudder.

"Proud of the way you went through it, Jinny dear."

"I'm sort of let down now."

"That's natural. I'll take you off for a little ride soon."

"Yes, I'd like that."

"There are a lot of telegrams for you on the table. Your mother telephoned." He hesitated. "She sent you her love."

"Mrs. Chastaine?"

If a strange woman, a transitory woman, was here in the home she was born to, whose fault was it?

She shrugged her shoulders. "A little incongruous, that," she thought. She moved over to the table: telegrams from Kitty, Christine Lancaster, her mother, Daggett:

"May I send you just a word of friendly sympathy." Another one—Philippe de St. Polle: "Most respectful sympathy."

She frowned, puzzled.

"Wonder why he did that?"

Larrabee, watching her, was thinking: "Does she realize what it all means to her?"

The door opened. Manning appeared.

"Miss Jean, we thought you might prefer to have luncheon served here."

He said it with difficulty, his voice trembling. Her father, then, had been loved by some one. That was something, after all. She went to him, laid her hand on his shoulder.

"That would be nice, Manning, yes."

"At one?"

"At one, yes. And, Manning, later, if you'd like, I hope you'll come with me. That is, if—"

"Please, miss, I'd prefer it. It would be a comfort to stay in the family."

He too made a distinction.

"Thank you, Manning."

A maid came in. Mrs. Waddington was asking if she would come to see her now. Jean consulted Larrabee with a look.

"Must I?" He nodded. "Very well. Say I'm coming."

SHE found her stepmother not prostrated as she had expected, but pacing the floor, her eyes red and swollen. Grief or panic? She was soon to know. In the corner two lanky figures, children of Mrs. Waddington by her former marriage, strangers, who advanced awkwardly, a perfunctory greeting, and an awkward retreat. A trained nurse rose and left the room.

"Go into the other room, darlings. I want to be with Jean."

They were alone now, the exile and the woman who had put her from her home. Mrs. Waddington began hurriedly, brokenly:

"It's so good to have you here, Jean dear—such comfort. I can't realize—yesterday everything was so beautiful—now. How can such things happen? Everything changed —everything gone. You mustn't mind me, Jean. I just can't get hold of myself. All night, then the shock. Don't be hard on me. I couldn't go back into the room again. I couldn't! You are so strong. You are wonderful, Jean; but, then, it's different with you!"

She didn't understand this.

"He was my father!"

"Yes, yes. I didn't mean—" She switched illogically and began to recount how it all had happened, with endless repetition, returning again and again to the same phrases, excusing herself, working herself up into a fever of excitement.

"This is not what she wants to say to me," Jean thought. "Why is she saying it?" Aloud she said: "If you'll let me, I shall take charge of everything."

"Would you, Jean dear? Oh, if you would!"

"Only tell me what you want. Do you wish the funeral here or in New York?"

"How do I know? My head—my poor head. I can't think. Do as you think best. Here—or in New York, I don't know. Besides, it's for you to decide now."

"I don't understand."

"It's your home now; everything is yours."

"I don't understand," she repeated, frowning.

"All your father had, everything, was in trust for you. It's all yours now."

"Surely the house—"

"But what am I going to do with the house?" she cried hysterically. "What am I to keep it up with? I'd be ruined in a month! I ought to move out tomorrow, get rid of the servants. I tell you I have nothing, nothing!"

"I understood you had your own money," Jean said, coldly revolted.

"But what does that amount to? A bare fifty thousand a year, Jean. Honestly, that's all. What is that—a drop in a bucket—and my children! Oh, if your father could have provided for me, but he couldn't. He wanted to. It was his dearest wish, Jean, but he couldn't. There was that dreadful will. I shall sell the house. I shall have to sell the house. It'd ruin me! I shall sell it at a dreadful loss—who wants a big place nowadays? I'd get nothing for it, nothing—unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Why shouldn't *you* buy it, Jean? I'm

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sure we could come to an understanding. You wouldn't be hard on me, I know, and it's all I have—all: all your father could leave me."

"I couldn't talk about such things now," Jean said, drawing away.

"But why shouldn't you come here, make it your home? You ought to have a home now."

"It's a little late, don't you think?" she said, and went out.

IN the afternoon Ted drove her out into the country.

"I'm dreadfully tired."

"Perhaps it would have been better—"

"No, too tired to sleep."

She slipped her hand into his coat pocket, leaning her weight against his shoulder.

"You don't want to talk, do you?"

"No." After a moment, she said: "If we could get away somewhere!"

"I understand."

"Away from people."

In the solemnity of her mood, she wanted to escape from this pale unreality of the living, from their brief existences, their houses of cards, from things so transitory against the enduring finality of death. Then there were other thoughts: ominous premonitions of change impending over them, threatening them, fears which she wished to put from her, denying them—frightened. But of what she had learned from her stepmother, of the startling upheaval in her fortunes, of those thoughts which even now must be Ted's thoughts, no word was exchanged as yet.

He avoided the highways, zigzagging by sandy byways, making for the North Shore.

"Is that a chapel?"

"Over there? Yes."

"I'd like to go in a moment."

He hesitated as they drew up, but she turned and held out her hand. Together they went in, sat a long while, stared into the painted shadows that stretched from purpled windows—dim, suspended, silent.

She gave a little pressure to his hand, rose and stood looking at him out of her deep eyes, eyes shadowed by the past night.

What was in her mind, back of the searching intensity of that look? She hesitated. Her eyes left his eyes, came back again in a long interrogation. . . . . Then they were out in the full afternoon again.

"I'm so tired I can't think."

They were on a country road, unfrequented, shady—a blue flat stretch of water showing between the hills. He slowed down, drew his arm about her.

"Don't try to think. Relax."

Gratefully she rested her head against his shoulder, closed her eyes. He watched her a moment, came to a gradual stop, shut off the motor. Overhead, the long leafy spread of a great oak.

"She'll doze off in a moment."

He sat motionless, watching the clumsy flight of a distant crow around a blasted tree cut out against the horizon. Blue, brittle sparkle of waters—a white sail drifting.

Had she any realization of the stupendous change which had come to her overnight, of what the future held for her? He considered somberly. New complications to be faced. Stirring of his pride. It would make a difference. No question of that. Awkward, damned awkward.

He had always visualized their marriage as a long period, when they would be living on what he had. Later, of course, each would inherit a great deal; but for years—twenty years, perhaps—she was to live on his income. Now—

When he looked down at her again, her eyes were open, so fixed in their contemplation, that involuntarily he whispered:

"Awake, Jinny?"

A faint smile came to her lips. She stirred.

"Ted?"

He met the profundity of her look.

"What?"

"I want you to marry me now—quietly, some day soon."

Unfortunate phrasing! He stiffened. Quick sensitive feeling of the change in her, the right by power to take the initiative. His face clouded.

"You know, then, that everything is coming to you?" He drew a long breath. "You realize what that means?"

"Yes."

"It's rather staggering." He looked at her wistfully. "Wish I could, Jinny."

"Marry me and take me away, Ted."

"You really feel like that?"

"You're the one thing I want in the whole world."

He looked away suddenly, frowned.

"It can't be done that way." He remembered their talk in the garden of the Berkshires. "Not now."

She shivered, sat up.

"Some things I've got to do first. You know that?"

"Yes."

"You'll feel that way later. You're just tired now, Jinny dear."

"I suppose so."

"It's not because I don't want to—" He looked down at his fingers, playing on the steering wheel. "You ought to get my feeling about this. We've said certain things to each other. We've got to go through with them."

She shook her head unconvinced.

"Tomorrow you'll see it so. I'm right, Jinny."

Was he right? She wondered. Strange, elusive thing, happiness—one moment to be seized, one moment gone. For what had been given, what would be taken away? A sense of foreboding—not to be reasoned down. A woman's intuitions.

Chapter Sixteen

THE valet knocking on the door startled Larrabee from a heavy sleep.

"Come in." Resentfully, still hugging the pillow, his eyes still closed, he growled out: "What the devil time is it?"

"'Alf after eleven, sir." This in a high nasal voice.

"Good Lord!"

His head was heavy and his head throbbed. He tried to remember. What the deuce had he done to make him feel like this? It had been a late party. Yes, he remembered that. Dance somewhere, bridge, and then a few rounds of poker until four with Lancaster, Standing and that Englishman. He must have drunk more than he had realized. How much more? He managed to get one eye open and surveyed the room, as the valet, drawing the curtains, let in a blinding flood of sunshine. His trousers were pendant from the electric-light bracket; his shirt decorated the mirror, and one shoe on the bureau was sprouting violets.

"Now, how the deuce did that happen?" he thought sulkily. "Violets—don't remember any violets."

"Thought you might relish a little breakfast, sir!"

"Good Lord, Peters, a cup of coffee!"

"Ready, sir."

"Must have had something up the nose last night, Peters. Feel a little rocky this morning."

"You were a bit squiffy, sir."

With his awakening senses something odd in the inflection arrested his attention. He sat up and stared. It was Peters' trousers and Peters' coat, all right; then the valet turned, and he looked up into the mocking eyes and malicious smile of Kitty Flanders.

"What the devil!"

"You'll be feeling better, sir, after a swallow of coffee!"

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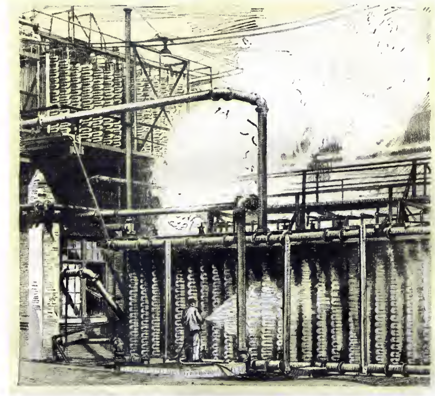

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He broke out laughing.

"Kitty, you little imp!"

Shouts from the other rooms, interspersed with feminine giggles.

"Well, you've caught us, all right," he said penitently. "I only hope the others feel worse than I do."

"And here is R. E. Morse sitting on the bed." She suited the action to the word and held up an admonitory finger. "Bad boy!"

"Don't! I feel rotten enough already."

"Have you forgotten that you are lunching with your fiancée?" She said it maliciously.

He frowned, and glanced at the breakfast-tray which had been placed at his bedside.

"Sit quiet. He shall be fed."

"Coffee!"

"Yes sir, right away, sir. Two lumps it is, and cream last."

She gave him the cup, and approaching a little nearer, dug a spoon carefully into the grapefruit.

"Angel!"

"I do know how to take care of a bad boy, don't I, Teddy dear?" she said sympathetically.

"Kitty, you're a darling!"

"Remember, I'm your second-best girl."

"You certainly are that!"

She blew him a kiss, her eyes shining.

"That's not what a valet should do. Open your mouth."

Clarice Coster, likewise in male attire, peeped around the door.

"Well, of all the paralyzing sights! There isn't a man in the world I'd do that for."

"Patient's doing very nicely, thank you. How's Charley Lancaster?"

"Sulky as a bear. Refuses to get up."

"Try a wet sponge."

"You're the only one can do anything with him."

KITTY frowned, a quick admonitory glance. "In a minute."

She continued feeding Ted, bending still closer.

"What a boy you are, Ted dear—incorrigible, never ready to stop. Well, you've earned the right to play awhile." She said it defiantly, as though defending him from some distant challenge. "My Lord, if I'd stuck it out over there four years—open your mouth! What did you do? Drink them all under the table and put them away to bed? You would!"

"Can't remember."

He hoped it was true.

"Another cup. Here you are. Don't worry, I wont tell on you. We've only one life, haven't we?"

"So they say."

"Guess we're a good deal alike, Ted," she said, smiling down on him tenderly. "We were made to play. *Joie de vivre!* That's me, too. Only you've been so serious lately. Not like the old Teddy Bear. Nothing wrong? Nothing with you and Jean?" She said it with an air of indifference, but the look in her eyes was watchful.

"Not yet."

"Well, if there is, come to me. Good pals? Good pals always, Ted?"

"Sure thing, Kitty."

"Some girls are lucky! Well, hurry and dress."

She looked at him intently a moment, and then touching her fingers to her lips, applied them to his.

"Ted, you are the sweetest thing in the world. If it weren't for Jean, I'd be terribly in love with you."

"Scoot! I'm getting up."

She frowned and disappeared. Presently her voice was heard in the next room.

"Amusing little kid," he thought. "Harum-scarum, but heaps of fun. Rotten breaks in life, but she keeps her chin up with the best."

He liked Kitty—guileless, the right sort, a real comrade. He liked Kitty. Of other women he was always a little suspicious. Rather fond of him, too. Not the first time he had perceived it, a perception which did not prejudice him in the least against her, and this morning, indeed, was rather soothing.

He arose wearily and resorted to a cold shower. He was decidedly remorseful, dissatisfied with himself.

"What a damn' fool I am!"

He began to dress moodily. The prospect of the luncheon did not appeal. Jean disliked the Standings; the Englishman was more or less of a bounder; and there was a certain Mrs. Bolton of the party who was flagrantly fast. He knew the look that would come into Jean's eyes. One more misunderstanding, one more thing that would pass without comment to rankle in their memories. Lately, somehow, he seemed always to be putting his foot in it.

HE returned to his room and took up a pile of letters, accumulation of several days: invitations for week-ends, a cruise in the Mediterranean, invitation for the hunting season in Herford County. He threw them down with an oath.

"Friends be damned! I'm sick of friends. When I die a premature death I want some one to put on my tombstone: 'Slain by His Friends.'"

If he had wanted an excuse for the failure of the last five months, he could rightfully ascribe it to his friends. That was the trouble. Where the average man had five, he had a hundred. Society needed him. Society pursued him and reclaimed him whenever he had sought to break away.

He had made several brave but futile attempts. He had renounced the world and gone in the hot month of July to New York, taken to himself a bewildered, bespectacled tutor, who drank champagne with him each night and strove desperately by day to erect the foundation of an engineering career. At the end of eight weeks Larrabee had been appalled at his ignorance, at the stupendous amount of preparation ahead, appalled at his own mental incapacity for concentrated study. Confinement depressed him. He craved the exhilaration of open-air competition. Whereupon the best but not the wisest of friends had carried him off for some glorious hunting in the Canadian Rockies. It was to be but an interlude. He had taken a dozen text-books with him.

Ostensibly, now, he had a desk in a broker's office. New disillusionment. When he had started to buckle down and learn the business, his announcement had been greeted with tolerant smiles. He had been told to go out and play—play with the right persons, of course, who, to oblige the best of companions, would place their orders through him. Disillusionizing, but revelatory of the interdependence of business and society.

He had gone to his father and discussed the prospects of a political career. Nothing simpler: a year or two in the State legislature from a convenient district, a term in the State senate, then an easy trip to Congress. Too sincere to deceive himself, he saw that he was nothing by himself. His value was as his father's son. A political career meant a path cleared for him and a nomination more or less paid for. He went away promising to think it over. Rather galling to his pride—his pride already keenly sensitive.

He had considered going into business. There were several friends with schemes for promotion who had hinted at partnership, if he'd supply the capital. He had written to his father. The answer had been laconic.

"My dear boy: Know your own limitations. You're as much fitted for business as I am to run a female seminary. You have

"If You Hear of Anything"—

TWO men, neighbors, were seated in the smoking car of a suburban express. As the train pulled out the better dressed man turned to the other genially. "Well, Jim, how are they treating you? Keeping you busy?" The man called Jim slowly shook his head. "I am being let out the first of the month . . . too old . . . If you hear of anything, I wish you'd let me know."

THE tragedy of men and women who are "too old" is occurring day after day. The same heart-breaking anxiety. The same hurt pride and reluctance to have the world know that they are no longer of worth and importance in business affairs.

One by one the influences which work against healthful and happy living are being overcome. Life expectancy is being lengthened, disease is being stamped out, housing and working conditions are being improved. And now the next great forward movement is taking shape—to free old age from dependence and want.

It is a splendid sign of the times that great railroad systems, banking institutions, large industrial corporations and practically all lines of business are working out plans either to provide retirement incomes for their employees or to place their existing plans on a sound and scientific basis.

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Some of these systems are good, some fair and some hopelessly involved. Some, inspired by generosity but not soundly based, may result in costs so heavy as to make their continuance impracticable. Haphazard pension plans which are almost certain to come to grief should be replaced by scientific reserve methods.

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If you are a worker, wondering about your old age, or an employer, planning pensions for the workers in your business or your home, send for "Sound Retirement Plans and What They Should Provide". Mailed free on request.

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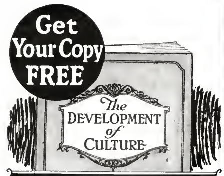

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"Your old Dad."

"P. S. Time you married and settled down."

Tbis from his father, who knew Jean disapproved of him and refused to enter bis bome. It was as though he had written:

"My boy, know your luck. There are only a few prize packages around like the Waddington millions!"

There was a letter from his mother. He picked it up, besitated, glanced through it and tore it slowly to pieces. No need to read it through. He knew the contents; ten pages imploring bim to give up his bachelor life and to settle down to a home with a woman of distinction and ideals. It hurt him.

Everyone irritated him with references to his approaching felicity. Everyone, of course, expected him to marry Jean. Clarice Coster only yesterday had said:

"Why such mystery, Ted? When is the fatal date?"

His friends joked him.

"Time's getting short! Not many more parties like this!"

And day by day the prospect grew fainter to him as he felt her drawing away from him, his doubts changing to a conviction that the breaking-point was only a question of time.

WHEN Larrabee emerged, the Honorable Crawford Lewis, long, lank, pink and blond, was already dressed.

"How do you feel?"

"Fairish. We were a little blotto last night, weren't we?"

"Rather. How's Charley?"

Charley Lancaster—the separation from his wife was already known—was decidedly ragged and shaky until Peters arrived with tbe pick-me-ups.

Outside the great house a horn shrieked impatiently.

"Lord, what an hour to get up!" said Lancaster sulkily.

Two cars were waiting, and the unsympathetic smiles of the ladies. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Standing, their hosts; Clarice Coster; Kitty; and a Mrs. Bolton, a tall thin, auburn-haired young woman of the spring crop of *divorcées*. Tbe Honorable Crawford Lewis took tbe seat next to Mrs. Standing, with whom he was engaged in a serious flirtation; Clarice Coster and Charley Lancaster were in the back.

"Me in front with Teddy," said Kitty to Fred Standing and Mrs. Bolton. "And we'll promise not to look around without fair warning." She suited the action to the words, settled down close to his shoulder and patted his knee. "Need a little affection and sympathy this morning, Ted dear?"

"Help a lot."

"You do need some one to look after you—some one who understands."

"Probably."

After a silence, gently, in a sweet voice:

"Wbat's wrong, Ted?"

"Rotten headache."

"Not what I mean."

"What then?"

"You're just a little unhappy, aren't you?"

"What the deuce should make me unhappy?"

"Don't be so gruff. You can be so gruff. You frighten the life out of poor little me. I only wanted to give you a little advice."

His face clouded.

"Everyone gives me advice."

"But I care a lot about you. It's different between us—you and I and Jean. We've always gone on together. I care a lot about you, Ted."

He felt he had been unnecessarily rough.

"You're a mighty good sort, Kitty."

Her face lit up. She patted bis arm.

"That's nicer. Don't delay too long, Ted."

"Delay what?"

"You understand. Marry Jean, of course. Why don't you?"

He stiffened. She saw bis lips set in sternness, waited, hoping for an answer.

"Ted!" There was another pressure on his arm. "Is it the money that bothers?"

"I can't discuss it."

"Ted dear." She drew a long breath. "I know you both, and I see—I see danger ahead. Don't grow too far apart! You never know."

Sincere? Probably, as far as she recognized or wished to recognize her motives.

He did not answer.

"I'd do anything in the world for you—and Jean."

"All right. Thanks. But now—do you mind?—let's drop the subject."

She drew away from him, remained silent, suddenly burst into laughter.

"Look out behind. Some one has got to amuse me. Ted's a bear. I'm going to turn round. One, two, three!"

Kitty's remarks aroused again the willful obstinacy in Larrabee. Well meant, of course; but confound it, why was everyone offering him advice, advice with always a warning conveyed? Then this mood passed. Something irrepressible awoke in him, the excitement of coming again to her. Her figure rose to his imagination, precious, and full of cbarming dignity. He loved the poise of her head, the quiet grace of her moving body, the frank, steady meeting of her glance, devoid of the usual trifling coquetries: the nature that did not give in little bits to many men because it needed to give so completely to one. Contrite, dissatisfied with himself, feeling a little helpless, knowing his tremendous need of her, he wondered if it were too late. Could he go to her again, with the old feeling of frank confidence, make confession and turn to her for guidance? Better to talk out everything, than this withholding from each other the thoughts which divided them. Make her understand what was so difficult for him in the new conditions, the revolt, the obstinate pride from wbich he suffered. If it were not too late?

"And here we come to Jean's little shack!"

Kitty's flippant voice rudely dispelled his dreams. The little shack was the thousand-acre estate that Jean had taken over from her stepmother rather than see it go under the hammer. All the hopelessness of his situation fell on him with redoubled force. His pride asserted itself, ugly, rebellious, grim, as he thought of living on his wife's money, playing the steward, the majordomo, to such a future!

"Hell—I'm tired of acting the schoolboy on probation. Be good and get a prize! I'm not myself. I haven't been myself for months! What's the use of going on? There can only be one end! Let's have it over!"

Not the first time he had come with such a determination. But at the first look into her wistful eyes, his glance went down, and every pang was stilled with the sheer yearning joy to be back once more in her presence.

Chapter Seventeen

LARRABEE had hoped for a favoring moment of intimacy. He saw at once this was to be denied him, and the discovery increased bis irritation. Several cars were already parked on the great esplanade; another was arriving behind them. He had visualized Jean waiting for them in the gardens or on the steps, the simple familiar figure he had known, of the Ford car and the four-room apartment off Lexington Avenue. The new formality and the scale oppressed him. It was the first time he had come to her in the home of her father since the frantic race through the night. Then she had returned as a stranger. He was the

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stranger now. He felt it as they were ushered through the vast hall, passed along from footman to footman through a succession of drawing-rooms—had a sense of not fitting into the picture.

JEAN came forward as their names were announced, separating herself from the dozen guests already arrived. For a moment, at the touch of her hand, the quick welcome in her eyes, he felt the familiar thrill, felt it with a little clinging depression. Then before a word could be said, she was gone from him, and he was swallowed up in introductions. He divined that they had been invited as an afterthought, caught a glance of Jean directed at Mrs. Bolton, and realized the social incongruity of her introduction into this group: an ambassador, his wife and daughter, a Senator, a French title, an English novelist, several women of a conservative set who talked to him of his mother. Mrs. Bolton certainly did not fit in, and Charley Lancaster added nothing to the picture.

"Act refined, Ted; we're lunching at the White House," said Kitty in a whisper. "Hello, here's Brains."

Victor Daggett entered. It was Jean and Victor now. Kitty was looking at him with an expressive arching of her eyebrows. Ted did not notice her. His eyes were on Jean, estimating the value of her welcoming smile. Daggett knew everyone, greeted everyone with ease, at home in this atmosphere which was foreign to him. Daggett was the enemy, if not for the personal challenge, at least for the world he represented. Who knows? Perhaps the danger was more immediate than he suspected. Jean approached, speaking to Kitty, looking at him.

"Ages since I've seen you, and I only heard by chance you were down." Her eyes said: "Why didn't you let me know?"

"Ran down yesterday," he answered. "The governor's having a big house-warming tonight, you know."

"The party will break up after lunch. Wait awhile. I want really to see you."

Nothing could be more cordial. Yet he remained ill at ease under the fixity of her glance. Why were her eyes always asking questions? Kitty gave his hand a warning pressure. "For heaven's sake, smile, Ted. This isn't a funeral!"

He shrugged his shoulders. He was watching Jean as she moved among her guests quiet, self-possessed, interested, a personage. How naturally she had fitted into her new surroundings, and how remote was the Jean he had once known! Growing apart, Kitty had warned him.

AT lunch Daggett obsessed Larrabee. They sat opposite, each one removed from Jean, who, of course, was flanked by the ambassador and the English novelist. The conversation became general: discussion of the English political swing back to conservatism, Eastern problems, anecdotes of Shaw, Lloyd-George, Clémenceau, speculations on the progress of Fascism. Daggett advanced the theory that the rise of Mussolini portended a new phase in political evolution, the recognition of the limitations of democracy. When his view was challenged, he developed his theme with agility, whipping up the discussion, holding his own. The rise of democracy had been a struggle for equalization of opportunity. The movement had outstripped its object. It was destroying intelligent leadership in the necessity of appealing to the mob. Italy was significant because it represented the first voluntary recession back to authority. He cited France's predicament and indicated significant conditions in America. He spoke with authority, easily, excited general interest.

Jean was visibly impressed, as he meant her to be, shrewd enough to display his worth in such company. From time to time he turned to address a point to her understanding. Once or twice she made objections. Instantly he treated them with extra consideration, re-stated them with added emphasis, and seeming to regard the issue from her point of view, convinced her of her error.

Larrabee had not said ten words. The discussion interested him despite himself, though he listened gloomily. Everything seemed deliberately staged to accentuate the brilliancy of Victor Daggett and to disclose his own shortcomings. Was Jean also making comparisons?

"I suppose that is what she wants me to be like," he thought.

He felt awkward, out of place. Once or twice a question had occurred to him that seemed to him would illuminate a confused point, but he lacked courage to phrase it, fearing to appear at a disadvantage. His jealousy of Daggett, which had long been slumbering, began to be acute, stirred by the latent antagonism that the man of action feels for the man of reflection. He had come with a longing to find again the Jean of his romance, and instead he found himself assisting at the parading of a rival.

HE was, of course, in no doubt as to the intentions of Victor Daggett. He knew that people no longer took it for granted that Jean would marry him. Quite natural. She could pick and choose. Men of achievement, of established careers, celebrities, mature men with mature ambitions, were seeking her as a part of their achievements and ambitions. No wonder society should be incredulous that with everything open to her, her final decision should go to a glorified idler with nothing but a happy-go-lucky disposition to offer. And yet—he smiled grimly. Jean looked up at that moment, saw the smile, puzzled over it. He was thinking:

"And yet if I'd been willing, she would be mine today. Queer world. What an ass Daggett would think me!"

Well, they had drifted apart. It didn't take a fool to see that. They had risen; and still interested, a little group about Jean and Daggett was continuing the discussion. He stood a moment watching the awakened light in her eyes and then moved away. Again the ugly suggestion returned to him. Had Jean deliberately planned the comparison to open his eyes? At this moment Mrs. Bolton, to his increasing irritation, slipped her hand through his arm and began to chatter. He took the first opportunity to escape.

The party broke up. Those who remained organized the bridge tables in the red salon. Larrabee came over to Jean.

"Make a moment for me somehow. I've got to talk with you."

"Rather difficult, isn't it, Ted?"

"Good heavens, am I never to have a chance with you alone?"

She looked at him, caught the look of irritation, and her face went grave.

"The library?"

"No, no. Where we can be alone."

She reflected. They would be playing bridge for some time yet. Kitty was amusing Daggett, who appeared anything but amused.

"I'll be back in a moment," she announced casually. "I'm going to consult Ted as a veterinary."

They went past the stables and took a path that wound through the bared woods. Underneath, leaves stirred like the silky swish of water. Ahead, white, virginal huddling of the birches. Each sensed the gravity of

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the moment, shrank from the inevitable word.

"How about this?"

"No, a little farther, if you don't mind." She said it nervously. Not in the grove where she had played as a child. "There's a quiet spot a little farther."

She stepped in front of him, leading the way through the evergreens which had overgrown the path. Each step seemed to plunge into the unknown. Then the ripple of water, a stretch of clean sand and a sheltered cove.

"Well, let's sit down," he said awkwardly.

She glanced upward at the sternness of his eyebrows, at the eyes with their far-away look, and leaned back against a pine tree. He took a position not too near her, thought a moment and drew out his pipe, started to fill it, slipped it back into his pocket.

"You know, of course, what I am going to say?"

She did not look at him.

"I'd rather say it now, than later."

She did not answer.

"You know the French saying: 'When a tooth hurts you, have it out.' I'll try to make it as painless as possible."

Firm, all hesitation gone from his voice. She met his eyes, saw the smile he had summoned up, understood. He would go down gallantly. Her heart rebelled.

"Ted, I don't want to talk now."

He shook his head.

"I'd rather clear the air. It hasn't been an easy time, you know. I haven't been myself—well, for a long time. I can't go on like this. Question of self-respect. Jinny, I guess I realize now—I'm not the man you're going to marry."

A MIST before her eyes. Sudden cold contraction of her whole being. The thing voiced at last that she had striven to drive from her mind.

"You know it too. If you wont acknowledge it, it's because you hate to hurt me. I told you once I wouldn't trade on your pity. And I wont!"

She was staring away from him.

"Are you jealous, Ted?"

She said it so low that he had to make her repeat it.

"Jealous!" He exploded at the idea. "Good God, Jean, why drag in a thing like that! That's so futile! Here I am trying to make you see what's happened between us, and you accuse me of jealousy!"

"Are you so sure?"

His eyes wavered from the steady question in her glance. He picked up a handful of pebbles and juggled them in his hand.

"You're making it hard."

"I want the truth."

"Well, who wouldn't be jealous?" he said at last. "I never see you—and when I do, it's always like today—to make me feel how far apart we've grown."

She watched him as he began to fling pebbles aimlessly, as he had flung away the splendid opportunities of life.

"Whose fault is it?" she said indignantly.

"You've gone into another world. I don't fit in it. Oh, I understand. You made it clear enough today."

She turned on him in amazement.

"Ted, you don't think I did it on purpose!"

"No," he said at length. "No, you couldn't do anything like that. But I got it just the same."

"Are you jealous of Victor Daggett?"

A gesture scattered the remaining pebbles. His hands came together in a quick convulsive grip. Flare-up of temper—fight for control.

"That was unnecessary. Wait." In a moment he took up again, "Jean, let's try not to hurt each other—say things we'll regret."

"I don't understand you," she said without relenting.

"What do you mean?"

"Do you still love me, Ted?"

"Oh, I see. You mean—is there anyone else?" Incongruous thought, that! His eyes filled with her loveliness, looked quickly away. "No—and there never will be!"

"Then I don't understand at all."

"You don't understand why I haven't made something of myself," he said solemnly. "I've tried, and it was rather disillusionizing."

"Ted Larrabee to give up a fight!"

"That hurts!"

She was making it very difficult. He could not tell her the truth, much as he longed to do it. He could not confess the rebellious pride in him, the difference that her fortune had made.

"You could be a little more generous, Jinny."

"Generous!" This hurt her, and she showed it. "Have I ever once criticized you? Haven't I been patient all these months?"

"Don't reproach me," he said miserably. "I can stand anything but that."

"I'm sorry."

She sprang up and went nervously to the water's edge. What instinct in her had wanted to break down his control, force the look of pain into his eyes, know how utterly tragic it was to him under the difficult smile? When she came back, she stood stiffly looking down at him, her handkerchief twisted and bruised in her nervous fingers.

"No, I will never understand that you could love me and yet say such things!"

He rose. An angry reply was on his lips, but he fought it down.

"I guess we've gotten where we can't understand each other any more."

Her hands closed.

"Yes, we had better go back."

He stared at her.

"I don't think you have any right to be angry with me. I'm doing the right thing as I see it."

"But what of me?"

Had her eyes filled with tears, with weakness and yearning, how easy the solution would have been! But they looked out at him accusingly, in righteous indignation. He laughed—not very successfully.

"You? Why, you'll marry some one with brains, some one worth while, and you'll feel a little more charitable some day—when you look back. . . . . Well, that's that! All right, let's get back."

HE took a few steps, stopped, turned to where she was standing rigidly, hesitated, came back.

"Don't let's spoil all that's gone before, dear," he said huskily. "We can't help what's happened. It's just life, that's all."

She was looking beyond him, not seeing him.

"Come, Jinny, let's go back."

She came out of her rigidity, stared as though she had not understood his question, caught her breath.

"Can't we go back, Ted, to what was before?"

"Rather funny, that," he said grimly. "No, I don't intend to see you, Jinny, not for a long time—a damn' long time."

"But it isn't fair!" she cried miserably.

"That's the tough part. When one thing goes, everything goes. Well, that's the way it is."

A crash in the underbrush, a voice calling. Then Kitty and Daggett approaching through the trees.

"This isn't final," she said rebelliously.

"You're wrong, Jinny. It is."

"Hello there, hostess!" cried Kitty's voice. "Guests are on a strike. Everyone's going."

Kitty's quick eyes searching their faces.

The ensuing chapters of this fine novel by the author of "The Salamander" bring a striking climax. Be sure to read them in the next, the January, issue.

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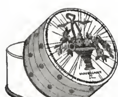

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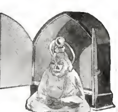

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MENNEN SKIN BALM

GETTING MARRIED

(Continued from page 58)

"Oh, yes," said Carolyn. "She suggested that I consult you."

"I didn't," called Mrs. Master. . . . . "Oh, how do you do, Henry! I wanted to telephone, and when I picked up the receiver, I heard you chatting to my daughter."

"I thought you said I had hetter consult Mr. Swayne, Mother," said Carolyn in a surprised tone. "But mayhe I am mixing things."

"I'll arrange the job for you," Swayne said, "and then, if I may, I'll call and give you some advice about the work. You see, it's rather irregular to put in an untrained person."

"Oh, that will he delightful," said Carolyn.

There was a pause, so palpably filled with waiting that Mrs. Master said:

"Yes, do come, Henry. We'll be so glad to see you."

"Thank you; good-hy."

Three receivers clicked, and then Mrs. Master said indignantly:

"Carolyn, you are too unscrupulous for words. How dare you drag me into this?"

"All's fair in love and war, Mumsy," Carolyn said, "and this is hoth."

A FORTNIGHT later Creston had taken on its customary autumn change. The poplar trees were minting a harvest of gold; the maples were turning scarlet, the oaks hrown; the elms were thinning to the advantage of their lovely Gothic arches. Asters glowed in the garden, and chrysanthemums were coming to hud. The market gardeners were advertising their winter vegetahles, pears and apples. Overnight railway employees wore a harassed appearance, hoarding-house keepers became expectant, hundreds of disreputahle little motorcars shot up and down the hills. Five thousand students had caused the city to bulge and hum and race.

Carter Knight passed up the steps of the Fine Arts Building, aware that many good-looking girl students were wondering who he was. He was tall and so handsome in a healthy hrown way that girls for a good many years would wonder who he was. But as he was not yet used to the glory of his instructorship in English, this wondering admiration was as incense to his ready nostrils. He hoped the girls he would draw for his general English Literature course would be pretty, and if possible intelligent. He strolled into the English office, and there he saw Carolyn Master's dark head bent over a desk. She was so husily engaged in sorting cards that she did not look up. Knight stared at her hlankly a moment. Then he straightened and smiled broadly.

"Hel-lo!" he exclaimed.

Carolyn looked up hlankly. Then she smiled genially.

"Oh, hello, Carter! Look here, is there some one in your class called Motherhead? It sounds to me like a made-up name."

"But what are you doing here?"

"Working. Mother says you called up twice last week, hut I've been practicing this joh and didn't have time to call you hack."

Carolyn hent over the cards again. Her pose was concentrated, and presently it became compelling to Knight.

"You mean it?" he said incredulously. "You're working?"

Carolyn looked up again, her smile a little impatient.

"Yes, I'm awfully keen on the joh. Mayhe it's the proverhial new hroom sweeping clean."

She began to typewrite on a small white card. Knight watched her for a moment, his incredulous smile fading. Then he went over to his desk and picked up his mail. All the letters palpahly of a husiness nature were carefully slit for him. It happened that he hated opening envelopes. He was unaware that he had mentioned this peculiarity to Carolyn. He flashed a grateful glance at her hent head. Carolyn, perfectly aware of it, grinned wickedly to herself. She knew that presently he would wonder, uneasily, if she had happened to linger over the handwriting or postmarks of any of his personal mail.

"But his prevailing impression," she thought, "will he that I am here for a joh and am keen on my job."

Knight read his mail, strolled out of the room, and made discreet inquiries from the head of the English Department. From him he learned that Miss Master had applied for a position as filing clerk to Dean Swayne, who, assuring himself of her competency, had appointed her to the first vacant place, which happened to he in the English office. Upon this a certain tensity in Knight relaxed—a tensity which he did not admit, a certain guardedness which was his constant shield and huckler where girls were concerned. Living in a town which was hetter dowered with girls than with men, Knight set a perhaps undue value on his freedom.

For two weeks Carolyn continued her preoccupation with her work. Whenever Knight entered the English office, she was very husy. If he spoke to her, she responded with a hright, preoccupied smile. Twice when he called her up in the evening, she pleaded engagements. Old tactics, hut always effective, she hoped. They appeared to he, because one afternoon just before she closed her desk for the day, he came into the office and announced that he intended to walk home with her.

"You're running this devotion to your job into the ground," he said. "I suppose you wont tell me you have to walk home alone so you can think over your work for tomorrow?"

"Why, no, I wont," Carolyn said. "Of course, I'd love to have you go with me, Carter. Just a minute. I have to run into another office. Then I'll get my hat and coat, and we'll go."

She smiled at him ahsently, left the room and hurried down the corridor to Swayne's office. He sat at his desk, correcting proofs. Carolyn smiled at him hrilliantly.

"Those old proofs," she said, "pasted together, they would reach from here to New York City. Stood on end—"

"Yes, yes?" agreed Swayne, his tone inquiring.

"I ran in to ask you if you wouldn't leave them and come over tonight and have supper with Mother and me. You've only made us one little stingy call since I came to my senses and went to work in this interesting world."

SWAYNE passed a hand over his graying curls. She was an alluring puss, this girl, looking very much as her mother must have looked twenty years before.

"Is your mother supporting this invitation?" he asked.

"Of course," Carolyn said, meantime thinking: "There's the soup from last night we could warm over. I'll make Carter walk hy the hutcher's, and I'll carry home a steak. A ramekin of chestnuts, tomato and lettuce salad; and if I telephone at once, it wont he too late to order ice-cream."

"I'd love to come if you'll not make any trouble for me," Swayne accepted.

"We never make a fuss for our friends," Carolyn said, smiling adorahly, "—only for strangers."

"Yes," thought Swayne, "a girl like that certainly does make a man's heart heat faster."

"If I may use your telephone," Carolyn said, "I'll tell Mother you're coming."

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WE WERE IN THE MIDST OF AN HOUR OF ROMANCE

(Letters from Lovers: III)

"I found myself listening for the silver splashing of a fountain—the sound of a far faint voice from a minaret. I found myself looking for a lattice, patterned in the purple of the night—for a swaying lamp wrought in arabesques of orange—for we were in the midst of an hour out of romance—with you at the heart of its beauty."

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"His mood was so dreamy and tender. He had never been like that before. And yet—could it have been—the temple incense?"

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She dialed her home number and said indulgently:

"That you, Mumsy? Carrie speaking. I'm telephoning from Dean Swayne's office. He says he'll accept your invitation to supper." She allowed time for her Mother's indignant gasp and went on: "Yes, I'll tell him what you say. Only Mumsy, I forgot to order the ice-cream. Sorry, but we had a heavy day in the office. It's not too late if you order it now. I'll not forget to bring the meat home, as per your command."

"You're a young sophisticated serpent," hissed her mother guardedly.

"Yes, I told him seven o'clock—that is, I *will* tell him. Good-by, Mumsy dear."

Carolyn put down the receiver and innocently met Swayne's quizzical eyes.

"I'll bet a dollar your mother didn't intend to have ice-cream. It was an idea of your own to crowd it on her because you remembered that I like it. Your mother hates it."

Carolyn smiled with frank eyes.

"Goodness, Mr. Swayne," she said, "I haven't the brains to deceive you even about a thing like ice-cream. No, Mother said to get it for you. She remembered too."

"Ice-cream or pie, I look forward to this evening," Swayne said.

As she left the office, Carolyn mused on the conceit of men. "As if," she reflected, "I had the inclination to remember the tastes of a man of forty. He's old enough to know, even if he is a bachelor, that ice-cream is the easiest thing people can have for dessert."

Rejoining Knight, she got her coat and hat, and they swung down the wide steps of the Fine Arts Building. Knight always liked to walk with Carolyn; her pace fitted his, and she showed a zest in motion that matched his own.

As they struck across the campus, he said: "It's one long time since I saw you, Carolyn."

"Is it? Well, I've put away childish things. Don't see much of the crowd any more. Carter, I just love working. It's so satisfying."

He looked at her warily.

"It's awfully hard to believe that, Carolyn. You've been such a girl for play. Somehow I can't just assimilate this sudden taste of yours for work."

CAROLYN was silent a moment. Then she decided to tell her friend some half-truths. She had been sufficiently old-fashioned and sufficiently popular to expect men to pursue her. It had been only during the past few months that she had found herself denuded of suitors. This was to be expected in a college town, where the male population was largely transient, but Carolyn hadn't happened to realize it until she was herself a sufferer by the exodus of various attractive seniors and graduate students. It was not in tune with her temperament to be a husband-hunter, but she had sufficient adaptability to sway her temperament to a vital need, and sufficient working knowledge of men to support whatever technique she selected.

Looking at her thoughtful face, Knight dropped his voice, and added:

"Unless, Carrie, some of your mother's investments— By Jove, I'd be sorry—"

"Thanks, no, it isn't that," Carolyn said. "Mother and I are what you call comfortably off. That is, if we do with a cleaning woman and a washwoman and without a cook, we can have a car and all the clothes we want. If we have the maid, we may even keep the car, but we go short on furs and summer travel. No, our little nest-eggs are good and warm."

Knight waited.

"I'm going to tell you the truth, as a girl rarely tells it to a man," Carolyn said.

Knight stiffened. When a girl who was perhaps halfway interested in him made that remark, it meant, his experience had taught him, a thumping lie.

Carolyn looked at him with candid eyes and really did tell him something more than half the truth.

"I'm not any more contented to go on playing than you would be," she said, "though up to a few months ago I was perfectly satisfied to fill my days in with a little housework, a little shopping, a little reading and a lot of social doings. But all that has begun to pall. I want to get my teeth in something worth while. I am not going to pose and say that I yearn for a career. I don't, particularly. But I want to count in some useful way. What I hope is that I shall marry. But I'm not going to get married just for the sake of the married state."

JUST here, when she entered upon the false part of her well-considered speech, Carolyn turned a singularly limpid look upon Knight. It was just here that he began to believe her.

"I hope," Carolyn said, making her voice brave, "that I shall marry, but it's got to be the right man. He hasn't come along yet, or if he has, I haven't recognized him. Maybe it's true that people may all of a sudden fall in love either with a new acquaintance or with an old friend—"

"No," interrupted Knight, looking at her with a kindling glance, feeling what a dear and tender and altogether delightful girl she was. "No, I don't believe it's that way with love. A man is friends with the right sort of a girl for a long time, and the two draw closer and closer until they find they have so much in common that they want to go on sharing it for the rest of their lives."

A little warning ticked in Carolyn's brain. The fish was pretty nearly on the hook now. It behooved her to play her bait and her line warily.

"No doubt that's the way love comes," she said, her voice impersonal. "I may miss it. In that case I want a central interest in my life. The best interest would be one's own home, husband and children. Failing that, would come work, with one's mother's home a secondary interest. I am trying to qualify for whatever life intends for me." Carolyn's tone suggested the utmost passivity. Only the most suspicious could have suspected her of husband-hunting. "If I do marry," she went on, "whatever training I may have gained will be useful in my own home. If I don't, I'll still have the work. And I'm tremendously interested in my job so far, and I'm succeeding in it, too."

It never occurred to Knight that Carolyn was expressing to him a sentiment that millions of girls have said to millions of men. Her remarks struck him as singularly fresh. He admired her for thinking out things for herself, and for taking the initiative. It wasn't as if she were taking this initiative in an aggressive way, doing anything unwomanly or anything that would bring her in competition with the world of men. There wasn't, he decided, a more feminine creature anywhere than Carolyn Master.

His look upon her was approving. Carolyn believed that the quality of it would have altered had she lingered on the note of sentiment.

"I take my hat off to you, Carolyn," he said. "I can see your point of view exactly. You must be twenty-three now—"

"Twenty-two," said Carolyn softly.

"Is it? I thought it was twenty-three. I wonder that more of the girls of the crowd don't get bored as you do with the eternal parties, and try to get something worth while to do. If they'd even study—I take my hat off to you and Ellen Blair."

"Ellen Blair?" said Carolyn, her voice rather sharp. She saw in the eye of her mind James Blair's sister, blonde, serious,

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wistful, appealing. 'Has Ellen got a job?"

"Oh, no, her people wouldn't allow that," said Knight with an unconscious snobbery for which Carolyn would gladly have boxed his ears. "No, but she's begun taking special work in English. I have her in the General Literature course. Hasn't she told you?"

"I've been so busy I've hardly seen her for two weeks," Carolyn said. "I should think she might be a good student if she put her mind on it, but she has certainly never before shown signs of taking to books."

"She says she finds it hard to begin," Knight remarked, "and she certainly does keep me after class every day, asking me questions. I'm always late to lunch. Of course it's my job, but then—well, a helpless girl gets on my nerves."

Carolyn silently began to improve her plan of campaign. If Ellen irritated Carter Knight, then he should occasionally be shown the two girls together to get the benefit of the contrast between them. She pushed the plan to the back of her mind, and began to talk to Knight of his work.

When they reached the Master house, Knight asked her if she would go with him to the theater that night.

"I wish I could," she said, "but Dean Swayne is coming for supper. Why don't you come too, Carter? We can go to the theater some other time."

Knight accepted, and Carolyn went into the house, walking on air. The two men would be given a good dinner, which she would have partly prepared, and each would see her receiving the attentions of the other. Excellent little plotter, Carolyn! She met her mother's protests with a whirlwind embrace, ordered the steak sent over by a special messenger, and set herself to making chestnut ramekins.

IF Carolyn had had a chart on which to mark her progress toward matrimony, she would have given it a long upward curve that night. The dinner was perfect, and well served by a pretty student upon whom Mrs. Master was accustomed to call when she entertained. Even when Carolyn allowed for the lambent attitude of well-fed man toward the women who have fed him,—provided they are good to look at,—and when she allowed also for the fact that there was present no other girl to compete with her, she felt that the occasion had considerably advanced her. Swayne watched her with softly parted lips and admiring eyes. He had a little the effect of a huge St. Bernard surveying the gambols of a kitten, but she hoped that Knight would not so interpret her manner. Knight's manner was certainly more interested than it had previously been. His already marked liking was tinctured with a new respect, even with something like deference.

"Ha," thought Carolyn, as the guests made a late departure, "something accomplished and something done to earn a night's repose."

She turned around with a satisfied face, to see her mother stifling something between a yawn and a sigh.

'You didn't mind the trouble, old dear, did you?" she asked with an unwonted solicitude.

"Of course not. But, Carolyn, do you truly like Henry Swayne very much? He's so very much older. Do we need to put him again on a dinner basis?"

Carolyn said musingly:

'Somehow, he doesn't seem to me as old as he did before I took a job. I truly am growing to like him more and more. Yes, do let's have him here as we do Carter or Ja— or any of the other boys, Mums. That is, unless you don't like him."

"Oh, I like him well enough," said Mrs. Master briefly. "Very well, Carrie; he's one of your length of men."

"Not much length," Carolyn said, following her mother upstairs, "but at long last, every decent woman's string must consist of just one."

By mid-November Carolyn managed to include Ellen Blair in her campaign. The two had always known each other and before Ellen's brother James had gone abroad, they had frequently been in the same small parties. Yet, so far as Carolyn's inclinations went, their contact had been casual. Now she walked with Ellen, drove with Ellen, lunched with Ellen. In some of these excursions Carolyn included Knight. She knew well enough that Ellen sometimes invited Knight to the Blair house to dinner without including her; but that too was a part of her plan.

So far as she could judge, Knight's attitude toward Ellen was compounded of irritation and a reluctant admiration. The admiration, Carolyn concluded, was for Ellen's marked good looks and for her money. The source of the irritation, she thought, lay in Ellen's helplessness, passivity, her supine acceptance of anyone else's views or will. Who wanted a perpetual echo? Certainly not Carolyn, and she thought certainly not Knight.

Yet while Knight's friendship for herself grew in warmth as the autumn waned, it did not change its character fast enough to suit Carolyn. If she had an objective in mind, she wanted to achieve it as quickly as possible. She decided, too, that the constant contrast with Ellen was not paying its way as speedily as it should. When the heavy snows came, she saw her route to more dynamic action. Tobogganing and ski-ing were strong winter sports in the college town. Carolyn was good at both. She knew she was at her best in sport clothes, especially in a scarlet sweater and a scarlet tam-o'-shanter with a gold-brown feather. She knew the color of her cheeks matched the color of her clothes, and that the gold-brown of her eyes was softer than the quality of the feather. Added to this a flashing smile, showing perfect little teeth —yes, Carolyn thought that the season of the winter sports would put the climax upon her essay in getting married.

The strong point in the situation was that Ellen was not good at winter sports. Her nose got blue and her mouth drooped in her efforts at endurance. Moreover she lost her breath on a toboggan, and used skiis with an expression of agony. Yet she couldn't bear to refuse any invitation, especially one in which Knight was included.

From the first day of their sports together, Carolyn was sure that she was gaining ground with Knight while Ellen was losing. It annoyed Knight to have to drag Ellen's toboggan to the top of the slide. Carolyn dragged her own. Carolyn saw his eyes frequently passing from one girl to the other. She knew that her own springy figure contrasted admirably with Ellen's droopiness, that her own zest was more inspiring than Ellen's martyred acceptance. Carolyn was sure that her future would be decided by New Year's.

But—it was decided upon the Saturday before Christmas.

ON that afternoon, which was a holiday for Carolyn, she drove to the Blair house, picked up Ellen with her skiis, and they proceeded to the steepest hill behind the town, where they were to meet Knight. They spoke but little as they went, and seeing Ellen's downcast face, Carolyn felt a spasm of pity and of self-reproach. She was being ruthless to this girl, was probably hurting her. It wasn't fair.

"I'm going to bring things to a head somehow," Carolyn reflected. "I'm behaving to Ellen like a man-eating tiger."

They parked the car, and Carolyn looked about her over the white world. The lake

was slate-gray, except for wide margins of ice. The houses seemed to crouch down into the snow, as if seeking warmtb. From the hills the cedars stood up, a string of quiet green against the snow. Carolyn drew in deep breaths. Sbe felt a sense of power, almost an exaltation. Nothing was going to daunt her, not cold, not obstacles.

"It's one bully world," she told Ellen.

"I hate this cold," Ellen said shiveringly. "I wonder how Jim will like it after his many months in hot countries."

"Well, if he doesn't come bome before June, he can get used to it gradually," Carolyn said carelessly.

"But his letter today said he'd arrive by New Year's. I suppose he'll get pneumonia the first thing."

CAROLYN was silent. Jim was coming home—after nearly a year's absence! Well, it didn't matter to her, except that she meant to be engaged before he came. She glanced across the snowy hills to see Knight bounding toward them, bis skiis across his shoulders. Her heart warmed to him. Here was a man with brains, humor, ambition, a love of outdoors—all the things she liked. He was her man. He ought to know it by this time. Since he apparently didn't, something must happen to bring him knowledge. Something, and at once.

As they put on their skiis, chatting and laughing, Carolyn had an inspiration. She would have an accident. She would stumble as they went down the hill, and sprain an ankle. There was the risk, as she did it, of really breaking her leg, but she must chance that. When he saw her maimed and brave, Knight would know where his heart had led him. He would have his reward—and she would have hers.

"I've never tried this bill," sighed Ellen as she rose to her feet.

"It's great. Go ahead. Let's see you do it first," bade Carolyn. She felt a touch of scornful pity for Ellen, who was shivering in her furs on the tumbled snow, looking fearfully down on the steep slope of the hill. As Ellen took a long breath and started, Carolyn turned to Knight with an animated face, and a carefully thought-out epigram on her lips. But it was never spoken. Only a few yards down the hill, one of Ellen's skiis struck a hummock of ice, and she collapsed in a heap and lay still.

"Oh!" cried Carolyn violently. "Damn the hellish luck!"

For a moment, as she plunged down the hill, side by side with Knight, she bad no pity for Ellen, only anger that Ellen should have accidentally plagiarized from her what she considered the strongest point of her technique.

She and Knight reached Ellen at the same moment and knelt on the snow beside her. She was unconscious. Knight lifted her against his breast. His face was tense, agonized.

"Speak to me, Ellen!" he called. "Speak to me, darling!"

Carolyn tugged at his arm. She shouted to him as across a great space—and, indeed, she felt as if a great space lay between them:

"What's this? What's tbis? You call ber darling as if you meant it. Are you engaged to her? I thought you didn't like her."

Knight raised his bead and stared at ber angrily.

"I don't; I mean I didn't. I mean I don't like her—I love her!" he shouted back. "I thought I was irritated all the time because she is so dependent. I see now I was just irritated because I felt my freedom slipping. What does it matter? What are you yelling for? Why don't you do something?"

"I will. I am. It's just so funny. You said you didn't believe in love at first sight, and here you are in love with Ellen."

"I never said any such tbing. It was you

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that said it," he returned crossly. "I never talked about love anyhow, never knew anything about it until now! Say, what are we talking about, anyway, with Ellen here—"

Carolyn knelt, laughing, and if at first her laughter had been bitter, presently its character changed. She was a good sport, and she laughed at herself.

"Why are you laughing like a hyena?" Knight said angrily. "It's no laughing matter. I don't know what to do, and I think her leg is broken."

Carolyn bounced to her feet.

"Rub her face with snow," she said. "I'll go and bring the blankets from the car, and then I'll drive to the nearest house and telephone for an ambulance. You tell Ellen what you've told me about loving her, and she'll forget her pain."

"They're so queer, men," she reflected. "He's forgotten already that he was halfway in love with me. He'll soon think that he'd have proposed to Ellen long ago if I hadn't been hanging around so much!"

SHE went with great strides down the hill to the spot where her car was parked, unstrapped her skiis, got out her rugs and plodded back up the hill. When she reached the two, Ellen's eyes were open, and her face was radiant. So was Knight's.

"Nothing's broken at all," he said joyfully. "She just fainted from the shock. She is delicately organized, Ellen is. I ought never to have let her try it."

"I'm afraid I'm really an indoors girl," Ellen said with a soft possessive smile at Knight. They had gone a long way, those two, in a couple of minutes, Carolyn decided—farther than she and Knight had gone in three months. She felt suddenly cold, as she looked across the valley to the icy hills, the slate-colored icy lake. It was a bleak world, she thought. Inside, her spirit, for the moment, drooped against the cold, just as Ellen's body drooped against the cold of nature. Only now Ellen had some one to protect her against all draughts that might attack body or soul.

She drove them both to the Blair house, gay with Christmas wreaths and ribbons. They forgot her as soon as they had descended from the car, though she waited a moment to see if they would wave to her from the front door. She drove home, put the car in the garage and went into the house. Her mother, she knew, was out for the afternoon, and of this she was glad, for it would take her some time to adjust herself to the fact that she must make a new campaign.

For Carolyn the next two hours shared the character of what the French called "a white night." Despite her ability to laugh at herself, she hated the sense that she had been beaten, and so easily, in a matter on which she had put all the brain she possessed—beaten by Ellen Blair, who had done just nothing. She hated to seem ridiculous in her own eyes. She saw and even enjoyed the irony of the fact that what she had planned to do deliberately had been done accidentally by Ellen; but she felt, somehow, inferior and bruised. She wept a good deal, telling herself that nature intended woman to be pursued and not to pursue. She had pursued, and look at what had happened to her, while Ellen Blair, who hadn't done any chasing, had gained a husband! It was what she herself deserved, Carolyn decided, for going against nature.

Yet when darkness had fallen, and she had outwardly regained her accustomed calm, she found that she could not give up her campaign.

"There's Dean Swayne," she reflected, lying back on her pillows, and staring out at the pines beyond her window, weighted with snow, dusky in the twilight. "He calls a lot, and he's got a way with me that would be caressing if I'd let it. He's not so old. I really like him as well as I ever liked Carter Knight. It's just that it will take some readjusting of my mind to think of marrying a man seventeen years older than I am. Well, it's got to be done. He's a dear, and of course I'd get my way a great deal more with him than I would with Carter."

She rose, and without turning on the light, bathed her eyes and changed her dress. She went into the hall, intending to slip downstairs and make herself a cup of tea. As she neared the head of the stairway, she heard the front door open. She withdrew a little. Somehow she did not want, yet, to face her mother.

Then she heard Swayne say:

"Of course Carolyn isn't here yet, or the house wouldn't be so dark. You might let me come in, Minnie dearest—even if you wont let me have the whole loaf—"

Carolyn gave a silent gasp; her world spun about her. She found herself clutching the banisters, and leaning forward, trying to peer into the lower hall.

"It was just three years ago today you refused to marry me because Carolyn was coming home to stay, and you did not want her to feel that her home was shared by an outsider," she heard Swayne say. "Now that she is sure to marry this young Knight—"

They went into the living-room, and she lost her mother's reply. Carolyn tottered into her own room, and—to her credit be it said—she essayed a trembly little laugh.

"Well, I surely almost did spill the beans for poor Mother," she reflected. "I guess my next campaign will be to get a job in New York, far, far away from these scenes of defeat."

THE house had suddenly become insupportable to her. She found a heavy coat, put on her scarlet tam-o'-shanter and slipping down the back stairs, went out by the kitchen door into a strangely quiet world. The bare elms stood tall on each side of the street, their slim branches delicately defined against the twilight sky. Along the sidewalks lay great pure banks of snow. Lights shone from the windows of other people's homes, and they somehow made Carolyn feel very lonely.

"But I'm not the first lonely person," she told herself, stoutly, "and I wont be the last, whatever comfort there may be in that."

She left the street and turned along the path by the gorge. Here a certain sense of peace came to her. Far below her lay the black rushing stream straining to reach the lake. From the margin of its swift waters climbed pine trees all bearing their freight of snow. A solitary arc-light showed well ahead of her. Upon her fell a light drift of snow from the trees.

"Snow in the world, and snow on my heart," murmured Carolyn.

She walked on swiftly, trying to encompass her spirit with something better than resignation. She would be first content, and then happy. The world was full of men, and she was a good-looking girl. Some day she would find her mate.

She saw a man's figure approaching from under the arc-light, a student, doubtless. She turned her head as he came nearer, and gazed steadily into the gorge. She wanted to be alone in her white night. Then the man stopped, and she felt her shoulders seized. She was about to scream, when his voice said:

"Carolyn, I was just coming to you."

With a sense of relief and anger she looked up to see James Blair, excited, tense.

"How could you frighten me so?" she said crossly.

She had often planned this meeting. She would nod carelessly, hold out an indifferent hand, and say:

"Hello, Jim; you back?"

His serious face bent above her, his blue eyes wide and anxious.

"Frighten you? But how could I? I got home two hours ago, but I couldn't get away before."

"I'm sure it's very nice of you," said Carolyn, a faint surprise in her tone. "But wouldn't tomorrow have done to call on your friends, especially as you seem to have got on well enough without us for eight months?"

"You see, I wanted to be sure," Blair said, his hands still gripping her shoulders. "I thought I loved you, but marriage is so important. I wanted to be certain this was life and death with me, so I got them to let me off for six months. I felt surer than ever, then, but I got them to give me six months more. As soon as they did, I couldn't stand it another minute, and came right back."

Within, Carolyn was laughing and crying. She was saying: "Jim, you darling goose, no one but you, who haven't a bit of humor, could have treated a girl like this. Oh, Jimmy darling, I shall laugh at you all my life, but no one else need dare do it. Jimmy, Jimmy, how could you treat me so, and let me eat my heart out for you! Oh, how happy I am—"

Aloud she said: "Yes? You came back? You thought you could leave me without anything but a stiff note of good-by and find me just the same? You thought all you had to do—"

She knew from the fact that he kept violently shaking her, how very much in earnest he was. It was the queerest sort of love-making to which she had ever been subjected—and the most convincing.

"No, no," he said. "I'm sure I'll have to work a long time to make you love me. I was prepared for that. I know you, so popular, so wonderful, would never dream of marrying me unless I tried a long time. But I had to be sure I cared so wildly that I could make you happy, even though you are always laughing at me; I had to be sure of myself, and then if you began to love me, you could have all the time in the world to be sure of yourself."

"Oh," Carolyn was inwardly caroling. "Oh, don't I see myself telling all the girls—telling them that of course Jim has been in love with me for years—but that I wanted to be sure and was awfully glad that he went away for almost a year."

Aloud, she said: "James Blair, if I thought you were taking anything for granted—"

"Oh, Carolyn," he said humbly, "I suppose I've blundered. I always do—"

CAROLYN said sternly to herself: "Listen, girl! You mustn't get too proud. Remember that only a few hours ago you were as good as jilted by two men. In a few minutes you are going to forget that you were ever anything but able to sit down and be courted by the man you really love. Before you get conceited and inalienably sure of your perfect charm, register a vow to be always sympathetic to girls who wish to get married, and to other confirmed spinsters who never will be married. Register it quick, quick, *quick.*"

Carolyn registered. Then she shook herself free of Blair's grasp, put her hands inside his arm, snuggled close to him and said:

"Never mind, Jimmy; I'm not going to be hard on you. If I've anything to forgive, I do. We'll start over. You may begin courting me at once, and we'll let the future take care of itself. But before we do another thing, come along and tell Mother you're home and in love with me. She might be interested."

She swung him, incoherently muttering phrases of love, into pace beside her, interrupting him to say ecstatically:

"Oh, what a peaceful, thrilling, beautiful world this is!"

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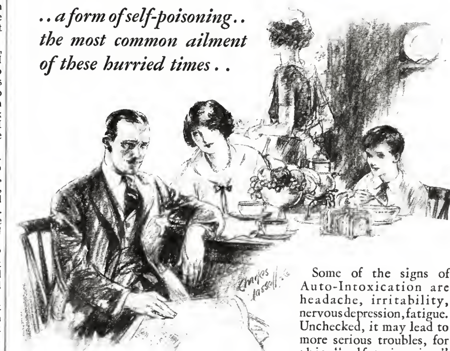

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THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS

(Continued from page 87)

faces at certain moments? There's an essence of personality there, an intrinsicality beyond anything a man can understand. Don't forget that whether they know it or not, women are the keepers of the secrets of the earth. By the time a man has reached your age and mine, good or bad, he should know enough never to awaken that intrinsicality unless it awakens gladly and with mutual recognition. To accept it as a charity—" Vizatelly lifted his hands and spread them out in a gesture of finality. His cane fell to the ground, and he stooped and picked it up. Hastings was still staring at him with thoughtful eyes.

"You don't grant women much will of their own, do you?" he asked. "Suppose they want to do all these dreadful things? Recently I've noticed that it's the men who ought to be protected."

"I don't give anybody much will of their own," retorted Vizatelly, "not with so many instincts and inherited prejudices and so much newfangled sense and nonsense about. Mighty little will of their own. That's why the few people who think at all ought to think more."

"Hand me those cigarettes, will you?" said Hastings. "Thanks." He lit a cigarette and leaned back against the pillows in deep thought. "You've increased my temperature," he complained. Finally he shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I'll tell you what I think: I think you've talked a lot of foolishness. I've learned to consider moments, not years, and I've also learned to think that any woman over twenty-one is old enough to take care of herself, especially if she has been married. What lasts, anyway? And now, I wish to the devil you'd go, because my head hurts."

Vizatelly stood up. "And I hope fervently and continuously," he said with feeling, "that you die. I'll pray for that."

"I wont; I've seen the doctor."

"Doctors are fallible."

Vizatelly paused at the door.

"See here, think over what I've said; you're not a monster."

"Go away."

Vizatelly, ushered through the living-room and out into the hall by Hastings' servant, descended the stairs slowly, saying to himself: "You blamed old *deus ex machina*, this is what always happens to a *deus ex machina*, anyhow."

BUT *streptococci* are more powerful than words. Hastings did not see Mercedes the following night, nor the night after. He could not have seen her for a week, at least. An aviator stumbles and breaks his neck, and kingdoms have been lost because of indigestion. Hastings developed a dreadful cold in his head, that blinded him, choked him and ran like fire from his nose. Thousands of miles away a Chinaman had sneezed, probably, and the sneeze, overtaking many victims on the way, had finally reached Hastings. He groaned, cursed, and came to the conclusion, as he had many times before, that Fate was ironic. Yet when the fever had left him and he lay weak and tranquil and quietly unromantic, he was not sure that he altogether regretted this ironicism. Perhaps that fat old fool had been right—or partially so. Perhaps he had been. His arguments had been troubling from the very beginning. Poor little Mercedes! At all events, here was an opportunity to think things over.

Hastings had wanted a holiday for a long time, and now this cold gave him an excuse. He would go South for a month. He would write Mercedes a letter the day he left. He put aside an inclination to call her up and get her to come to see him. That would be too dangerous. She had inquired about him every day until yesterday, and he supposed that now she considered him entirely cured. Well, he would exaggerate his case a little. Perhaps his absence would at least make Mercedes decide that she really loved him.

HE need not have taken so much trouble. Both his solicitude and Vizatelly's were more or less wasted. Other factors were at work deciding what would happen to Mercedes. An uneasiness and suspicion that had troubled her for several days had turned into a certainty. The incredible, in the face of previous history, had become the actual. She had been to see her doctor, and he had confirmed her fears. Now she stood on his doorstep in the pale February sunshine and wondered what was to become of her.

She had, with so much difficulty and bitterness, arranged the broken fragments of her life, only to have them broken again into a thousand pieces. She had thrust Stephen away, only to find that he had left with her a part of him of which she could not rid herself. She was going to bear Stephen a child, and she wanted to die.

She stood where she was for a long while, and then walked slowly back to her sunny apartment, an apartment that seemed to her suddenly as arid and hateful as the apartment at the Avignon where she had last seen Stephen. It was not until several hours later that a temporary solution flashed across her mind. She must go away and hide; that was clear. She could not endure seeing Hastings again, or even Vizatelly, and supposing that it was possible to avoid seeing either of them, how could she stand the long months of loneliness that lay before her? She remembered what Stephen had written about the ranch, and a wave of homesickness for the encircling protection of mountains and of solitude took possession of her—a wave of homesickness for the sure tenderness and unquestioning silence of Laplace and Uncle Dan Pallet.

These were people so close to the earth that they would not consider the having of a baby anything out of the ordinary. They would not even care who the baby's father was. If Mercedes wanted to have a baby, that was her business, not theirs. Lots of people had babies. And they would take care of the baby once she was gone, unless Stephen wanted it. For it never occurred to Mercedes that, her task accomplished, she would not die. Women always died in circumstances like these. She would die sometime in September.

She could sublet her apartment, and she had only a couple of days more toward the making of "Passionate Purity;" after that she could buy a ticket for Wyoming. She would send a telegram to Laplace and a note to Hastings and a letter to Vizatelly. Once she saw Laplace, she was confident she could convince him of the necessity of not sending word to Stephen; and as for Hastings and Vizatelly, she would have to lie to them. She would say that the little cough they had noticed—a cough that came from cigarette-smoking—had taken a dangerous turn and that the doctor had advised her to go to the ranch immediately—nothing really serious, if attended to, and she hoped to be back in the spring. And in her letter to Vizatelly she would impress upon him, also, how fatal it would be if Stephen was given the slightest hint of her intention. Vizatelly would understand. Suppose Stephen came back from a sense of duty? Mercedes would never forgive him nor the person who had warned him. Conditions would be far, far more hopeless than they had been before. She would tell Vizatelly a further lie. She would say that his talk of a week earlier had convinced her of her folly—that Vizatelly need never worry about her again.

Sweet Vizatelly. He, at all events, would miss her. She would send him a kiss and say, what was the truth, that she loved him.

Wyoming, she knew, would be deep in snow at this time of year, but Laplace would be able to meet her at the station in a sleigh, and the snow would cut her off still more from all the memories of the dreadful present. . . . . Deep snow, white and solacing.

Three days later Hastings' letter arrived, charming, apologetic, tenderly humorous. Perhaps at the end of the month Mercedes would really want him and send for him. If that happened, then he thought there would be no question as to what was the right thing to do. Meanwhile, he could not bear to take any chance of seeing her ravishing nose swollen like his.

The letter lay in a pile of mail that Mercedes never saw.

Chapter Twenty-five

STEPHEN, landing in Cherbourg, spent eight days in Paris waiting for a letter from Molly to tell him his presence would be entirely convenient. This was a delicate situation; Molly must have plenty of time to decide how to meet it.

Toward the end of the week, Molly's letter arrived, cordial and welcoming as ever: She would be so glad to see dear Stevie. It was heavenly at Cannes! There was no hint of the present situation, and Stephen wondered if Molly was aware that he knew. . . . . Stephen must stay at her villa for at least a week. Then she would find a little place for him. She was so happy to have him near. If he would send a telegram she would meet him at the station.

Stephen bought his tickets and left two nights later on the Paris, Lyons and Mediterranean Express.

He awoke to what seemed a new planet. The train was nearing Marseilles. To the left was a silvery-gray bare country of tortured hills, deep green here and there with pines, golden in other places with mimosa, checkered witb groves of olives and the winter darkness of vineyards. A fierce, gay, gallant country, with the same blue sky and unashamed sun over it to which Stephen was accustomed in his own land.

Toulon, slumbering in its naked plane trees and useless fortifications, was passed; St. Raphaël, pointed and windy; and finally, around a corner of the hills, appeared the sheltered hollows of Cannes. Stephen, trying desperately to procure a porter to help him with his bags, saw Molly in tbe waiting throng of cars, sitting expectantly at the wheel of a small Citroën, painted red. He dumped bis belongings out of the window into the uplifted skinny hands of an extremely feeble old man, and swinging down the steps, crossed the platform. His arms were wide. He had forgotten for the moment his ill-humor and depression. Molly, after all, was his ewe lamb. For a second he did not care what she had done; he was only glad to be witb a woman of his own blood whom he loved. And Molly was so pretty, so much a part of the vivacious crowd and the sbifting chromatism. Her white clothes, her golden hair, cropped to straightness above her neck, ber blue eyes, seemed exactly to suit the scene. Stephen remarked how much the fiber of Molly had always made him think of a bright breeze across hright waters. What sudden synthesis of pigment and slumbering desires in the dour Londreths and coldly smiling Wilmerdings had managed to produce this shaft of illumination? Molly did not look in the least defeated.

Molly's villa was on the other side of Cannes in the direction of Nice, back in the thick greenness of umbrella pines through

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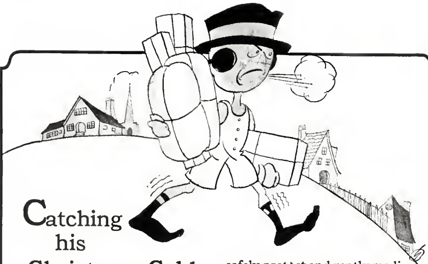

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which the sunlight fell in great white patches. A wall surrounded it, and inside the wall was a small garden filled with roses and iris, in its center a round pool fed by a spouting bronze fish upheld by a column of marble. From the veranda, between two giant eucalyptus trees planted as frames, one had a view of the town beneath, the gay houses half hidden by palms and cypresses, the horned harbor and, far off, neither on the sea nor in the sky, the shimmering Iles de Lèrins.

Stephen sat down in a long cane chair and sighed.

"You are glad to be here?" asked Molly.

Stephen did his best to smile unconcernedly.

"Poor lamb!" She touched his hair, her blue eyes thoughtful. "I'm afraid you'll have a dull time." A shadow crossed her face. "I see practically no one."

"I'm no-not looking for excitement," said Stephen. "Besides, you forget I'm in mourning."

Molly glanced down at her white dress.

"Yes, of course. I didn't go into black, myself; I thought it would be foolish. But I am burning a candle for him."

Stephen put down his glass of lemonade and stared at her.

"Bu-burning a candle?"

Molly, shiningly modern, was archaically grave.

"Why not? I've come to believe in such things. I want some day to join the church. . . . . He wasn't very kind to me, though, was he?"

"No. I don't exactly understand, either."

"I do. I was all he wanted to be but couldn't, and so hated and feared. I've always felt that about people like him. And I suppose in my way I am just as much of a Puritan as he. Puritanism is merely being blindly passionate about something, isn't it? We're a passionate race. You're passionate. You showed it in going West; you showed it in coming back."

Stephen shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know what I am."

"I do. I learned what both of us were here." Molly stared at the drowsy town at their feet. "This is the coldest place in the world at the tip of a cold continent—burnt out, disillusioned, masquerading. I once thought I agreed with them; now I find them merely childish. They think people like you and me young because we still vaguely perceive hope and cherish a few enthusiasms, but I know we are mature, and it is they who are young because they're senile. Only two classes of people are cynical, naturally—boys and girls, and dotards. Finish your drink, and I'll take you up to your room."

Stephen turned his head and looked at her with slow amazement. "I do-don't know that I agree with you," he stuttered, "but you've done some thinking, haven't you, since I saw you last?"

"Quite a lot."

SHE led Stephen to a bright chamber where the chairs and bed were covered with a chintz in which palely rose shepherds and shepherdesses talked together near palely rose sheep, and two long windows, grilled iron railings reaching halfway up them, let in the sun and a sense of the sea and the faint perfume of the garden.

Stephen unpacked and took a bath and lay down on a couch, smoking a cigarette. He wondered what had become of De Sauvigny and what he had to do with this house, and why Molly had turned toward Catholicism, and why and how she had achieved this new philosophy and, under her smiling outer manner, this new underlying gravity. At all events, these changes in her would make whatever he had to do a task greatly more delicate than he had imagined.

The days that followed demonstrated the ac-

curacy of tbis surmise. Tentative attempts to reach frankness and definition were not successful with Molly. She was luminously, and even gayly, explanatory of what she thought, in a way she bad never been before; but, in a way she had never been before, she was silent about what she was doing. Stephen felt as if he were living in a place of gossamer and sparkling enchantment, and the isolation and disappearance of the sense of time began to have their healing effects. Each morning he arose, struck afresh with the piercing loveliness of the view from his windows, bathed and had breakfast with Molly on the veranda—honey and coffee and crescent rolls and, as a concession to his tastes, a soft-boiled egg. Then he read until luncheon. In the afternoons he and Molly in the red Citroën explored the neighboring country: Grasse, Nice, Monte Carlo, the wild loneliness of the Groegs du Loup and Thorenc. The last two reminded Stephen of Wyoming, although not so green as his part of it. Back from the narrow strip of the coast were valleys and hills and forests as solitary as wben the Romans had first seen them.

AT night, this being a week of moon, he and Molly sat in the garden. Once they went to the motion pictures and laughed, and were indignant, at what Europeans must think of the home life of Americans. The ordinary attractions of Cannes they avoided. Molly showed no inclination to go near the casino or the hotels, and Stephen was placidly content that she didn't.

Stephen felt that during these five days the positions he had imagined had been reversed, and that it was Molly who, realizing his soreness of spirit, was trying to cure it by her gentle ministrations.

"I mu-must get a Citroën of my own," he decided, "and fi-find a spo-spot to settle down in. If I'm going to learn how to save Philadelphia I'll have to start. Not a ho-hotel, but a little villa, or a couple of rooms, with an old cook to look after me."

"We'll start tomorrow and look."

"No." Stephen, sitting in the moonlight, stretched out his hand and took the hand of Molly. "I don't want to break this up. Th-this is a reconstruction of childhood I don't want to disturb. I may never see you again so intimately and uninterruptedly. No, my dear. This is Thursday; on Saturday I'll be off. I saw about getting a car yesterday, and I have my American license. I'll p-pack my bags and tour the coast."

Molly was silent for a moment, staring at the lighted town squared by the silver trunks of the eucalyptus. Her hand stirred in Stephen's. She spoke softly, with a rushing note in her voice. "You are lovely," she said. "Lovely and beautiful. I know only one other man like you, and he is not as fortunate. He is sick and hurt—from the war, from a lot of things. Tell me, why aren't you happy with your wife?"

The moonlight grew pale to Stephen, and harsh. For a moment he had thought that he was approaching a revelation, but the revelation, so it seemed, was to be his own.

"I'm not so lo-lovely," he objected, "nor beautiful. It's easy to seem that way to people who can never know you—even to sisters. It was not Mercedes' fault; it was mine. You can't explain these things."

"No, but I know you, and you are lovely. I don't care what you have done or may do. You are lovely because you are kind and because, for all your laughter and health, the world seems beautiful to you, and sad. If you've been unkind, it's because you did not understand."

Stephen witbdrew his hand and sat up straighter.

"I've been wa-wanting for a long time to say something to you," he began, "but I've never before had the chance. You-you're not especially happy, are you?"

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THAT great preacher of the humanities, Henry Ward Beecher, once said that if a man is so content that he does not want to see, know, feel or be any more, he ought to be embalmed in pitch and resin and made into a mummy.

There is both a genuine and a counterfeit contentment. The first is what Socrates called "natural wealth;" the latter, like luxury, he condemned as "artificial poverty." It is well enough to be contented with what we *have;* never with what we *are.* A rational discontent is better than dull, unreasoning contentment. Bovee, an early apostle of common sense, truly said: "One who is contented with what he has done will never become famous for what he will do. He has lain down to die!"

Contentment, no less than wealth, rank and power, must be earned if it is to be a genuine element and substance, beauty and tranquillity in our lives. And the only way to earn contentment and wear it with grace, with justice to ourselves and the life around us, is never to be content with what we *are,* never to feel discontent with what we *have.* That life formula is one of greatest human service. We should all strive constantly to qualify, enrich and beautify our lives by seizing life every morning and riding it over the hills and far away every thrilling day.

We can not live a vital and progressive life by mooching around at home. We must travel, we must go over the horizon and keep on going to other parts of the world, to other people—yellow, brown, black and red. To human beings so different from ourselves that they shock us out of our living narrowness and ignorance of the living world. There are several billions of "other fellows" living, jostling, begging, giving and getting on this earth, and we should not remain content with a counterfeit contentment that is ignorant of this swarm of human endeavor.

Travel, teaching us how little we know, also teaches us how to know, feel, see, hear and be more than ever before. It is as necessary to travel amongst our fellow men to nourish and enlarge our own natures as it is to sustain our bodies with food and intelligent physical care.

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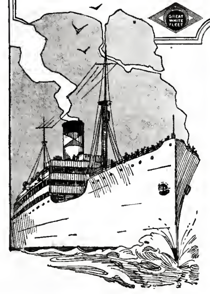


"In a way, yes, happier than I have ever been. In another way, no. That would be impossible."

"I th-thought perhaps you were a trifle homesick. I'll give you half of what was left to me if you'll come back to America. I ll give it gladly—I want to give it."

Molly smiled broodingly. "You are being unkind now," she said, "because you don't understand. I have found something to do over here. It seems to me important."

"Wh-why is it you and De Sauvigny don't marry?"

"We can't until his father dies."

"D-do you think it will last?"

"Yes, but even if it doesn't, it wont matter."

"You mean?"

"Just at present he would die if I left him, and I would too. That's enough."

"I've heard that be-before, but I don't believe it."

"It's true—I don't mean literally. You don't believe it because you have never been utterly lonely or utterly sick. Perhaps you will be some day. I've come to the conclusion that there's no such thing as love without some shame and bitterness. How can you appreciate adoration until you have learned utterly to despise yourself; and how can you give adoration until you have found some broken thing to mend? Life seems to me not so much creating something new, as putting together again the scattered fragments of the original beauty."

"Per-perhaps." Stephen nodded. Molly! It seemed scarcely possible that Molly should have thought all this out for herself, and yet here she was in the moonlight saying these things. He raised his head. "Yes, I suppose so, and yet I can't, somehow—I know it's stupid, but I can't quite—"

Molly put her hand on his arm. "You don't have to. I understand perfectly. You mean you can't quite give me any money if Henri is going to use it. I don't blame you. But you needn't worry. I have enough to get along on. If I'm ever really hard up, I'll let you know."

"Could you get married if you were richer?"

"I've no doubt. But that wouldn't make much difference, either. And it wouldn't help you. I know what you think of a man to whom such considerations are important. But they are important. Between him and you there are centuries of hostile standards."

MOLLY rose, and going to the stone balustrade that bounded the terrace, leaned both hands upon it and gazed down at the city. "Besides, perhaps I would never be so sure of him again. It really doesn't matter. I'm glad to shut the world out. It isn't as if I were a younger woman."

"Where is De Sauvigny now?"

"I sent him away, of course, when you came. He will be back Sunday."

"Cou-couldn't I meet him?"

"No, not yet. Later on."

She faced about, a slim golden figure in the fainter gold of the moon, the dark tips of cypresses rising behind her.

"I understand life less and less," said Stephen. He smoked for a few minutes longer before he looked at his watch. "Gra-gracious. It's half-past eleven. I must be off to bed. Are you going up?"

"Not yet."

He went over to the balustrade and put his arms around Molly's shoulders and kissed her. Under his hands he felt the terrible softness of women. . . . .

Stephen could not sleep. He lay watching the barred silver of the slatted shutters that were partially closed before his windows. At length he arose, and pushing one of them open, leaned upon the iron grille. The distant sea was absolutely still; not even a band of darkness showed a trace of wind; the lights in the city were mostly out, and against the splendor of the topaz quiet, the cypresses stood up black and pointed. Then the gurgling of the dolphin in the fountain came to him, and he looked down into the garden. Molly had not moved. She had been standing there by the balustrade ever since he had left her, almost an hour—a white interrogation point against a horizon immeasurably old.

Thirty years to live, forty years to live, fifty years to live, what were those? Even if he and Molly lived sixty years longer, and they could hardly live much longer than that, before so many years were out, they would be gone, and the shadow that was Molly would have joined the shadows of the dead women—a hundred of them, perhaps—who had stood in exactly the same spot questioning the night. What did he care what Molly and De Sauvigny did with the money he gave them, if it would bring a moment of happiness and security into this immemorial puzzlement? He could make them happy for a moment, even if he could not make himself so. De Sauvigny could throw the money into the gutter, if he liked.

Across the ghostly shoulders of Molly it seemed to Stephen were falling invisibly a score of cloaks long since turned to dust: Celtic, Gallic, Phœnician, Grecian, Latin, Teutonic—the cloaks of all the races that had paused upon this hill. One learned things—no, did not learn them; but, being already in your mind, they fell into recognizable patterns—through strange processes. It was odd that because your sister loved a man well enough to become his mistress, you should see with a stark conviction that beneath all the actions that were necessary to keep the world running, beneath even the search for truth, despite all follies and false manifestations, there was only one intrinsicality, one thing from which all others sprung, and that was the folly of finding, in the loneliness, some one for whom you would die and some one foolish enough to die for you.

No life without a willingness for death—no life worth living; no death, except merely a blowing away, save after a willingness for life. Dogs had this because they were unreasoning; a few men had it because, through much reasoning, they had fused reasoning into forgetfulness of self. Stephen wished that he had recognized all this more clearly before he had put himself forever out of touch with Mercedes, although all his life had been an attempt to recognize it. He wished— His hands were gripping the railing of the grille so the iron bit into them. If he could only stumble and run through leagues of moonlight and fall on his knees before a small white figure that had once questioned the night in Wyoming!

The next morning he said to Molly: "I sha-shall make arrangements to turn over half of what I've got to you. I don-don't give a damn whether you want it or not. I've got more than I need. That was my intention from the beginning. I was just trying to find things out."

Two weeks later, down on the sea near San Salvador outside of the town of Hyères, he discovered a tiny villa owned by a pleasant woman, the widow of an officer killed in the war, where he could rent the whole upper story—three rooms—and be the only visitor. In five more days he was installed, his trunks were there, his books; and the widow, a youngish widow, had adopted him as a somewhat mature son. He did not want to be too close to Molly—not yet awhile.

Chapter Twenty-six

TOWARD the end of April, Vizatelly wrote Stephen a letter, which Stephen opened and read on the red-tiled veranda of his little house while he was breakfasting.

"Quite so, and quite so," wrote Vizatelly,

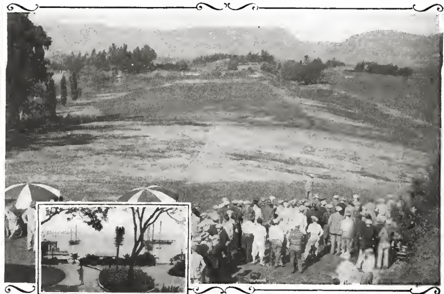
"I too, like you and most other thinking men, have questioned democracy and asked myself where this great lumbering hobbledehoy of a country of ours was going; but in the end I always come back to the conclusion that imperfect as everything now seems, we must give it its chance. Perhaps we are on our way to splendor. I don't know. . . . .

"And now to come to you. I have been thinking about you lately. Why do you bother about Philadelphia, or tenements, or civic improvements, or whatever it is you are bothering about? There are plenty of men much better fitted for such tasks than you. It seems to me there is a corner of the fight out in your part of the world where, with your experience and money, you could be instantly useful. It is a far-flung battle line, but underneath all slogans the object is the same—the leveling down for selfish or fanatical reasons of everything that makes life worth living. The headquarters standard should bear the words: 'Men *shall* live by bread alone.'

"Let me tell you something: Within the year there is to be, unless all signs and rumors fail, an attack launched upon conservation and the beauties and natural resources of your West such as has not been launched in two decades. And it will be launched under the guise of altruism, as such attacks invariably are launched nowadays. Does that stir you? I see a real battle about to take place, a man's fight. The issues are daily becoming clearer, and it behooves all but a fool to take his part. The greatest difficulty so far is that so many fairly wise men do not see how clear and connected the issues are. It is not funny; it is not to be laughed at or turned wearily away from; it is here upon us, bloody and terrible—it is Armageddon between the sons of darkness and the sons of light. As for myself, lazy as I am, but passionately fond of my country and what it could be, I hear trumpets."

STEPHEN put down the letter and lit a cigarette and stared at the sea. The thin blue smoke drifted toward the green and gold of the vine. Vizatelly had stirred him—Vizatelly could always stir him when he wanted to. But how much was the stirring worth? What could any single man accomplish, after all, except to fill the small jug of his more harmless appetites, intellectual and physical, to the brim and, if he was rich, try to spend his money with some wisdom? What exactly? At the moment America seemed large, confused and formidable.

The night before, Stephen had dined with a Frenchman whom he had got to know fairly well, a charming, blond, graceful, gently cynical creature, who having accomplished four years of war, was not unnaturally inclined to think he had done his share of the world's work. The Frenchman lived in a low, spreading Provençal house of pink stucco, surrounded by an immense garden filled with marguerites and geraniums and roses slumbering in the sun, and the house had been built on the site of a lost Roman city. There was no knowledge left of the city, save its name, haunting and mournful, but in the bay to the south, the Roman triremes had anchored, and in a small wood to one side was an ivy-covered Roman tomb and the thick ruins, from which grew trees, hugely old, of a villa and a fortress. And numerous trinkets intimate and poignant had been found that women had left—hairpins and combs and mirrors. Stephen and his host had walked in the dusk before dinner and, passing by the tomb, had bowed their heads beneath a Roman gate. After dinner they had drunk their coffee on a terrace above a pond where frogs croaked without pause. A nightingale had practiced tentatively.



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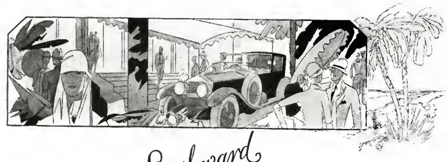

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"I wonder," thought Stephen, "if this is really all that comes of it?"

Spring in this country made you feel that way. The earth did not laugh; it smiled indulgently and quietly as if acquiescing in some childish fable. The nightingales, commencing to sing, were not vernal; they seemed merely to be taking up again a melodious quest they knew to be hopeless. The English alone—soon to be gone—were imbued with the worn-out infantile zest of conquest. . . . . All day long, silently, disagreeably and awesomely, they played golf.

A lady, slim and white and languid and prettily without morals, had tried to lure Stephen, but with no success. She could not understand how any solitary man, no matter what his history, recent or otherwise, had been, could behave as Stephen did. The resistance spurred her to greater efforts. "The Americans," she told her best friend, "are incredible."

He was finding himself, however, not so fiercely and impatiently deaf as he would have been a month before. He did not reject the lady roughly; he was even a trifle flattered by her attentions, finding in them some balm for a confidence in his own attractions, rudely shaken. The lady lived in an imitation fortress not far away, and Stephen occasionally took tea with her and drove her about the country in bis Citroën.

Stephen was, indeed, growing less restless. He could perceive a time when he would perhaps be not so different from his neighbors. Continuous sunlight and the blue sea worked their spell. Study and reading, habits resumed after many lost years, were growing more and more interesting, an increasing circle of new acquaintances, the visits of passing American friends. Three weeks earlier Stephen had helped Molly marry her De Sauvigny, the bibulous Orpen being dead and so no dispensation being necessary for the ceremony. Knowing what he did, Stephen had not found it a particularly festive ceremony; and he had avoided an invitation to spend part of the summer in Touraine, although, against his prejudices, he could not help but like De Sauvigny, a quiet, limping, chestnut-haired fellow, gravely in love with Molly. He supposed that after a while he would become thoroughly used even to De Sauvigny. *"Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse."* Not exactly, nor ever altogether—not even when you have decided that certain steps taken are irrevocable and are definitely attempting to get well.

The evenings, however, spent on the vine-covered porch in the thick southern darkness powdered with stars, gave a prospect of being forever difficult; so too the hours of awakening. And every now and then there were letters like those of Vizatelly's to make you restless—and untoward, absurd incidents that sprang out at you from nowhere: letters and incidents that had to be definitely fought in order to permit you to continue your well-planned, leisurely course.

THERE was one especial incident that had to do with music. Music is more touching than anything of sight or words if you are away from your own country and hear music that suggests it; Stephen was fiercely homesick for a while.

This was two weeks after he had received Vizatelly's letter and before his mind had cast entirely aside the problems it presented. He had gone to the Casino in Hyères one afternoon with the languid lady to witness the last performance of the season, the dancing of two Russians, a man and a woman. In the darkness, too hot, the Russians, tall and graceful, danced in the lighted cavern of the stage—a Steppe song, a sword dance, a mazurka from Poland, Schubert and Mendelssohn and Rimsky-Korsakov and a Spanish seguidilla, a fantasy of Debussy's. All the nations in review. And then, not in

the least knowing what they were doing and imagining it jazz, they sprang swaying and twisting into the rhythm of a negro spiritual.

Stephen sat up, cold shivers running down his back. He had not noticed the program. In his nostrils was the faint perfume of the languid lady at his side—so avid in reality; and in front of him were the vague baldheaded shadows of an uncomprehending matter-of-fact orchestra.

"It's a me—it's a me, O Lord, standin' in
 the need of prayer.
It's a me—it's a me, O Lord, standin' in
 the need of prayer.
Not my brother—it's a me, O Lord.
Not my sister—it's a me, O Lord,
 Standin' in the need of prayer."

Ah! Would they dance again? Stephen applauded. Would they dance? They did, but more slowly, for here was something they could not utterly misinterpret. They were still funny about it, however, grotesque and loose-limbed in the way they thought negroes were, and the woman wore a great yellow cotton wig.

"De fox have a hole in the ground;
An' de bird have a nest in the air,
An' ev'rything have a hiding-place,
But we poor sinners have none."

Stephen's companion, sensitive to impressions, felt Stephen's mood and wondered. These songs were amusing, but nothing to get excited over.

But Stephen was seeing pictures she would never see and probably would not have liked had she been able to see them. Rice-fields which he knew well and had shot over, now abandoned except for partridges and the men who pursued them. Rice-fields heavy with tradition and memories as the erect trees were heavy with mistletoe and the nights with fog. Slow-moving streams and great sparse forests and twisting paths and roads down which came black figures, shy and grave and light-footed still with the jungle. And back in gardens of clipped box, too few but some of them remaining, were old houses, in the spring wrapped in the white clouds of magnolias and with azaleas burning like fire beneath the ashes of the gray hanging moss.

These were some of the pictures Stephen was seeing, but he was also seeing cañon trails and blue distances and feeling the minor silence of aspen groves on a hillside and the minor notes of great grim cities, worried and turbulent.

A MONTH after Vizatelly's letter, near the first of June, Stephen received another letter, but this letter, unlike Vizatelly's, made him act immediately, tremblingly and longingly. The letter was from Laplace and the envelope was stained from long traveling.

"Dear Friend, Mr. Londreth," it said. "This been a long time since I wrote you. Well, Mr. Londreth, everything's going fine. The horses they come up a few days ago from down below looking good, although some of them still have lots of winter coat, and that black horse, Tom, I think he got worms. The calf-crop it look like it be good. I going to make money for you and me, Mr. Londreth, in this place. Mostly the snow all gone now, except in hollows. We're going to have maybe an early spring. Old Stimson, he still working for us, and he say to give you his regards and he will write some time when he have time. Sluff, he cooking. He cooking fine, too, but he still awful hard to get on with. I got a couple of boys to help with the spring work, but this place is sure cheap to run alongside of what we used to have.

"And now, Mr. Londreth, I think you better come back for a while anyhow, and pretty soon. Mrs. Londreth, she going to have a baby—about September, she think. She been here since February and doing fine, but she don't let me tell you, not a word. Now I think that maybe she getting so she want very much to see you. Yes sir, I feel sure of that. But maybe you better send a cable or letter to me. She a very proud lady, Mrs. Londreth.

"With all the best of wishes
 "Yours affectionately,
 JEAN."

IN high mountain countries spring is an affair utterly different from the spring Stephen had seen. Where there is snow, spring is a recurrent discovery and adventure, binding with its renewed pledge even the wariest of hearts. You wait so long for it. Hope falters and grows irritable. Blue hours, with a sun that moves slowly, after a while cease to deceive. In all the forests and hidden places the silence lies unbroken, and the clouds that hang along the mountain-tops do not lift. So when there comes suddenly a day with a vague new hint of drowsy restfulness, in it, yawning and deep breathing, you turn away from it lest you be once more disappointed. But this time the day spreads into a week, and quietly the silence begins to lift, to walk, to hurry. The earth murmurs with water; mosses drip; from beneath the snow small flowers that have grown in blue darkness show their purple crowns. The winged unexpectedness of birds appears, and the gossamer drifting of insects. Green creeps along the aspens. The brown grass quickens; the streams gather themselves together for running; and as if they were horns so far away that you mark them only by their flashing, the peaks proclaim the summer.

Mercedes no longer wanted to die, although she still was sure that she would. The long winter, during which Laplace had watched her like a tactful nurse, and Uncle Dan Pallet had dropped in apparently by accident almost every other day, had given her unaccustomed peace of mind and a curious inverted sense of existence. Life and death were so affirmed in this valley, so constantly about, in trees, in the earth, in animals, in the skies, that they assumed new importance and yet at the same time seemed no more than expected incidents in an immense and unending process. A recondite, interrelated business, in which the fall of a leaf and the death of a woman were the same events, separated only by degrees. And yet this very affirmation and inevitableness made unnecessary haste, or even unnecessary resignation, absurd. You no more sought death than you sought life. They were both there. And since she herself must die, Mercedes put death out of her mind in the far more urgent task of giving and planning for far more of life than she had ever had herself for this new life stirring beneath her breast. This life would start from a point to which she, Mercedes, had never even attained.

As long as she was able to make such trips, she had hunted the country far and wide on skiis with Laplace—along the little river where he had a trap-line (a cruel way of killing frozen, delicate creatures) and up into the neighboring forests, white and soundless. At dusk they came back through the cold and iridescent shadows to the leaping flames of a hearth whose fire was never allowed to die down. By this hearth, or sometimes on snow-covered hillsides, while Laplace was off for an hour or so on some feral, mysterious occupation of his own—the seeing if any martens were about, or the climbing of a slope or the following of a trail for the mere pleasure of doing so—Mercedes would think about herself and Stephen.

Her life seemed a curious, short table of incidents, now that she looked back on it. Breathless! She had been so eagerly

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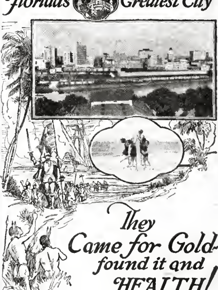

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and selfishly concentrated upon an end that had, in reality, nothing whatever to do with what Fate intended for her. She had meant to dance; she had meant to love somebody—or rather, for this was the truth of the matter, to be loved by somebody—without thought of the future; and what Fate had intended for her all along was solely to give birth to Stephen's child. When that was done, Fate would have no further use for her.

Such things happened often to women. It was clear in her case; otherwise the two most important things in her life would not have been so accidental—the first meeting with Stephen, Stephen's last visit to her. She did not know such terms, but she saw herself as a mold whose purpose would soon be over, and she was glad that she could at last see things in this way, because she was beginning to realize the vast importance of a mold, and the importance soothed her, although not always, when she grew weary for Stephen's arms. . . . .

Stephen, of course, was different. Stephen was not a mold. Stephen's life had just begun. It would go on better, once her stupidity was out of the way. She hoped Stephen would like their child. To some extent it would be herself made as he wanted it.

When spring came, Laplace, a gentle tyrant, no longer allowed her tiring excursions, and she spent much of her time in the grove of cottonwoods below the ranch-house and near the stream. It was there that one afternoon Laplace confessed to her that he had written to Stephen. At first her heart leaped, and then she was angry; but Laplace looked so hurt, his small wrinkled face so grave, and she loved him so much, that she forgave him. Her heart was still beating so that it was difficult to speak, but her words were quiet.

"It doesn't make much difference. I suppose he will come and go away again. I suppose he ought to be here when his child is born."

"Why you and Meestar Londreth not get on together?" asked Laplace suddenly. It was the first time he had risked such a question. He was squatting on the heel of a long boot. In his embarrassment he began to roll a cigarette.

Mercedes looked at the hills to the west, visible through the feathery branches of the cottonwoods and rising into a calm and cloudless sky.

"I don't know."

"Perhaps he come back, and then you and he get along—and not know."

Mercedes drew a deep breath.

"When did you write him?"

"Three weeks ago."

"I don't think he will come. Why should he? People don't make so much fuss over babies now as they used to."

LAPLACE looked down the little valley to where the trail from the open country came out of the half-mile of forest. The green of oats shimmered beyond the darker green of pastures, and far off, above the strip of forest, a peak of the mountains to the east floated dauntlessly. Two men on horseback, tiny moving figures in immensity, and a pack-horse, were leaving the edge of the timber.

The figures were so small that it seemed they would never approach their end, but as you watched, you noticed a brave directness, a steadiness in their coming, that gave them a certain largeness. You knew that before long, standing before you, they would, for all their smallness, seem in some ways as large as mountains.

"I think he coming now," said Laplace.

Mercedes stood up in the warm, broken sunlight. Her small figure was for the time being twisted out of its shape, but her eyes were bluer than they had ever been. A dragonfly seemed loud as water. Stephen, white-faced and stern, flinging himself from his horse, stumbled.

Perhaps it was a symbol.

Men do—so do women.

THE END.

THE MORAL REVOLT

(Continued from page 41)

was with him. They had different natures, and a different point of view. They talked a different language. It was not that they quarreled, but rather that they had little in common. With Bob, on the other hand, she was always at her ease and perfectly happy. He never treated her as well as Archie did; he lacked Archie's fineness and chivalry, his considerateness and his innate courtesy. He treated her in the off-hand fashion women usually detest. He neglected her when he felt like it. And yet she fell in love with Bob.

Archie presently took note of the fact that she was very largely in Bob's company. She went to the motion pictures with Bob; they found this and that excuse to be together. Bob was often at the house.

At last Archie said to her: "Esther, do you think you'd be happier with Bob than with me?"

She admitted that she would.

"All right," said Archie, "get a divorce from me and marry him. In the meantime, do as you please."

In due time she brought suit for divorce. They got by without the collusion being detected, and without otherwise betraying the fact that they were in conspiracy. At last the interlocutory decree was granted. The final decree was to follow six months later—another senseless obstacle.

In the meantime Esther and Bob had been living together secretly, though with Archie's knowledge; and when the final decree was granted, Esther was soon to become the mother of Bob's child. I married them a few months later in a manner to protect the *child* from any possible stigma.

Shortly before the birth of this baby, Archie gave a dinner party to his divorced wife Esther. He invited Esther, Bob, Phyllis and Bert. It was a thoroughly amicable occasion.

A woman to whom I told these two contrasting stories about these five persons said: "You imply in this last story that because Archie left his wife free to follow her inclination and finally marry another man, everybody was thereby made happy. I admit that his conduct seems to have made possible the avoidance of a lot of trouble. But what I want to know is where does Archie get off. Archie had rights. Of course if he didn't care about Esther, and was willing to let her go, that's another thing. But assume that he really loved her, and then found that she cared for another man: It seems to me that there are limits to what human nature can reasonably be expected to put up with. And I can't see that such an outcome provides Archie with the happiness he has a right to—assuming of course that he loved his wife and wanted to keep her. It looks to me as if in such a situation he had a right to be jealous, and put up an active resistance, and assert his intention to fight off any man who might try to deprive him of the woman he loves."

I have no doubt that this same view of the matter will occur to many of my readers. I answer it this way: If Archie loved her, and wanted to keep her, the losing of her was a regrettable tragedy in his life. Such tragedies happen. We can't prevent their happening. And in marriage, no matter how hard people try to pick the right mate,

some of them make mistakes. Esther thought she loved Archie because, recognizing his superior qualities, *she thought she ought to love him,* in preference to Bob. She made an honest mistake.

In this situation Archie had a perfect right, if he loved her, to want to keep her and to be first in her life. That goes without saying. But that desire is not jealousy. The point I make is that he was free from *jealousy,* and that he put her happiness before his own wishes. A *jealous* husband would have tried to hold her because such a course fell within his conventional and legal rights. Archie had a sweetness of nature that made the course he took easier for him than it would be for some. Besides, it is quite possible that when he found Esther didn't care for him, his own feelings toward her underwent a change.

But whether they did or did not, it in no way lessens the significance of what he did. He accorded to another human being the freedom of action we should all be prepared to accord to other human beings, so long as such freedom does not infringe on other people's rights. And you will note that in this case he did not feel that she was violating his right of ownership, as most men would have done.

If there had been children, the rights of those children would have been involved; and in that event the case would have had a different aspect. Esther's freedom would have been limited by the *right* of a cbild to both its parents. Quite another thing, you see—a real right instead of a fictitious one. In that case I don't know how they would have worked it out. Probably Archie and Esther would have continued their home with Bob entering in as a Tertium Quid.

I know such a case in Denver right now —a wealthy couple. Only yesterday I saw them on the street. The husband was walking on ahead witb a lovely four-year-old child tripping along beside him, her hand in his. The wife followed. She was accompanied by Tertium Quid. I am not commending the arrangement. I merely say that the thing happens, and that these people seem to find it satisfactory. Before this latter couple arrived at the present understanding they were both miserable, as I happen to know.

Some persons would consider such a solution impossible and repugnant. But other persons don't. We differ in these matters, apparently, as we differ in politics and religion. I really don't see why Denver society should interfere with these people, or judge them, or ostracize them. But it would do just that—if it knew what I know. And among the people who would do the ostracizing would be many who also would be ostracized for one reason or another if *they* were found out, by people who, in their turn would be ostracized if— What a merry-go-round!

IN the long run the value of any human behavior has to be determined by the test of human happiness. The stand society takes against such irregular domestic relations as I have been describing is based on the belief that that kind of thing if generally practiced would disrupt society. Some think that God prohibits it, and that He does it solely for that reason. But society has not yet reached the point where it can see that anger, hatred, malice, jealousy and the like *are far more destructive to human happiness than any amount of sex irregularity.* I don't say the old view is all wrong. I merely say that it needs some sort of revision, and that it can make no just claim to being exempt from such revision. Present results do not support such a claim. And until such a revision shall have been worked out, I think it behooves us all to be tolerant of those who are finding their way out as best they can. Perhaps they are contributing to the revision. I think it would

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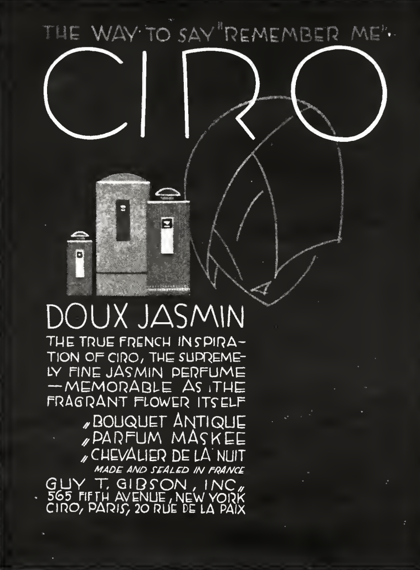


be preposterous to say that their conduct is wholly anti-social or wholly without value. Such persons are at least *doing* something. Perhaps they think there is something to the saying that heaven helps those who help themselves.

BUT to come back to this phenomenon that my friend E— called erotic avarice: I know a man whom I shall call Harris, which of course is not his name. He is separated from his wife. She said to me once: "Mr. Harris can go his own way; and he can have affairs with as many women as he likes, so long as he continues to provide me and the children with that two hundred dollars a month he has agreed to."

Such is *her* view. Now note *his* view. Some time after the separation Harris found his wife sitting on another man's lap. Unmindful of his own affairs with other women, he flew into a terrific rage. His wife was his property. He neither used that property nor cherished it himself, but it was quite clear to him that nobody else must touch it. He, being a man, might have outside affairs, but for a woman to behave so—that was different. Enter the twin bugaboos, Purity and Impurity.

A woman recently separated from her husband said to an officer of my court: "I am glad to be separated from my husband at last. I don't love him. In fact, I hate, detest and abominate him. But if he wants a divorce, I shall refuse to let him have it. I wont have him marrying any other woman. He sha'n't have that satisfaction, ever, if I can prevent it."

Mrs. Lindsey and I were once dining with a delightful French family. It consisted of a mother, her daughter, her son and the son's wife, a bride. The son was well up in the twenties, and his bride was somewhat younger. They all spoke very good English, which they courteously used as their exclusive medium of conversation because Mrs. Lindsey and I do not speak French. With us was an English friend who knew these people very well, and who is familiar with French customs.

In the course of the evening this interesting family branched off, still speaking English, into conversation among themselves concerning a private matter. And we could hardly believe our ears when this respectable French dowager, a woman of high social position, suddenly began vigorously reproaching her son for neglecting "Annette."

"Annette," murmured our English friend, grinning discreetly, "is his mistress."

If the reader will try to imagine some stately matron in middle life, a leader in the social affairs of her home town, publicly reproaching her son at a dinner party on such a ground as this, he may get some idea of the mixture of amusement and interest we took in this situation.

The young man began to make lame excuses. It was clear that he felt himself very much in the wrong. There wasn't a doubt that he had been neglecting Annette.

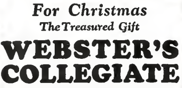
"Oui," his sister put in indignantly. "You have not been near her for months."

"It is not right," put in the mother. "When we return home, you must not so neglect her, Henri. She has been so good to you, always. That is the way with Henri," she added, turning to me, "careless and irresponsible!" And—lifting her eyes, she shrugged in the inimitable French manner.

"Ever so careless about much," said the little bride, shaking her head sternly at her husband, and yet smiling. "I have told him he must not neglect her; but will he listen? *Non!*"

Utterly bewildered, I turned to my English friend for help. "Am I getting this straight?" I asked under my breath.

He nodded. "It's one of their little ways," he said. "He has supported Annette for years, with money furnished, of course, by his mother. The girl is below him in station. A



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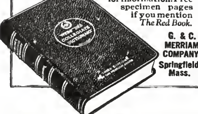

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"Even the bride," I murmured.

"Even the bride!" he said. "Charming, eh? And no jealousy!"

Later he observed: "Now, in England we see these things differently. A high-class Englishman regards the psychological satisfactions of sex. That is why such *liaisons* in England are likely to be between social equals. And of course they are usually secret. And yet I think this Englisb view—wbicb is also your American view—accords a much greater dignity to sex. We English require more of sex, spiritually, than does a Frenchman. Perhaps," he added, "there should be a compromise between the two points of view. The French have much to teach us, and we have something to teacb them."

In relating this incident, I offer it simply for what it is worth, and for the light it sheds on certain of our own customs. It may have been merely an individual example rather than the custom of the country, but at all events it bappened.

The moral of this little story is plain. What it means, if it means anything, is tbat custom can make anything "right" or that it can make anything "wrong," and that the sooner we get over our superstitious reverence for the authority of custom as custom, divinely sanctioned, and established with the beginnings of time, the better for all of us.

The curious custom of courting practiced by the early New England colonists known as "bundling" was "right" once; it is "wrong" now, and contrary, the average moralizing minister would tell you, to the will of God. Yet in seventeenth-century New England it was deemed favored by God.

Sucb facts contain a wholesome shock for our self-satisfaction and our smugness. They are disillusioning. They demonstrate that, outside tbe range of the Golden Rule, allowable conduct is simply conduct whicb society, for any reason whatever, chooses to permit, and tbat unallowable conduct is conduct which, for reasons equally arbitrary, and often irrational, society chooses to forbid. Sometimes allowable conduct is outrageously unethical. It is nevertbeless "right." Sometimes perfectly ethical conduct is a violation of conventional morality. Such conduct is always "wrong."

OUR present marriage customs are just as much a matter of expediency as was bundling. They have the same degree of divine sanction, and like bundling they may be expected to last just so long as they work. When they fail to work, a few rebels will start changing them, as some are now doing; then the crowd will follow; and God, somewhat belatedly, will be found by His interpreters to have changed His mind. The new custom will become tben the "will of God"—still, however, only so long as it works. This epitomizes the wbole process by which customs come into existence and later give way to other customs. We shall do well to rationalize the process.

In the meantime we are given to understand that marriages are made in heaven. I admit that some might have been. But as to others—why blame them on heaven? Above all, why blame the jealousy tradition, that curse of matrimony, on heaven? Any custom that gives two free persons the ownership of each other is a device of the devil. Heaven has nothing to do with it. It is a worse offense against ethics and destroys more marriages than all the "infidelity" in the world. The capital crime against marriage is

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not infidelity, which is the one ground for divorce in some states, but jealousy, which isn't a ground for divorce anywhere.

AMONG the most interesting confidences I have ever received in connection with the domestic relations work in my court I count the story of a man who had come to see me in behalf of his sister, but wound up by telling me a story about himself. His sister was having trouble with her husband because, to her highly virtuous mind, sex was a thing repulsive. Her husband had therefore wandered afield— However, that is another story.

It happened that I already knew Stanley Hubbell, as I shall call him, very well; and our consultation about his sister led us to a discussion of the general problem of possessive jealousy. And presently he began to tell me about himself, and how he had once saved his own home by putting jealousy out of his life.

A few years ago he married a woman whom I have since come to know. She is very lovely—a strong and splendid soul in a beautiful body. He had had to display considerable enterprise to win her, for her suitors had been many.

"I have never been able to understand," Hubbell said to me, "why Alice chose me instead of some one of those men who could have provided her with wealth and comfort beyond anything she could wish. They were many of them—fine fellows. Yet she chose me. I can only wonder, and be thankful that women are not always logical.

"Well, shortly after our marriage, some curious things happened. You can judge their significance for yourself.

"Alice and I were married here in Denver, and we went immediately from here to San Francisco, where I had business. My friend Will Carson accompanied us on that trip. He had been best man at the wedding; and while I was courting Alice, he had exerted himself—at first—to further my cause. He had shown her many courtesies. It was not till later that I knew that when he thought she might not accept me, he fell madly in love with her himself.

"With him in Denver was another friend of mine, and of his—Tom Ryan. Tom, as I learned later, fell in love with Alice too. Neither man admitted his thoughts to the other, but on the theory that all is fair in love and war, each tried to win her favor. Tom was a bachelor, but Will was married, to a very rich girl whom he did not love.

"Such was the situation when Will and Alice and I took the train to San Francisco. After we had been in San Francisco a week, I was obliged to make a trip from there which involved an absence of a few days. I left Alice at the hotel, where Will also was stopping.

"The next evening he took her out to dinner, during which he made undue use of a hip flask. When they returned to the hotel, he paused at the door of his suite, and leaned against the wall, saying he felt faint. Alice, much concerned, took him by the arm and helped into his room—whereupon he whirled about, locked the door and began to make violent love to her. Violent is the word. He had, as I have said, been drinking. I suppose that accounted for his actions.

"Alice happened to be very strong, and was able to resist effectively. But even at that, she emerged from the struggle with her hair down, her clothes torn, and a diamond pin she had been wearing broken to bits.

"By some miracle they had not been heard. She finally escaped and went to her room. The next morning she met him at breakfast as if nothing had happened, with a calm 'Good morning.' Later he came to her, abjectly apologetic. He wept; he called himself worse than a dog; he begged her pardon, and altogether exhibited the most extreme signs of repentance.

"She forgave him. But when I returned, she told me what had happened.

"Now figure it out for yourself. What was the traditional thing for me to do? Well, I didn't do it! I thought it over, and I never indicated to Will Carson in any way—never have to this day—that I knew a thing about it. I have reason to think that he suspects I know. I also know that he is today one of my most devoted friends, and that Alice and I have both his respect and his loyalty. I am sure he still loves her, but I don't blame him for that. I think my course was better than shooting him.

"It was not long after this that Tom Ryan came into the picture. When we returned to Denver, Tom began calling at the house constantly. He came frequently in my absence. Of all this Alice said nothing; but I suddenly began to realize that Tom was mad about her, and that it stood to reason he was not keeping the fact to himself.

"Tom was a fine, big, handsome chap—a fascinating personality. It would not have been strange had he attracted her.

"One evening Alice said to me: 'Tom thinks you are away. He is going to call me by phone this evening and ask me to go riding with him in his car. Would you object to my going?'"

"'Not at all, dear,' I said. 'If you want to go, that's all right with me.'

"'Tom is in love with me,' she continued calmly. 'He will want to make love to me, and he will probably want me to run away with him. Suppose, Stanley, I let him make love to me, and suppose I decided to go away with him. What would you do?'

"'If that suited you, it would be all right with me,' I said. 'I don't own you. I merely love you, and I want you to be happy.'

"Well, Judge, I wish you could have seen her. She sat there with an enigmatic Mona Lisa smile on her lips. I swear I couldn't make out whether she was tempted by Tom or not, or whether she would go or stay. But I stood by my guns. Whatever else would keep her, I knew no assertion of ownership would. And yet, I had doubts. Some women, you know, resent it if a man doesn't show jealousy under such conditions. They take it to mean that he doesn't care.

"And sure enough, that was the next thing she shot at me. 'You don't seem to be jealous,' she said. 'Does that mean that you don't care?'

"'You are too intelligent really to mean that question, Alice,' I said. 'I do care. But my caring has *nothing* to do with it. My respect for you as a person, with the rights of a person, has *everything* to do with it.'

"And still she sat with that enigmatic smile on her face; and I watched her and wondered. Presently the telephone rang.

"'That will be Tom,' she said, glancing at the clock. And she took down the receiver. 'Oh, is that you, Tom? Good evening! So glad you called up. Surely! A drive would be delightful! I have just told Stanley that you had suggested it, and you know how he does love to drive! When will you be over?'

"TOM arrived a half-hour later. He was his usual urbane self, and drove us forty miles before he brought us home—game to the last. He doesn't suspect that I know; but he never tried it again.

"Now, how long do you think it would have taken me to have driven her into the arms of a man like that if I had followed the traditional course? She stayed—absolutely of her own will—under no compulsion from me. As for the other men, they had a right to win her if they could, say I. Of course Will Carson's methods were outrageous, but aside from that, I say I hold *her* because I hold her *love*, and in no other way.

"And if she had yielded to them, and then come back to me, I'd feel the same. To my way of thinking, so long as she loves me,

nothing she might give to them would rob me of *her*. As it happened, she was not tempted. But that was a matter of temperament and inclination. Had she been tempted, it would have been the same. What she wanted to do or wanted not to do lay equally within her rights. I claim nothing, and I have everything. I would still have everything had she seen fit to accede to one or both of those two men. And had she gone to one or the other of them and left me, I would have had nothing—which is precisely what I would have had anyway had I held her by possessive jealousy.

"Some would call this a spiritless philosophy, Judge; but I think otherwise. Jealousy is a kind of cowardice. It will go to any extremity in its effort to avoid the truth and pretend that facts are not facts. I refuse to yield to it."

SO much for Hubbell's end of the story. A few years after my talk with him I met Will Carson on a train during a trip to Chicago. I knew him fairly well, though not so well as Hubbell; but before the trip was over we were on more or less confidential terms, so much so that he opened up with a tale which, I confess, I more or less paved the way for, and which was substantially in accord with that which Stanley Hubbell had told me. Of course I was careful not to betray my knowledge of Hubbell's version of the incident.

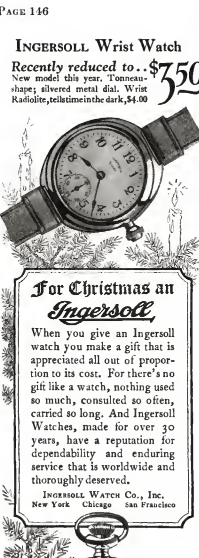
"You know," said Carson in conclusion, "I think Stanley knows what happened. And yet he has never said a word about it; I am received at their home, and they seem to think a lot of me. Only—Alice never sees me alone. I don't think Stanley holds any grudge or resentment. In fact I sometimes think he sympathizes with and understands the impulse that overwhelmed me. All I can say is that I don't get it. I don't think I would be capable of such conduct if the situation were reversed. He has shown a nobility and a reasonableness in his view of this matter that is beyond me. And it's from no lack of ability to assert himself or put up a fight, either."

From this double-barreled story, so to define it, the reader may draw his own inferences. To me it means, among other things, that the most important thing about a man is his philosophy.

The reader will of course note the significance of certain of these stories in their relation to each other.

The union of Phyllis and Bert was a success before their legal marriage and a failure after it because marriage introduced into their relations with each other restraints which they did not like, and which, in their case, did not make for happiness and contentment. In other words, whatever may be said in favor of the monogamous ideal, it has, in this instance, when forced on a couple who find it repugnant and irksome, failed to make marriage either livable or endurable.

The theory on which society maintains monogamy in marriage is *that no other relationship in marriage makes in a like degree for happiness;* but Phyllis and Bert lived together for some time in a nonmonogamous relationship, before their legal marriage, and they were happy in it. Apparently, then, there are people so constituted that monogamy does not meet their temperamental needs; and the question is, can society wisely or successfully force such persons to accept the monogamous ideal whether they like it or not. I think it cannot. The effort of society to forbid and prevent outside episodes in all marriages is precisely the thing which seems to have wrecked this particular union —since it was a successful union previous to the time when law and custom introduced that restriction into the relations of this couple with each other. In other words the marriage of Phyllis and Bert apparently con-



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tained elements which were capable of making a success of it under conditions not sanctioned by our conventions.

The marriage of Archie and Esther, on the other hand, lacked the success element. It was no true marriage because Esther did not love her husband. It was not possible to make a *marriage* of this union, monogamous or otherwise. In putting an end to it, therefore, Archie made it possible for Esther to find elsewhere the happiness she could not find in marriage with him. He also left open for himself the possibility that he would later find happiness with some one else; and he provided for Bob's happiness besides. Thus instead of making three people miserable, he made three people happy. He did it, however, by running counter to what society deems "right." According to those who believe in what they call "the sacredness of marriage," Archie should have stood by his guns and made everyone miserable. At the most, he and his wife should have separated, and then gone on eating their hearts out to the end.

The Hubbell marriage contrasts interestingly with these other two cases, in that it has on test proved to be genuinely and voluntarily monogamous. This voluntary monogamy suits the temperament and needs of Mr. and Mrs. Hubbell; it makes them happy. Anything else, if *they* should practice it, would make them unhappy. Their impulses and preferences, in other words, are precisely opposite to those of Phyllis and Bert. But note that it must be a *voluntary* monogamy. Had Hubbell, by showing jealousy, attempted to make of it anything other than a *voluntary* monogamy, it would have become what the marriage of Phyllis and Bert is, a fake monogamy. By the same token, if jealousy could be eliminated from the marriage of Phyllis and Bert, it might become, like the Hubbell marriage, a voluntary monogamy. I think it would probably pass through a triangular phase, but I think, in the end, they would tire of it, and find it inadequate, and that they would find a real monogamy better suited to their needs.

OUR racial experience seems to show that monogamy is better fitted to the needs of most human beings than any other form of relationship between the sexes. I feel sure it will predominate in marriage by virtue of its own inherent merits—*if given a chance.* Where we make our mistake is in thinking it can be *forced,* and that any departure from it on the part of any number of individuals will destroy it. What destroys it is our system of forcing it on people whether they think they want it or not.

The evidence before me indicates that triangular relationships in marriage make *some* persons happy, and that such relationships, when the parties mutually consent to them, have put many a marriage on a psychologically stable basis. Such persons would often be unhappy if divorce should separate them. They insist that they love and need each other, in spite of their outside fancies. These, permit me to emphasize, are *facts.* I ask the reader not to hold *me* responsible for them. I record them solely for his information.

Our social traditions have taught all of us since childhood that the Triangle is intrinsically and unescapably tragic, that it must from its very nature deprive one of its members of his or her rights, and that an absolute monogamy in marriage is, *without exception,* the only basis on which marriage can be made to work. When a marriage fails, we never say that it failed because it was monogamous, though we wouldn't hesitate to say of a marriage that it failed because it was polygamous. This may be orthodox, but is not necessarily reasonable. If an unconventional polygamy can ruin this marriage, why should not a forced monogamy ruin that?

Many men may have many minds about most things, but they are not permitted to have them about this one, on which they perhaps differ more, in taste and natural bent, than about any other thing. Here they must be uniform. Here one man's meat cannot be admitted to be another man's poison, even if it is. There may be diversity of taste, but there must be outward uniformity of response. Differing conditions, differing capacity, differing needs all met by the same prescription! And this, in the most variable and intimate of human relationships! In no other phase of life do we expect this absurd and impossible thing of human beings.

THIS is in no sense an attack on monogamous marriage. I have said before, and I say it again, that I think the marriage in which one man and one woman fill each other's lives is the ideal marriage. That is the thing to strive for and hope for. But when individuals find themselves so constituted or so matched that they desire in their hearts some variation from this ideal, then I am sure that the restrictions they impose on each other tend to make a tragedy out of conduct which would otherwise be innocuous and often only temporary. The subjective effect on the individual of conduct carried out in secret violation of such restrictions is often devastating to health, morals and common decency; and the social consequences, if there be no secrecy, are just as bad or worse. Thus the effort to achieve an outward respectability often makes persons who rebel against our social code genuinely immoral; while a courageous sincerity and openness in unconventional conduct makes others *seem* immoral in the eyes of society, and so destroys them by an adverse and hateful social suggestion, which they are constrained, subjectively, to accept.

Non-monogamic marriages would, I think, usually become monogamous if allowed to work themselves out freely. If they didn't, they would be falling short of the ideal, of course, but they would still usually work out with a reasonable degree of happiness for all concerned. At present they work out in misery, vulgar intrigue, lies, heart-burnings, hatred, cruelty, neglect, divorce and parentless children. This happens in the best-regulated families. Having reached the limit of endurance, the bewildered couple finally seek the divorce court, split up their homes on highly triangular charges, wrangle over the possession of their children, and finally leave it to the court to determine that Johnny, aged six, and Sadie, aged five, are to be with their mother so much of the time, and with their father so much of the time, and that they are to have a home with two parents in it *none* of the time.

I think that if individual preferences and tastes could be given even a reasonable right of way in marriage, society would benefit incalculably by such a change. I think society suffers unguessable harm from the traditions of marriage which are in the saddle at present, *however fundamentally desirable may be the monogamic ideal back of those traditions.*

I am anxious, in this connection, not to give the impression that I favor the Triangle in marriage. I don't favor it. I think it far better when couples are so matched that they genuinely don't want any outside episodes. I think marriage in general tends to seek the monogamic status. I think such a status is attainable *on a free-will basis* in most marriages, and that it would, under favorable conditions of freedom in marriage, tend to become more so. *But the monogamic preference, when genuinely felt, is a product of culture. It involves voluntary self-restraint and voluntary self-discipline. It must be evolved by society on a free-will basis, and it can't be legislated or otherwise forced into existence.* At present we are legislating and forcing; and the more legislating and forcing we do, the more unmistakable becomes the rebellion on the part of

men and women everywhere. And in such rehellion there is great peril for the individuals involved in it.

I feel no alarm ahout these social tendencies; but I am often keenly alarmed for the welfare of individuals who get themselves so entangled in the machinery of change that they are in danger of heing crushed in the wheels. When I deal with individuals, therefore, I urge them to abstain, if possihle, from experimenting, and to leave that diversion to persons whose special talents seem to make it, if not safe, at least less dangerous.

But if they insist on their own way, why, then I do what I can for them. There is no use in trying forcihly to stop either them or the machine. Why waste one's energy trying, or one's hreath denouncing? Why not give help, guidance and tolerant sympathy instead?

This can he done. And the doing of it would be easy if society would look to the beam that is in our own eye, and pluck from its heart that darkest of superstitions, the Ultimate Blasphemy, that God is static and Satan alone progressive.

(Another article in this unique and revolutionary series by Judge Lindsey on what is going on in society today as revealed to him in his own famous Denver court will appear in the next issue.)

THE MYSTERY OF MOLLIE CORBIN

(Continued from page 63)

"Right, General. So I see our only chance to get those two is by getting from them this evidence which they have. So instead of using the usual detective methods, General, I'm going to stake everything on a trap—a sensational trap which, while always before their eyes, must he unsuspected hy them and all the world. The trap is a realistic adaptation of their own practices."

General Thorne stared. "In the name of heaven, just what *is* this trap, and how do you expect it to produce the evidence?"

"If you don't mind, General, I'd rather not tell you. My plan calls for the use of means which I, as a private detective, can use, but which you as a puhlic official might not wish to sanction. So it's best for you to be ignorant. Then if I fall down in a way that reflects upon the Department, you can clear the Department hy claiming ignorance of my intentions and putting all the hlame on me—which wont hurt me at all."

"Isn't the real reason for keeping me in dark ignorance," General Thorne asked dryly, "that you want me to play *Doctor Watson* to your *Sherlock Holmes,* so that in *Holmes'* usual manner you can hold back your surprise till the very end of the case?"

"You're joking, General. You know I wouldn't hold hack a thing from you except to protect you. Now do I get the loan of the Department?"

"Of course you do!" Thorne exclaimed heartily. "You've helped me and the Department in too many big affairs for me not to trust you to the limit—and there's nothing bigger that the Police Department could do just now than help round up that precious pair! Only, when you return the Police Department, I'm hoping it will still he all in one piece!"

CLIFFORD'S further talk with Thorne related to practical arrangements as to the use of the Department, the main item of which was Thorne's agreement to see that all of Clifford's suggestions were carried out without permitting suhordinates to learn their real source or to question their meaning. The talk concluded, Clifford returned to his office; and here, after a telephone message, Mollie Corbin joined him within an hour.

To her Clifford outlined the now matured idea which had hegun to germinate that

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State of Illinois, County of Cook, ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Charles M. Richter, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of The Red Book Magazine and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of tha ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the data shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit.

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morning when she had told him of her schoolgirl sister and their likeness. Mollie fairly gasped at the almost incredible boldness of Clifford's plan, but she consented to act out the part the plan assigned to her. That night there was another session with Mollie, this a secret one; and the following morning there was another session with General Thorne.

The mechanism of Clifford's plan was now complete—in fact, the plan had already begun to operate, and a sensational version of the first events would be in all the late afternoon papers. He was trying to time all his details very accurately, and that afternoon at four, a half-hour before his story was due to break, he was in the handsome inner office of Langdon and Abbott.

This first visit upon the lawyers he had figured out as being one of the most important elements of his plan. Its whole purpose was to create an impression, to start a train of thought that would grow and make all later events seem convincing. As for himself, he wished to establish the conception that he was a dull-witted, blustering, conceited detective, whose vanity and short temper caused him to be boastingly indiscreet and who therefore was not to be seriously considered as an antagonist.

Clifford had asked to see both partners on business relating to their ward, and so both were present. While introducing himself, he made a swift study of the pair, each of whom was in the neighborhood of sixty. Langdon was a man of large and impressive figure, who affected an open face and genial heartiness, more suggestive of the popular family doctor than the shrewd man of law. But Clifford could imagine all the kindliness fading out of that genial mask, the gray eyes growing hard and the mouth tightening like a vise upon some grim decision. Clifford sensed himself in the presence of one of the most astute and ruthless intellects he had met in all his career—a criminal intelligence so trained and alert that it had outwitted the law, even kept suspicion almost in abeyance, and so had maintained for him his place among honored and trusted men.

Abbott, slight of figure and withered of face, likewise wore the firm's look of geniality, but this mask was no disguise for the fox cunning and weasel spirit of the man. Clifford instantly picked Abbott as the weak member of the combination.

"Just what is it concerning our ward Miss Corbin, that you wish to consult us about?" inquired the suave Mr. Langdon.

Clifford had decided upon a swift and blunt attack. "Miss Corbin is my client—see!" he shot out gruffly, in his best hard-boiled manner. "She came to me yesterday, and told me about you two birds. Said she was afraid of you two. Believed you wanted to hold onto her dough, and was afraid you'd croak her, or have her disappear, so's you could keep her coin. When I take a case, I don't sleep on it—see; and my first move in protecting that little dame is to come straight to you two coots and give you warning—"

THE astounded Mr. Langdon was on his feet. Clifford's provocative opening had served one part of its purpose; it had jerked off the mask of geniality. Mr. Langdon's face was almost apoplectic in its murderous fury.

"Get out, you dumb-bell!" he shouted, pointing at the door. "You think you can come into the office of gentlemen, accuse them of crimes—give them warning— Get out of here, I tell you—get out!"

"Aw, cut the big-voice argument. I aint no jury. Be yourself. I already said most of what I want to say to you two bimbos. I'm going to say the rest. Quickest way for you to get rid of me is to keep still and let me finish. Besides, Langdon, if you could

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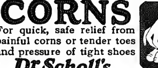

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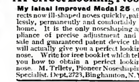

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see your own face, you'd keep it closed long enough to wipe that guilty look off of it."

With a great effort Langdon controlled his temper, but he could not withdraw the murderous hatred from his eyes. "Go on, then," he choked out. "Say the rest and get out."

"And see that you keep the rest mighty short," put in Mr. Abbott.

AT his swift attack Clifford had seen gray fear leap into the face of the smaller partner. Yes, Abbott was the weaker of the two.

"When I take a case to protect a client," Clifford boasted, "I'm not one of these lads with sleeping sickness who waits till the client is hurt before he makes a move. I'm a quick mover, I am; I believe in preventing the client from getting hurt. And that's just why I'm here. I'm here to warn you two bimbos that if anything happens to Mollie Corbin, I'll know you two are to blame, and I'll fall on you both like a ton of brick. So if you're wise, you're going to be good. That ends the speech I came here to hand you."

Langdon replied with a scathing dignity that should have obliterated this dense, vainglorious detective.

"I am treating your stupid effrontery with more consideration than it deserves when I say that either you are crazy, or our ward is temporarily out of her mind. The reputation of Langdon and Abbott is such that no one could possibly believe such a preposterous story. Moreover such a criminal procedure is a thing entirely outside our character even to conceive. So your warning is unnecessary. We wish you good day."

"Bunk! You birds wear a good reputation for just the same reason a burglar wears a mask. I wouldn't put anything beyond you two." He gave each a searching glance. "Even at that, of course there's a chance that the two of you are not in this together. Perhaps one of you is trying to pull the thing off by his lonesome. I'll bet that each of you is just waiting for his chance to double-cross the other. Never knew a pair of crooks who trusted each other, who wasn't afraid of each other, who wasn't just waiting for the chance to dump the other fellow and grab everything for himself."

This last had been a carefully prepared and carefully aimed shot, and Clifford believed it had gone home. Each man lived in fear of betrayal by the other, or his estimate of the pair was all wrong.

"Are you going—or do I call the police?" demanded Langdon.

"Listen—when the police are called in to settle things between us, I call 'em. Get that! Sure I'll go—leaving you two is the one pleasant thing about meeting you."

Clifford put on the derby which belonged to his hard-boiled character and started for the door. But just then the telephone on Mr. Abbott's desk began to ring. Mr. Abbott took up the phone.

"His office wants him?" repeated Mr. Abbott. "Tell his office Mr. Clifford is just leaving. . . . . You say his office insists—"

"If that's for me, let me answer it," said Clifford, turning about and brusquely taking the telephone from Abbott's hands. "Hello. . . . . Hello. . . . . Yes, yes. . . . . What!"

For two minutes Clifford listened, breathing shocked exclamations. Then he set down the phone and silently turned eyes of blazing accusation upon the partners.

"Well, what is it?" nervously asked Abbott.

"So after all I was too late!" exploded Clifford. "You two have beat me to it!"

"Out with it, man!" ordered Langdon. "What are you talking about?"

"You both know what I'm talking about!" Clifford grimly retorted. "The exact thing Mollie Corbin said she feared from you two —she was afraid she was going to be made to disappear. Mollie Corbin was kidnaped at nine o'clock this morning."

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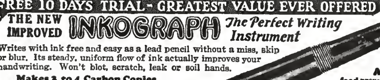

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"Kidnaped!" The two partners sprang to their feet.

"Don't think you can fool me by acting innocent of your own job! Yes, kidnaped! That was Morgan, one of my men, on the wire. He had been detailed to shadow Mollie Corbin and protect her. She came out of your house, Mr. Langdon, at nine o'clock, it being her intention to do a little shopping and then meet her younger sister, who was arriving at Grand Central Station. A taxicab that had been hanging around swung up to the curb and she stepped in. Through the window Morgan saw arms seize the girl and pull her down, and the taxi beat it. Before Morgan could start pursuit, be was knocked down from behind and jabbed with a hypodermic. He came to in Bellevue Hospital just a little while ago. That means he wasn't able to notify the Department and me of the kidnaping till six hours after the girl had been spirited away."

"I—I don't believe it!" gulped little Mr. Abbott.

"Nor do I!" declared Mr. Langdon.

"You don't, eh? Well, the Department will soon be telling it to you in a way to make you believe it!"

"Anyhow, if it really did happen," continued Mr. Langdon, "we certainly had nothing to do with it!"

"You'd claim that if you were both guilty as hell! But I'm not saying you both are guilty. Perhaps only one of you, and I'm not trying to say which one. Just as I said a little while ago, I think you are both born double-crossers, and I wouldn't put it past either of you to try to put over some game that would grab the girl's money and leave the other of you out. But the one of you that figured this thing out didn't count on his foot slipping the way it has."

The two partners shot covert glances of suspicion at each other. Clifford was missing no slightest detail of the byplay.

"And there's another detail," continued Clifford. "Morgan told me that when he reported to the police, he was told that Mollie's younger sister, Jennie Corbin, had just been brought in to Headquarters.

"She'd been sitting in Grand Central Station for hours—a bewildered little country girl, who didn't know what to do. Finally a policeman spoke to her and she told him her story, showed him a telegram. She'd come to the city, she said, to visit an older sister who'd promised to meet her at the station. But the sister hadn't come and she was scared. It looked to the policeman a matter for investigation, and he took her into custody. Then came Morgan's report of the kidnaping, the two cases connected right up, and it was plain why the younger sister wasn't met."

"I don't believe it—I don't believe it!" again gulped Mr. Abbott.

The telephone rang again, and Mr. Abbott answered it. He spoke for a moment, then hung up with a shaking hand.

"That—that was Commissioner Thorne," he quavered. "He said he had Jennie Corbin in his office, and he said for us to come straight over to Headquarters to see him about her."

"Since I'm headed to see General Thorne on the same matter," put in Clifford, "we might as well go together."

FIFTEEN minutes later the trio entered the office of General Thorne. With him were Morgan, Clifford's man, and half a dozen police detectives. The focus of all their gazes was a big chair which held a slight figure in a schoolgirl dress and a little straw hat with ribbon streamers, her two long braids down her back. She was adroop across an arm of the chair and was sobbing into her handkerchief.

The two guardians drew near her. "Jennie," spoke up Mr. Langdon, "—Jennie."

She raised a tear-swollen face from the

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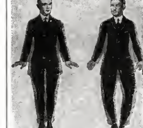

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handkerchief and looked at them. "Mr. Langdon—Mr. Abbott," she choked out in greeting. And then with the wild frenzy of an unnerved child she demanded: "Oh, what's happened to Mollie? Oh, what's become of Mollie?"

"We've only just now learned about her, Jennie," replied Mr. Langdon, in an attempt at a soothing voice, "—about her, and about your being here. Mollie will probably come home of her own accord—she may be home even now. If she doesn't come, we'll certainly find her."

The girl's face again fell into her handkerchief. "Mollie!" she cried frantically. "Mollie—oh, Mollie!"

"Mr. Langdon, Mr. Abbott," General Thorne said in a magisterial voice, "this is a very strange situation that has developed around your two wards."

"I assure you, General, we had our very first news of the situation just a few minutes ago from Mr. Clifford."

"Yes?" There was the least edge of doubt, of suspicion, in General Thorne's voice. "Then it is your due, as guardians, to know all that the police know about your wards."

AT General Thorne's direction, the bandaged and still dazed-looking Morgan repeated in detail his story of the kidnaping of Mollie Corbin, to which other witnesses had been found. Jennie Corbin told of her sister's message, of her journey to the city, of her long wait at the station. And in conclusion the policeman retold his story of having watched the waiting girl for hours, of having accosted her and heard her story of the sister who never came. By Langdon and Abbott the whole story thus rounded out and backed up was accepted as a fact without a tinge of suspicion.

"The problem which confronts the police," summarized General Thorne when the witnesses had finished, "is what has happened to Mollie Corbin, and who engineered that kidnaping."

"Mollie—oh, Mollie!" wildly sobbed the little figure in the chair.

"While your police are investigating the disappearance of Mollie, General Thorne," put in Mr. Langdon, "I think we had better take Jennie home with us so that she can receive the care her condition requires."

"That point has already been decided otherwise, Mr. Langdon, and I do not believe you will object to the decision. In view of some rather suspicious circumstances Jennie is going to be kept where the Department can have an eye on her, and have her at its disposal, until this matter of the disappearance of her sister is cleared up. She will be in the hands of the proper legal custodian, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. That is all for today gentlemen. Good afternoon."

A minute later and Clifford and General Thorne were alone.

"Well, Clifford," the Commissioner demanded, "did I act my part according to your directions?"

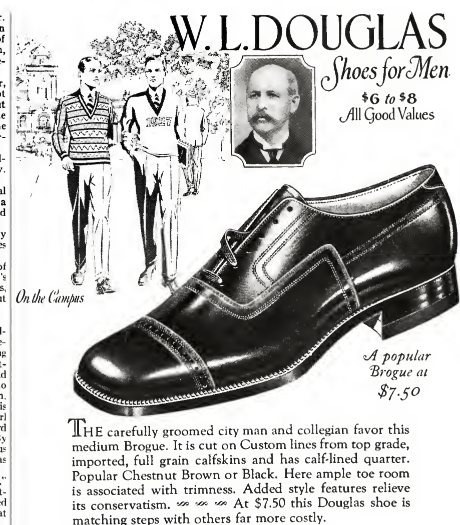
"Splendid, General! Splendid!"

"Aren't you going to give me some idea of what this is all about?"

"I hope you wont mind waiting a little longer."

"All right—all right," the Commissioner grumbled good-naturedly. "But I feel like a motion-picture extra whose knowledge of the story is limited to the bit the director orders him to do. I'm all worked up to see the finished film. That little girl is waiting for you in my secretary's office as you asked, and the agent for the Society will leave the two of you alone."

As Clifford entered the secretary's office the Society's agent obediently withdrew. Clifford led the girl to the corner farthest from the doors and warmly caught her two hands.



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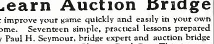

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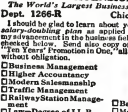

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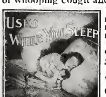

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"You were simply great, Mollie!" he whispered. "Simply great!"

"Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott did seem to believe I was really Jennie," Mollie returned.

"Of course they did!" exulted Clifford's whisper. "And we've now got you hid away in the safest place on earth, in the very last place those two will ever suspect your being—hidden away in full view of their own eyes!"

"But Jennie—is she really all right?"

"She's perfectly safe. And since they think Jennie is right here, there's no danger of their finding Jennie until we're ready to produce her!"

"And—and you really think all this somehow will work out to clear Hugh?"

"Only time can give you an honest answer to that question, Mollie. We've now done almost all we can. We can only sit tight and watch for things to develop out of this situation. But I'm hoping for the best, Mollie—I'm hoping for the best!"

THE exchange of Mollie for Jennie had been difficult only in that it had required care for details and exact timing. Two duplicate outfits for a girl of fourteen had been purchased. One of these complete outfits had been delivered to Jennie by one of Clifford's men. It seemed no more than an ordinary gift from Mollie, but Clifford's operative informed Jennie that she was to travel in it, and he had instructions for her covering every point.

Clifford himself had been in the car which kidnaped Mollie. After some mad driving which included three changes of taxies—this to leave the beginning of a broad trail which was to vanish—Mollie was flashed out of town in a closed car in which she changed into the second of the duplicate outfits. At Stamford she had caught Jennie's New-York-bound train and had sat for a time in a day coach; at that time she had been wearing a long loose cape and a tam-o'-shanter, her braided hair piled up beneath the tam. Presently she entered the parlor car, and as if by accident she opened the door of Jennie's drawing-room. She apologized for her error and after a moment withdrew and returned to her place in the day coach.

Of course the person who came apologetically out of the drawing-room in the tam and cape was Jennie. At Grand Central Station, unnoted in the great crowd that pours ceaselessly into New York, Jennie left the train and was whisked off to her appointed sanctuary by Clifford's man, who had been guarding her all the way. Mollie, with Jennie's bags, sat forlornly about the station waiting to be taken in by the police as a little country waif.

Clifford knew newspapers, and had counted upon the aid they might give his plan. A young woman who is rich and whose fate is a great police mystery—newspapers do not pray for a better front-page story. Within an hour after the little stranger had been picked up by the police, the story of the two sisters was on the streets. The mysterious daylight kidnaping of Mollie Corbin would have been enough of itself; but the added touch of the bereft younger sister, also an heiress, being protected and comforted by policemen, and sobbing brokenly for her lost Mollie—that made the tale irresistible.

The next day the story was the sensation of the city and of the whole country, and remained so for two weeks, with reporters running down every clue to the mystery. One promising explanation of the puzzle was exploded within a few hours after its discovery. This was a good-by note found in Mollie's bedroom ten hours after her disappearance; the note said she was tired and was going off alone for a quiet rest. But this note was promptly shown to be a forgery; furthermore, the note was not consistent with her telegram to Jennie.

The newspapers played up the theory of foul play, and as the days passed, foul play became accepted as explaining Mollie's fate. The forged note was in itself almost proof of this. It was recalled that another ward of Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott had likewise had a tragic end. Almost inevitably, as Clifford had counted, suspicion began to turn in the direction of the two guardians.

During these two weeks Clifford let the newspapers build up the case for him, and he closely watched the effect on the two partners. The strain was bearing heavily upon both, and unless he guessed wrong, each man believed the other guilty. At the end of two weeks of this strain and suspicion, Clifford believed his time was ripe, and he struck swiftly. He secured the arrest of Langdon and Abbott on the charge of murdering Mollie Corbin.

And then two days later, on the day before the trial of Hugh Kennedy for the murder of Ruth Emery was scheduled to begin, Clifford again struck swiftly, having arranged that Langdon and Abbott should be held *incomunicado* for the preceding twenty-four hours and that no news from the outer world should penetrate their cells in the Tombs.

CLIFFORD was now at last ready to put his daring plan to the final test. As the stage setting for the last act of his play he had settled upon a large room in the Tombs in which prisoners consult their lawyers. On this gloomy stage, at three o'clock, besides policemen and prison attendants, were gathered General Thorne, the *pseudo* Jennie Corbin, Hugh Kennedy, Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott, and grouped in a shadowy corner a dozen newspaper men, these last being present at Clifford's request.

As Clifford had expected, Langdon showed the better control of the two partners. He glanced suspiciously about at the many people in the room.

"Why this crowd?" he belligerently demanded.

"They are all interested in various ways in a little talk which we are about to have," replied Clifford.

"I defy you to make me talk! If you're going to question me, I demand the presence of my lawyer!"

"You may have your lawyer later. You are not here to be questioned. You are here to listen to some things that are to be told you. There has just been a startling development in the case of Mollie Corbin, of which you two as yet know nothing."

"What's that?" the partners breathed almost in unison.

Clifford ignored their query and turned to the reporters. "Since Mollie Corbin was my client," he explained, "the investigation into her fate has been unofficially in my charge, and since I know most about her situation, General Thorne has requested me to take charge of the present proceedings." He turned back to the partners. "Be seated."

The two men took chairs on one side of a table, and Clifford sat down opposite them, the *pseudo* Jennie Corbin at his elbow, crying brokenly into her handkerchief. Clifford gazed with boring eyes at the pair in ominous silence, a hush that extended throughout the room. Though his bearing expressed grim confidence, even menace, within he was taut with suspense. His drama was entering its climax—what was to be its ending?

"Well—what—what is it?" Abbott huskily breathed.

Clifford dropped the manner of a heavy-witted roughneck detective he had hitherto maintained before them. "Before I tell you the big thing we've found out, I'm going to remind you of a few things," he began

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in a voice as ominous as had been his silence. "The first time I saw you two, I told you my client was afraid you were going to do to her exactly the sort of thing that has happened. I warned you, but I was too late. You had already put your plan into execution."

"Don't try to bully us with your third-degree methods!" blustered Langdon. "We'd done nothing of the kind."

"That leads to the second point on which I wish to remind you. On my first visit I said that the plot against Mollie Corbin was a thing that one of you might have planned alone, intending to leave the other out of the profits of the undertaking. I then said that you did not trust each other, were afraid of each other, and were each capable of trying to double-cross the other. Perhaps that's what one of you really did in this affair."

The two haggard men could not refrain from swift glances of suspicion at each other.

"Is that what you brought us in here to tell us?" demanded Langdon. "Just to repeat the libelous lies you manufactured in our office?"

"No. You are here to be told that the mystery of the disappearance of Mollie Corbin has been cleared up—that is, all but one point: we do not yet know whether both of you are guilty, or only one." Clifford paused for suspense and emphasis, and then said slowly: "The body of the missing girl was found this morning."

"What!" they both exclaimed together; and then: "Where?"

"Both of you know where. Or at least, one of you knows."

Again the look of suspicion flashed between the partners.

"Where was the body found?" hoarsely breathed Abbott.

"We'll pass that question for the moment while I tell you something else. The body had evidently been buried about two weeks ago. It has been positively identified, although its distinguishing long hair had been trimmed close to the scalp and the features disfigured by quicklime."

"Where was that body found?" demanded Langdon.

"You declare that you do not know?" Clifford shot at him.

"I haven't the slightest idea!"

"Then since one of you is guilty, you say the guilty man is Abbott?"

"Then it must be Abbott!" declared Langdon.

Clifford's next words shot out with all their harsh driving power at Abbott. "We've got you, Abbott! That body was found buried in the garden of your Long Island country place!"

ABBOTT came struggling to his feet. "It's a lie!" he gasped wildly. "It's a lie!"

"I think so myself!" exclaimed Langdon. "See here, Clifford—don't think you can trap us by a piece of bunk!"

"If you wish confirmation, and fuller information, here it is."

To each of the partners Clifford gave a half-dozen copies of late editions of different afternoon papers. The two men glanced at the great black headlines, let out sharp cries, collapsed into their chairs, and madly went through the papers. The discovery of the body of the missing Mollie was a detailed story covering the greater part of most front pages—the sensational last development in the most sensational crime story of the year.

Langdon was the first to look up from the papers. His eyes accused Abbott.

"So—after all, Abbott—you *did* do it!" he breathed.

Clifford attacked swiftly, while both were unbalanced and before either could regain composure and caution.

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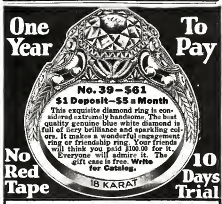

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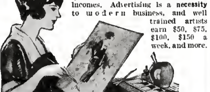

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"Of course you did it, Abbott!" he drove at the smaller man. "But of course you did not figure on that body ever being found. You probably hadn't even intended to bury her; you probably had intended to let her body be found some place, with suicide the obvious explanation. But the immediate hullabaloo over her disappearance forced you to change your plans. There's a will made out in your favor by her—what influence or force you used to get that will out of her we do not know. That will would have been produced at the proper time. That will in your favor, Abbott—that was what led to Mollie Corbin's death!"

"It's a lie—a lie!" choked out Abbott.

"I think you two men were both involved in this, Langdon," Clifford drove at the other. 'But if you were not—I do not need to tell a lawyer of your experience how much easier things are made for the man who is the first to give evidence for the state."

LANGDON moistened his twitching lips. But his hesitation lasted but a moment.

"I hadn't a thing to do with it. The guilt is entirely Abbott's. He did speak to me about getting a will out of Mollie Corbin—then plausibly getting rid of her—then producing her will—all just as you have said. But I told him I wouldn't be mixed in such an affair. Of course I've known all along that he went ahead with his plan, but not till just now did I know what he had done with Mollie."

Abbott came to his feet, gasping with amazed, uncontrollable fury, and thrust a small fist of skin-tied bones into his partner's face. "Why, you damned liar!" he cried. "You damned liar!" Panting wheezily, he stared penetratingly at Langdon for a moment; then understanding came into his eyes, and he cried out: "Oh, I get you, you damned double-crosser—trying to get out from under, and trying to put me away?"

He wheeled on Clifford, and his words tripped over each other, so great was their mad frenzy. "That body you found in my yard was a plant—was planted there by Langdon! Yes, Langdon and I did talk about getting rid of Mollie Corbin, much as you've said. But I had nothing to do with her kidnaping and death! Nothing! So it must have been Langdon. And that double-crosser secretly buried the body on my property, to throw the guilt on me, to save himself, to discredit me so I couldn't be a danger to him. It's all as plain as day—the damned double-crosser!"

"I didn't touch the girl!" savagely retorted Langdon. "You're guilty as hell, Abbott, and your saying I did the job and planted that body is just an attempt to squirm out of your guilt by throwing the blame on me! You're the double-crosser, Abbott! Clifford, if there is any evidence I can give that'll help put Abbott where he belongs, that evidence is yours!"

"Why—you—you—" choked out the inarticulate Abbott.

"I accept your offer, Langdon," Clifford put in; and then his grim voice drove crushingly at the other partner. "The best course for you, Abbott, is a prompt and full confession. You see we've got you cold—particularly witb the help of Langdon's evidence."

"So you think you've got me, Langdon, with your plant and your lying evidence!" the maddened Abbott panted, his voice a screech. "You think I'm going to let you get away with that? When I know you're the guilty man! You think you can fasten the guilt on me, and get away with it? You can't do it—you can't do it!"

Perhaps it was the sight of the pale and staring Kennedy that prompted Abbott's next words; perhaps the idea had flashed of itself into his terrified and vengeful brain.

"You're not going to get away with it, and make me suffer alone—you liar and squealer and double-crosser! I may not be able to prove you're guilty in this case, but I can prove you're guilty in another case! I too can turn State's evidence!" He pointed a clawlike finger at Hugh Kennedy. "That boy there never murdered Ruth Emery! She was killed by Peter Langdon!"

Langdon came lurching galvanically to his feet. "Stop, Abbott!" he shouted.

Clifford thrust Langdon back into his chair. "Shut up, Langdon, or we'll have your mouth held shut. You'll have your chance to reply. Go on, Abbott."

"So, Peter Langdon, you thought I'd take it lying down!" Abbott snarled gloatingly. "Mr. Clifford, General Thorne, it was like this: Langdon wanted Ruth Emery's money. He had coaxed her father into giving his money, in case of Ruth's death, to the United Philanthropies Foundation. That's just a paper organization, a fake—it's actually money controlled, through fake accounting, by Peter Langdon. Also Langdon didn't want Hugh Kennedy to marry Mollie Corbin. So it occurred to him that he'd gain his two big points by killing Ruth Emery and arranging conclusive evidence that would prove Hugh Kennedy the murderer."

"Lies!" gasped Langdon. "Lies, I tell you—all be says—"

This time Clifford's hand was clamped about Langdon's mouth.

"Those love-letters," Abbott snarled on in his fury, "Ruth Emery's diary, every written bit of evidence, they were forged and planted where they were found. The poison glass with Hugh Kennedy's finger-prints on it, that was a glass out of which Hugh Kennedy had drunk water and which Langdon had been carefully saving for this exact purpose. Right after one of Kennedy's visits to the house, Langdon poured the medicine poisoned with aconite into this glass and gave it to Ruth Emery. And that little bottle which had contained aconite and which was found in Kennedy's room, it also was planted there. The real bottle is in Langdon's safe-deposit box at the Grantham Bank. He has a little store of poisons there which he secretly imported so that he could have poisons without any danger of their being traced to him through an American druggist. There, Peter Langdon," he ended triumphantly, "that's how you've gotten away with your game! If I'm to be tried for a framed-up murder, you're going to be tried for a real one!"

CLIFFORD removed his gagging hand. Langdon sprang up in that extremity of wild rage which is lost to everything but itself.

"You were in that Ruth Emery affair as much as I!" he screamingly struck back. "It was you who had the idea of saving the glass with Hugh Kennedy's finger-prints on it, and you who had the idea of the forged letters, and you who did the forging!"

"Yes, but you did the poisoning—you are the actual murderer!"

Utterly forgetful of all else save their fear of each other, their long-smoldering and now maddened hatred of each other, and their frantic desire to seize whatever lessened penalty might come to the one who first exposed the other, they stood mouthing accusation after accusation. The accusations were specific, for they were intended to be evidence that would destroy: safe-deposit boxes and their contents, diverted trust funds, fake philanthropies, falsified wills, the key to records kept in code, other wards who had been defrauded or removed—all the secrets of their trade gushed forth, deluging each alike in evil. At length, exhausted and panting, they stood glaring their hate at each other.

"General Tborne," said Clifford, "I believe you have heard enough to secure convictions."

"More than enough!" exclaimed General Thorne.

Clifford turned to the group of reporters who had been the tense and hushed audience of his drama. "Gentlemen," he said quietly, "Commissioner Thorne has requested me to apologize to the press for the great hoax that has been perpetrated. Everything depended on our making Mr. Langdon and Mr. Abbott believe this hoax to be the truth, and we therefore could not avoid permitting the papers also to believe in this hoax."

"Hoax?" Langdon repeated blankly.

Clifford ignored him. "Gentlemen, there has been no murder of Mollie Corbin."

There were exclamations from the reporters. Little Abbott half arose, eyes bulging, face incredulously agape.

"No—no—murder?" he gagged. "But that body—you—you found—in my garden?"

'That body, gentlemen, was buried there under my direction. It is the body of an unidentified young woman in the morgue that had not been claimed and that was about to be buried. I merely borrowed the body for a few days and added to it a few little identifying items supplied by the real Mollie Corbin."

"But—but the kidnaping?" gasped Langdon.

"Gentlemen, there was no kidnaping. Rather, the kidnaping was the beginning of the hoax, was carried out with Mollie Corbin's consent, and I myself was the kidnaper. All during the period of her mysterious disappearance Mollie Corbin has been constantly before all our eyes." He slipped an arm about the schoolgirl beside him and drew her to her feet. "Gentlemen, here is Mollie Corbin."

"She's not—she can't be!" squeaked Abbott. "That's Mollie's young sister—that's Jennie Corbin!"

"Morgan," Clifford called to his assistant, "will you now bring in Jennie Corbin?"

The next moment a second girl with pigtails and in schoolgirl dress, was being ushered into the room by a police matron. The two duplicates of each other embraced one another with the wild affection born of danger and months of separation. Langdon and Abbott stared at their two wards with bewildered ghastly faces—it was plain that ultimate terror was closing about their souls.

"Gentlemen," Clifford continued, "I do not now need to prove to you which is which, since you see both safely before you. But General Thorne and I feel that we do owe you a full account of the inside story of this case. Here are the facts."

BEGINNING with Mollie Corbin's coming to him with the story of her danger and the danger to her lover, Clifford told in detail all that had happened up to the present scene in the Tombs. He wound up with:

"So you see that the only possible way General Thorne and I saw to clear up this complicated case was to create the plausible appearance of the very crime which we believed these two men had planned, and to shape events so that each man would believe the other guilty and be ready to expose the other. You have seen the results gained by our plan, and we hope that the true story of the disappearance of Mollie Corbin will make some amends to you for the necessary false one."

"I'll say it will!" exclaimed the recognized dean of the old-guard police reporters. "Your first story is the thing that brought out this second, so it's real news, a part of the truth! And what a wow of a story the two stories make together!"

There was a gentle tugging at Clifford's arm, and he turned. Looking up at him, her eyes streaming happy tears, was Mollie Corbin. Tightly around her was the right arm of Hugh Kennedy; the fine prison-

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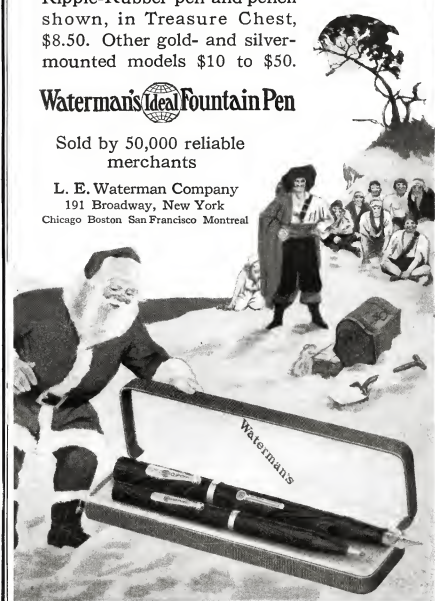

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bleached face he held on Clifford was twitching with awe and relief and happiness that were still beyond his bewildered comprehension.

"Mr. Clifford," slowly breathed Mollie Corbin, clutching one of his hands in both of hers, "it's all so wonderful—so wonderful —I can hardly believe it's really happened! Oh, what a friend you've been to Hugh and me! I don't see how we can ever pay—"

"Just you two live happy forever after," interrupted Clifford, who had gripped the free hand of young Kennedy. "That's the best way you can pay me."

BEHIND Mollie and Jennie Corbin and Kennedy, Clifford and General Thorne fell in at the end of the procession that clattered along prison corridors. 'Well, I'm mighty glad this job is over, General," remarked Clifford. "I hope I haven't banged up your Police Department too badly. I'm now handing it back to you, with many thanks for the loan of it."

General Thorne had slipped a hand through Clifford's arm and was gripping it tightly.

"Boy, boy, I'm still breathless at the way you've put the whole thing across! You're welcome to the Police Department, but do you realize how such a loan actually works out? You actually loan yourself to the Police Department. Since you're the best detective I know, and since this town is full of tough cases, the Police Department is yours to borrow whenever you ask for it!"

WE LIVE BUT ONCE

(Continued from page 69)

pepper tree. She cooed and gossiped and whistled all night, but nothing could disturb Valerie now.

At least she thought so, till she fell asleep, and slept on and on till mid-forenoon.

She woke up happy in the sunlight, happy to be alive. When the maid brought the breakfast, Valerie took pleasure in her puttering and her "thank you's." She kept making comments to bring them out. She really liked the maid today. Everybody was nice in such a nice world.

But after breakfast, when she woke to the fact that the whole day was before her with no prospect of seeing Blair, and the night, and more days, weeks, years perhaps —the world began to wabble in its orbit.

She was afraid to leave the house for fear that Blair might telephone. She was tempted to call him, break in on his conference, insult that secretary, order her about, let her realize that from now on she was her secretary, or at least the secretary of her Mr. Blair.

This childishness, this nursery vindictiveness, gave her a singular delight. Love was robbing her of all her sophistication, her sportsmanship, her dignity.

Lucy Livingston telephoned to say that the crowd was on its way back to Santa Barbara, and to ask her to come along. She pleaded an illness and said she would follow in a day or two. Her father and her mother called from Santa Barbara in great alarm over her disappearance. She assured them that she would be home as soon as she had done a little shopping. She neglected to say what she was shopping for.

Imagine, telling her father that she was trying to purchase Blair Fleming's love! The price unimportant. Yet she would have to tell the whole world about it sooner or later.

At noon Blair telephoned her—from a slot-machine near his office. There was such a racket of street-traffic outside, such a honking of automobiles, that she could hardly hear him, and he dared not speak up or tell her what was in his heart.

She had to conspire with him lest in her effort to shout hard enough to pierce the uproar in his ear, she should take her own household into her confidence.

The pin-pricks and spider-webs and gnat-bites were unnerving her. Then he smote her heart with the explanation that his wife had called him to meet her at luncheon.

VALERIE pleaded as pridelessly as a hungry child:

"Can't you see me late this afternoon or this evening?"

"God knows I want to, but my wife—" A thunderstorm of noise drowned his voice as if he were crushed under a railroad. She winced every time he spoke of that woman as his wife.

An intuition that Amy was cultivating her husband for the sole purpose of spiting Valerie flashed through Valerie's brain, and she accepted it without question. It struck her as a monstrous thing for a wife to do, undignified, despicable. Already her ideals had been so altered by infatuation that the attempt of a wife to protect her home and to reclaim her husband from a gipsy looked like a criminal attack on Valerie's vested rights.

Love was her new god, and anything that interfered with his divine will was infamous, was blasphemy, and worthy of fire and brimstone.

ALL this she pondered while she waited for the thunder in the telephone to die. At last Blair's voice came back:

"Did you hear what I said?"

"Not a word."

"I said, my wife is giving a dinner at home, and she insists on my being there. When I told her I had a client to meet, she gave me an ugly laugh. I've got to make an appearance. You can see that, can't you?"

"I suppose so."

He understood all the nausea in her tone, and how it sickened her as well as him, that another woman should be able to command his time and be obliged. He saw that it did not enhance him in her eyes to know that he could be commanded. What a weakling she must think him! Then his pride was revolted by the necessity of submission, by the need for stealth, by the craven shame of clandestine love. He was a well-known man; his face was recognized; even as he stood at the telephone in the lobby of the building, people spoke to him, or pointed him out. He could see their lips moving as they nudged one another and mumbled, "Look, there's Blair Fleming."

He had to stand and act as if he were discussing some matter of legal business, to seem bored when he was excited to a frenzy. And all this, he told himself, was more for Valerie's sake than his own. He appealed to her:

"It's all for your sake. You realize that, don't you?"

'Oh, of course! Of course!" she answered, meaning plainly: "Of course not."

This was hard to bear. For a moment he rebelled against both women and the double handcuffs of matrimony and infatuation that made the least free gesture impossible. There was a long silence at both ends of the telephone. Each waited for the other to say something helpful. Both were in such a misery of resentment that neither could find a pleasant thought to utter. At length he said:

"Well, I'll call you again the first chance I get."

"Please do; but don't inconvenience yourself."

That broke a flame through his calm. Heedless of who heard, he protested:

"Tbat's unkind! That's cruel!"
"It's not I that's cruel."
There was enough anguisb in ber wail to quell bis wratb. He sighed:
"It's fate, then."
"It must be."
"Well, good-by."
"Good-by!"
"Can't you say more tban that?"
"It's as much as you said."
"But I'm at a cigar-stand," he protested. "I can't say much here, with a mob jostling me and buying cigars right under my elbow! Please!"
She understood and had mercy on him; she murmured:
"I love you! I adore you! I'm perishing without you. If you feel the same about me, just say—say: 'Me too.'"
"Me too!"
It sounded like a prayer. She laughed a little sweetlier and said:
"Good-by, darling!"
"Good-by!"
A long pause. Neither could break the communion. She sighed again:
"Good-by!"
"Good-by!"
He was still unable to cut the line. She kissed the air inside the cup of the transmitter and bad for answer certain curious squawks that she recognized as bis reply. Then she hung up the receiver.
She had been talking with her eyes shut. When she opened them, he was gone from their little rendezvous inside the telephone. She was again in the upper hall of her aunt's home. She had been recaptured and thrust back into the prison of freedom.
There was an afternoon, and a night before her—and how mucb more? How long, O Lord, how long?
She went back to her room and marched to and fro, a jailbird under an indeterminate sentence. Suddenly she stopped short. This would never do. This was not living. Tbis was death. It was not Valerie who took sucb punishment without a struggle. She was no *Hamlet* to put off and soliloquize and let the native bue of resolution be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. She was for action, prompt, decisive action. Better to do the wrong thing than do nothing lest it be not tbe right thing.

Chapter Fifteen

BUT what to do? All day and night Valerie devoted to plotting, running over the possibilities, making audacious schemes, planning atrocious defiances. But every stratagem she considered had some flaw in it—not of risk, for she was not afraid of risk, but of futility. And every one of her devices had one requirement: Blair Fleming must agree to it, and coöperate in it. What assurance had she concerning him except that be was afraid of bis wife, afraid of his secretary, afraid of strangers at a cigar-stand?
Love told her that it could all be solved by a simple elopement. They would step aboard a steamer at the San Pedro dock and be off to the Hawaiian islands. They would charter a yacht and sail and sail to the South Seas.
But tbis dream was brief. Only a millionaire and an idler could attempt such a romance or endure it. Blair Fleming had none too much money, she judged from his home, which was modest enough, for all the gaudy fripperies his wife bad tried to hide it under. He was a lawyer with clients to care for, whose fees he needed. He was evidently carrying some case through court now.
He could not elope with her. He was chained to a desk. He had a living to earn. No doubt he had ambitions, too. He was no man to give up his career to bang about the heels of a lovesick woman. She would bave despised him if he had been. Yet it

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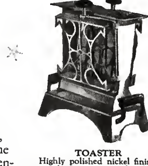

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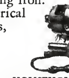

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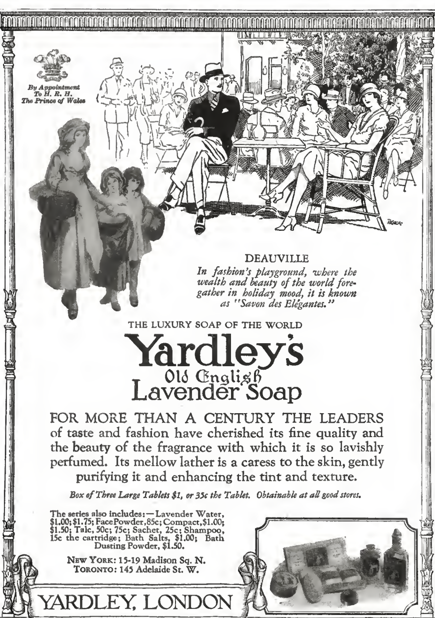

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was cruel for him not to he. Every way she turned, she met contradiction of desire by desire, frustration of ideal by ideal. The world was a hell of fiendish nonsense. Life was as silly as a riddle without answer. The old conundrum occurred to her: "Why is a mouse when it spins? Answer: because the higher, the fewer." After all the wisdoms of all the philosophers and the scientists, what more did it amount to? Still, it is a riddle that one must keep trying to solve.

Even when her aunt dragged her out for a drive, and took her along to a dinner, and a concert afterward, her head was full of conspiracies. Her hrain was so active that the time passed faster than she thought. It was soon midnight, and she was so tired of thinking that she slept heavily and woke heavily.

SHE was summoned to the telephone hy a man whose name she did not recognize. It was the garage man in San Bernardino. He told her that her car was ready, and wanted to know if he should send it up, or would she call for it. She answered impulsively that she would come down and get it.

She sat at the table a moment, thinking of nothing, it seemed. Then her index-finger hegan to dip into the dial and spin certain numbers—Blair Fleming's numbers. Too late she repented. She hraced herself for that sarcastic secretary. But the fates were caught napping. Blair answered the telephone himself. Miss Whitham had gone out to get an affidavit attested. He poured endearments into the telephone, boasted of his insanity of love and his resolution that nothing should keep them apart.

Then she frightened him utterly by a hlunt proposal that they go down to San Bernardino together and drive hack in her car. In his voice she could feel the white panic that overran his face. He hesitated, said how glorious it would be, what an inspiration it was, how he wished he might. He said everything hut, "I'll go."

She waited and let him writhe as if she enjoyed his wretchedness. But she was not enjoying it. At length she said:

"I was only joking. Of course you can't go. I'll call you up when I get back."

"But I can't let you take that trip alone, and come back in the dark all by yourself!"

That was what she wanted to hear, a little terror for her sake, a little hint of protectiveness. Still, she answered:

"I expect to spend the rest of my life alone. I'm used to it."

The vision of her wandering about like a lost lamh overcame him. He stormed: "I forbid you to go alone!"

She mocked at that: "Listen to the man! The forhidden one is doing the forbidding."

He knew what she meant, and he said:

"I go with you. When do we start? Shall I hire a car? No, then we'd have two cars to hring hack. We could go hy the railroad or the electric train."

"Go together?"

"Anywhere!"

Now it was her time to save him from rashness. That was the trouhle with men: they were all caution or all recklessness. It took a woman to combine slyness with impetuosity. She said:

"Do you rememher the hotel in San Bernardino where we ate a bite? Well, you go there and wait for me. I'll go on ahead and get the car and call for you."

They agreed on that. She would take the steam train and he the electric. They would dine separately. It would be dark when they met. The dark belonged to them.

She had to ask one question before her curiosity gnawed out her vitals:

"What are you going to tell your—your —the woman that owns you?"

"You're the woman who owns me. As for my—as for Mrs.—Amy—why, I'll have Miss Whitham tell her that I'll not get home—

I'll not get back till midnight, as I've been called south."

"On a conference."

"That's it."

"But who is Miss Whitham?"

"She's my secretary."

"Oh, yes. She doesn't like me."

"Why, she's never seen you, has she?"

"She has heard me asking for you."

He laughed. These women! Always at war with one another over men. Then he gasped:

"Good Lord, here she comes! It's all understood—I'll meet you at San Bernardino, after dinner."

"Good-by, darling!"

"Good-by, Mr.—good-by, sir!"

She understood that that "sir" was for Miss Whitham's benefit. It tickled Valerie to be cheating her as well as Amy.

She danced about the room now, where she had taken such slow tragic strides. But then, one dances into mischief with another, and keeps a funeral pace alone. She went to the window to drink in the air of a most excellent world. She fell back as she saw a car drawing up to the curb and Amy descending from it, dressed to the nines for a formal call. This was a checkmate. No, it was the work of Providence.

Valerie rang her bell and raced to the head of the stairs. The maid came. The butler appeared in the lower hall. She ran halfway down the steps to call in a shrill whisper:

"Mrs. Fleming is about to ring the bell. Tell her Mrs. Pashley is out, and that Miss Dangerfield returned to Santa Barbara this morning with her friends. Understand?"

"Very good, miss," said the butler.

Valerie agreed with him; it was exceedingly good. Retreating backward, she listened to the butler's vicarious lie. Amy was doubly disappointed. She did not even get into the house. Valerie could hear the genuine regret in her voice. She could see it in her carriage as she floated back to her car.

The best of it was, that when Amy learned from Miss Whitham that Blair was called south, she would never suspect him of being with Valerie. It never occurred to Valerie that Amy might suspect that a man who said he was called south might really be called north. Valerie made a better guess when she assumed that Amy would promptly call up Jimmy St. John and spend the evening with him. She laughed to imagine the two cars colliding. She resolved that she would not run into anybody this night.

WHEN Aunt Ada came home, Valerie explained that she must dash to San Bernardino for her car. Aunt Ada would not believe that she was going alone until Valerie asked if she would take her to the train. Aunt Ada agreed and saw her aboard the train, making sure that Blair Fleming was nowhere about.

The three hours' ride was a mere basking-while for Valerie. Things were moving. She would be at last with *him*. They could make their plans for a future all roses. Womanlike, she found it almost pleasanter to be alone dreaming of her approaching lover than to be actually with him. Suddenly she was at her station. A taxicab took her to the garage at the foot of the mountain. Her car was waiting for her, impatient as a favorite horse. It seemed to know her hand on the wheel. In sheer joy of existence she ran it about the roads, dashed up the switchbacks now cleared of wreckage and repaired, turned around at a most dangerous place and coasted down with the swoop of a landing aviator. She sped along the plains roads, admiring the huge arrowhead that gave the mountain its name. She ate a crude dinner at a roadside refreshment booth. Her only trouble was killing time till the curtains of the night were drawn.

At last the sun reached the horizon and died like a flaring bonfire on the peaks.

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EVERSHARP and WAHL PEN

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Valerie stopped her car and watched it blaze itself out till twilight charred all the trees, the sky turned to gray ashes and the world to blackening embers. The sun had climbed the sky, but had failed to hold the zenith, had drifted down into the dark where suns and kings, empires, gods and girls all go at last.

Fear came with the night, and loneliness. She longed now for her lover, less for the richness of his passion than for his company in the inevitable doom of their dream. The lights were coming out in the houses and the streets. It was time for people to creep together for shelter from despair. The stars were being kindled in the windows of the sky to light all wanderers home. It was the hour when home is the most needed of all things, and Valerie felt an exile, wondering if there were a home for her.

She ran her car now for the hotel with a sense of fear. She found Blair waiting for her in a shadow; her searchlight whisked it from him like a garment of concealment. He was afraid, too, with many fears: afraid of being recognized, afraid that she would not come, or that some harm had befallen her. And so, when the great tryst was perfected, they did not fling their arms about each other as they had planned. Their lips did not meet in a flaming kiss. They were more afraid of each other than of anything else. He lifted his hat with a formality that seemed foolish, since their hearts were supposed to be so intimate. She laughed stupidly and opened the door for him; and he stumbled, getting in.

Chapter Sixteen

A FEW bystanders and passers-by glanced at them idly, and all they said among all the golden words they had planned to say was a, "Well!" from each.

There were traffic problems also to make them muff the great moment. A car nearly ran into her as she made a turn, and a child darted in front of her car to give her a stab of fright. The streets were so well lighted that the most he dared was to take her right hand when she dropped it into his left, and squeeze it hard before she needed it at the wheel. The speed-laws were strict in the town streets, and Valerie had no desire to invite arrest just now of all times. Some of these small city judges had a way of visiting dire punishment on hasty visitors. More than one girl had had to spend a number of days and nights in jail for going faster than a crawl.

Both Blair and Valerie had imagined a conversation that would make *Romeo* and *Juliet's* moonlit balcony-parley seem frigid. But the best they could accomplish had no need of blank verse.

He said: "Well, you got your car back, I see."

"Yes. It was waiting for me."

"Seems to run all right."

"Fine!"

A block or two of silence. Then he made another try:

"Was your train on time?"

"Oh, yes. Was yours?"

"Right on the dot. Did you have something to eat?"

"Yes. Did you?"

"Yes. I had a lot of time to kill."

There was so little radiance in all this that she tried to step it up a bit.

"Are you sorry you came?"

"Never so glad of anything in my life."

"Honestly?"

"Honestly!"

Then Amy had to get in and ride with them as a ghost. Valerie simply had to acknowledge her existence.

"What did your wife say?"

"I don't know. I left that to Miss Whitham."

"And what did she say?"

"Oh, she seemed to think it was all right."

"I don't suppose she likes your wife any too well."

He laughed at her uncanny wisdom:

"How on earth did you guess that? You've never met Miss Whitham, have you?"

"No, but I've met one or two other women. And women don't like women."

"I never could understand that. I think women are so much finer than men."

"All of them?"

"I mean, I think that you are finer than all the men in the world put together."

"What could you know about me?"

"Well, we spent a lot of time together in the big storm. That was a test."

NOW they were well out of the town on the straightaway, the black leathery road lighted only by the tiny far-off stars and the flares of passing automobiles.

It was time for him to be gathering Valerie into his arms. Yet she hoped he wouldn't, after hoping so much that he would. He knew that it was expected and was therefore paralyzed. Almost any woman would expect a man to be a little tender along here at least. And Valerie had given him the right, the obligation, to take her in his arms. Yet it seemed so inescapable that there was no meaning in it. They embarrassed each other perfectly.

At last Valerie began to be disgusted with the paltry results of her great conspiracy. They might as well have met in a drawing-room or at a bridge table with Amy looking on. Loneliness came over her again—and resentment at the stupidity of life, and the brevity of it. Here they were together, alone, in the starlight, and they were getting nothing out of the difficult opportunity that might not come again. She began to understand his timidity and to see that it was not so much cowardice as adoration. She must be brave for him, or the night, fragrant with orange-flowers, with spicy lemons darkling in the trees and with roadside roses, would all be wasted forever.

And so, when they came to a long reach where the highway was wide and giant palms stood solemnly spreading their shadows beneath them, she ran the car off the road into a tunnel of foliage.

His first thought was shown in his words:

"What's the matter? Flat tire? Out of gas?"

She laughed at that prose so helplessly that he understood, and by the time she had shut off the power and whisked out the lights, his arms were open and she turned into them, and they kissed as they had done on the brink of the precipice, feeling themselves tottering on the edge of a deeper abyss.

It was a kiss of sacred earnestness. There was no coquetry on her part, no timidity or womanly shyness. Her arms were strong, and though her lips were strangely soft and velvety, there was such strength in her embrace that he felt his own lips bruised. He lifted her hand and kissed it, then kissed her lips, her cheeks, her eyes.

They put each other through the ancient cross-examination. "Do you love me?" "I love you!" "No, you don't!" "Oh, yes, I do!" "You couldn't!" "I couldn't help it." "How long will you love me?" "Forever!" "Surely?" "Surely!" and all the venerable rigmarole, the same in all languages and in all epochs.

A long shaft of light from an approaching car flooded their nook. She turned on her own headlights and they were hidden by the screen of radiance. They sat a long, long while telling over the same words in a rosary, bead after bead, and all of love. They differed no whit in language or gesture from millions of other couples in millions of other cars, yet they felt their own experience unique in human annals. At last, since he

seemed too content with the present to take any thought of the future, and was reiterating for the hundredth time that she was his first real love and his last, she sighed:

"And now what's to become of us?"

"God knows!"

"What do you most want to do?"

"Stay here forever.

"What happens tomorrow, and the day after that?"

"If I only knew."

Evidently he was not even making any plans.

"You're going to your office tomorrow, I suppose."

"Lord, yes. I've got to."

"And dine at home with Amy."

"Well, she has some people coming in."

"How nice!"

With the shock, but not the refreshment, of a dash of ice-water, she was wakened from her dream to the abrupt understanding that he had devoted to her none of the deep thought that she had given him. She had been juggling plots and stratagems for his possession, and he had taken her as a matter of course—a toy or a trinket to add to his collection.

She let in the clutch, and the car was moving before he could take his arms from about her shoulders. He was startled:

"Where are you going?"

"I'm taking you home."

"But I don't want to go bome. I want to be with you."

"Oh, no, you don't!"

"Oh, yes, I do. Please stop!"

He put his hand on hers with such appeal that she stopped the car again. He was in terror of losing her, yet in mortal perplexity.

Manlike, he had vaguely planned to add her to his career, his home and his joy in the world. He had plucked her from the garden of the earth to put her in his buttonhole and wear her over his heart. He might be tearing her from her life, but he did not even know what her life had been. She had pleased him more than anyone else had pleased him. But now the rose he would have worn amazed him by expecting to pluck him from his world! He was dazed. He had not had the leisure or the nature to suffer or to ponder as Valerie had done. He had known that she was no wanton looking for an escapade. Yet he had put off the decision about her till he could clear his desk of more pressing business concerned with his bread and butter, his clients' rights and his career. A man must think thus, and his loves must be snatched wbile he continues to climb his treadmill, for the moment he ceases to climb, he is gone.

Women are gradually stepping aboard treadmills of their own, and the world is going to pieces under the strain. A new and better world is in the building, but not without ruin and heartbreak for the old. Valerie was an old-fashioned woman in that she had no ambition for a career; it was only her imperious independence that was newfangled. She was a difficult woman for a lover to satisfy, for she was dissatisfied with herself as well as the world. The moment she saw that Blair Fleming had never dreamed of making her supreme to every other consideration in life, she prepared to go back to her solitude, even if she died there.

She stopped the car and said:

"Well?"

Chapter Seventeen

SHE did not turn off even the tiny lamp on the dash that gave her so eerie a glow, a footlight illumination from beneath, touching her throat and the soft flesh beneath her chin and her lips with fire, but leaving her eyes and tbeir brows in shadow—mystically prolonged in the night.

He drank her in and pleaded:

Now—This fine "hard-milled" soap keeps your skin smooth . . fragrant . . youthful

Look closely at an exquisite complexion. Notice its clean, fine texture. Pores are practically invisible.

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Cleanliness is the surest way to enviable skin. But cleanliness is not mere application of soap and water. Care in selecting the soap you use is most important.

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Wet the face with warm water. Work up a thick Cashmere Bouquet lather. Massage this into the skin with the fingertips until the skin feels refreshed and alive. Rinse in warm water. Then a dash of cold. Pat the face dry with a soft towel. If the skin is inclined to be dry, rub in a little Colgate's Charmis Cold Cream.

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"You can't leave me. You said you loved me."

"I did. I do. But you don't love me."

"I do—with all my heart."

She laughed unhappily: "He says he loves me with all his heart—and plans to go back to his office and his wife."

"Would you have me give up everything?"

"That's my definition of love."

"But I couldn't love you long, then; for I'd starve to death."

"Is your wife your bread and butter?"

"No, of course not. She's a luxury."

"Does she love you?"

HE felt it loathsome to discuss her, and could not answer. Valerie reached for the brake to release it. He stopped her hand and lifted it to his lips, speaking with the wretchedness of a Judas:

"If she ever loved me, she's outgrown it long since."

"Why do you think so?"

"It couldn't be hard to tell."

"Do you love her?"

"If I ever did—God help me, I don't. I have been afraid to think about it, but I—I never knew what love was till I met you. Stale old formula, but terribly true. I was very lonely, and I knew that. But I didn't know what I was lonely for. If anyone had said I was lonely for a woman, I'd have laughed my head off."

"I heard you do that once. I haven't heard you laugh much since you met me."

"I've been too happy to laugh with you—and too excited. But when we—when we get things settled, I think we could laugh together a lot. Up to now I've only really been able to laugh when I was with men—at funny stories, and mostly dirty ones. But you and I—do you laugh much?"

"I used to, before I knew much. I'd like to learn how again."

"Well, when we get things settled—"

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"I don't know. How could I arrange to be with you—to be with you a—a lot?"

"Marriage is one way."

"But—"

"Yes, I know. Listen, Blair, my—a certain old woman told me that she loved a man a century or two ago, and he was married, and couldn't get unmarried. His wife was in a madhouse, and the law wouldn't release him—the dear old law! So she was going to run away and live with him anyway. I hadn't had much respect for the poor old dub till I heard that she was capable of that devotion. Now I revere her as a brave and honorable lover, 'all for love and the world well lost.'"

"Did she live with the man?"

"He was killed as he was on the way to carry her off."

There was a moment of silent tribute to the unknown dead. Then Valerie went on:

"We might be killed on our way back to town. There would be an awful scandal, and that's all. We'd have died in innocence, so to speak, but nobody would believe it. Or you or I might be killed tomorrow. Everybody is getting killed nowadays one way or another. Then nobody would know we'd ever cared. But while we're alive—life's so short—there's nothing hereafter that I can figure out—no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven, they say—certainly not in hell. So this is our only chance—this little piffling, spinning top we're stuck on for a while—well, I don't know where I began all this, but this is what I want to say, and you can take it or leave it or take me or leave me, but it's my only way of seeing things."

She paused to gather her thoughts. He gripped her hand harder and waited, wondering:

"Listen, Blair, and understand if you can, but believe, anyway, for it's the truth I'm telling you: If you were in such a position as that man was—if your wife were in an insane asylum, and the law gave you no chance for freedom; or if you were in any position where you really could not break free—and you wanted me and really loved me with all your soul—why, I wouldn't hesitate a minute. I'd come and live with you openly as your mistress, or secretly, or any way. I might commit murder, if that did any good; but all the murderers and murderesses I read about who kill for love seem to lose their love, before they get out of jail or the courts. So I have no idea of poisoning your Amy. She's perfectly safe from me, and I wish her no harm. I wish her a beautiful lover with a million dollars.

"All right! As I said, if you couldn't get free from her, I'd come to you on any terms and not give a damn for anybody. They could hiss me. The good women could draw their skirts aside as I passed. The bad women could say I was one of them. The newspapers could put me in headlines. The church I joined as a little girl could kick me out. They could tar and feather and whip me. But I'd be just as proud and feel as pure as any angel in heaven, or any martyr that was ever broiled. For I should be giving my soul to the man who gave his soul to me."

Blair held both her hands and kissed them with a sense of humility and awe, envying a heart that could love so well, and wishing that he could make her the same avowal with as little reserve as she made hers.

"But—" she said, and drew her hands from his lips. "Listen to the rest of it, and see what a monster I really am, and then you will perhaps be glad to drop me cold."

He caught at her hands, but she said: "Wait! As I told you, if you couldn't get free, I'd have no sense of shame at all in being what you wanted to make me. But—divorces are as easy to get as blackberries. You just pick 'em off the bushes. Here in California any excuse goes, and no disgrace to anybody—except in the eyes of a few noisy bigots whose own families are full of divorces—or would be cleaner if they were.

"Now, if you love me enough to get free from your wife somehow, then I'll know you love me enough to deserve my love. I'm nobody, but my love is all I've got to give, and I'm not going to pitch it down under any man's feet. You figure out some way to break up your happy home and then come to me, and I'll be waiting."

BLAIR gasped at the suddenness, the brutal frankness of it, and mumbled:

"But—but—you—mean—"

"You know what I mean, and I mean it more than anything you ever knew any woman to mean before. If the cost is too much, if the test is too severe, if it isn't convenient for you—or if you have any reason on earth for going on as you're going on—why, I sha'n't blame you. I'll understand perfectly. I can't see why you should make any sacrifice for me. I've never done anything to earn it. We'll part as the best of friends, and when we meet, I'll—I'll—well, I don't know what. But this is a free country, and I don't even ask you to get a divorce."

This gave him a bit of respite for thought at least, and he reached for her dear hands again. But she lowered her voice for one final word:

"When you can say to me, 'I'm going to do my utmost to break from that woman that I have no right to live with, loving you as I do,' then I'm yours to the last drop of my blood!"

"Valerie!" he cried, reaching out in the dark for her. She thrust him away with a grim gentleness.

"If you can't say that to me, then I know just what your feelings are for me. I'll know that your kisses and your caresses mean just as much as any other man's who makes

Throwing the Light

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has changed, in this way, the hygienic habits of the world

This new way, by supplanting the uncertainty of old hygienic methods with certain and positive protection, provides charm, immaculacy, exquisiteness under all circumstances ... and adds the convenience of disposability

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(1) No laundry. As easy to dispose of as a piece of tissue—thus ending the trying problem of disposal.

(2) Utter protection—Kotex absorbs 16 times its own weight in moisture; 5 times that of cotton, and it deodorizes, thus assuring double protection.

By ELLEN J. BUCKLAND
Registered Nurse

BECAUSE one woman told another, because doctors advised and authorities urged, and because the frankness of scientific fact was used in dealing with a trying subject, the hygienic habits of the world have been changed.

Almost 80% of American women in the better walks of life employ this new way. A way that banishes the doubtful efficiency of old-time methods with a protection that is absolute.

If you are one of the 20% who cling to old ways, ask your doctor, please, about Kotex. What he tells you will make a great difference in your life.

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There is no bother, no expense, of laundry. Simply discard Kotex as you would a piece of tissue—without embarrassment.

Thus today, on eminent medical advice, millions are turning to this new way. Obtain a package today.

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See that you get the genuine Kotex. It is the *only* pad embodying the super-absorbent Cellucotton. It is the *only* napkin made by this company. Only Kotex itself is "like" Kotex.

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You can obtain Kotex at better drug and department stores everywhere. Comes in sanitary sealed packages of 12 in two sizes, the Regular and Kotex-Super. Cellucotton Products Co., 166 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

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I will give you the same offer I made to Christopher Vaughn, whose earnings have reached $125 in a week. You can do like John Scotti, who started without experience and made $97 his second week. Or Mrs. K. R. Roof, who has two children and does her own housework, yet in her spare time has made $50 in a week and $15 in a single afternoon. Yes, profits like these can be yours. Do you want them?

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All you need to do is to accept my offer to handle our dealings with our customers in your community. We have customers in a million homes throughout America—hundreds of them right around you. These customers of ours know and like and use "Zanol" Products—delicious foods, delightful toilet preparations, perfumes, soaps and household necessities—more than 350 different products in all.

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Address ....

....

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a try for me. And I'll greet them just the same way. I'll give you my fist in your insulting mouth with all my might."

"Valerie!"

She caught at his hand remorsefully. "No, I couldn't just strike you as I would an ordinary man, for I have loved you. I do love you."

"Valerie!" he groaned, and put his arms about her shoulders and leaned close to kiss her in all fervor. But she sat aloof, unutterably remote in the circle of his embrace, and said with a deadly calm:

"If you kiss me, I'll cut your throat."

He fell back from her in stupefaction.

"Think it over. And let me know what your heart decides."

She laughed as she said it, but with a weird sardonic hunger in her laugh. Then she bent and busied herself releasing the brake, shoving in the clutch, pressing the accelerator, meshing the gears and all the other circumstances of starting the car. He said nothing, but thought with a tremendous intensity, his brain like a judge weighing all the evidence of everything before the court.

The car ran like a level meteor till a greater meteor crossed its path, a clanging bell, a swinging red lamp, and far off, the piercing headlight of an oncoming express warned them to stop. Valerie checked the car at the railroad crossing, while the hooting engine with its growling wheels glided along the rails, its radiance turning them to molten silver as it approached. Before it roared past, it filled the little nook of darkness where Valerie and Blair were huddled with a blast of radiance that made them close their eyes. The train followed, a honeycomb of lighted windows, and then the tumult dwindled away.

There were lovers on that train—bridal couples on their honeymoons, couples that were parted though they shared the same close quarters, people on their way to or from crime, or benefaction, bliss, disaster—all the mysteries that make a train at night a dazzling peopled comet hurtled toward destinies unknown. Valerie had always watched such trains and wondered when one would carry her away as a bride—and with what groom. And here she was in such a plight that she almost regretted that she had not driven her car into the engine and erased all her earthly problems in one glorious crash.

She had begun this journey with such resolute expectation of solving everything with her fearless will. And here she was, a mere woman after all, waiting for a man to dispose of her with his choice. A few moments more of hesitation, and his silence would have chosen for him. She sent the car across the tracks with a wild impatience.

(The next installment in this brilliant chronicle of a ruthless love is extremely interesting. Watch for it in the forthcoming January issue.)

DEAR DIARY

(Continued from page 90)

Sally has been acting queer. I suppose I might have expected that from one like her. I wish I had put away my brush and come which has a back like my shoe horn. She and Lonny were whispering together every time I looked anywhere. I do not see how Mr. Lord puts up with it, and I am sorry to say he is still seemingly interested in that awful June Day, but I suppose he cannot break off with her to suddenly.

June 9: We worked today and "shot" all the scenes we came out here to "shoot," and I cannot help but feel that to come way out here on the desert for days to get three scenes was not at all neccessary, and if no one else felt like I did, I am sure the poor Eskimo dogs did, they being very hot. I am sorry to find there is no appreciation in the heart of Percy Lord, this so-called director. Of course Super-Summet is only a small company, and I am sorry I came out here on the desert with it, for a girl cannot be too careful what she does in her "career," and I do not think that Norma Talmadge or any of those would of ever come out here with such a small company. Mr. Lord is really a great dissapointment and not at all the man I expected. I am sorry I even thought he was worth saving for I heard today that he and June Day have been married for five years and have three kiddies. All I can say is that I am sorry for the kiddies having such a father.

Later: P. S. Sally has just come in saying she was engaged to Lonny Fish. Well, a second asst. camera man is just about her leval, that is all I can say.

JUNE 13: Back in Hollywood at last and I have just written a letter to my dear Avery in Escanaba. After all, being engaged to Avery is something no one else in the "movie game" has been able to do. After all my experiences I think that after all I might just as well go back to Escanaba and marry Avery. I suppose everyone in Escanaba would make quite a fuss over me, me having been an actress. And they would never know the terrible experiences I have gone through.

We left the desert, where I did not get a part after all I had done. When we got to the edge of a small town about ten miles from Hollywood at last, Percy Lord, who was riding with that homely wife of his, stopped all the automobiles. He called me over to him as the camera was being unloaded by that 2ed asst. camera man, which Sally will only be miserable with. "I am going to do something," said this so-called director. "Something for you," (he meant me) "and something for Lonny." He told me he wanted me to walk away from the camera toward the sunset, and he was going to diafram out on me walking towards the sunset. Diafram out means in the proffession to make the picture get smaller and smaller until there is nothing left on the screen. I was very thrilled as I have always considered it quite an honor to have a camera diafram out on one. He told me not to look back as he would call me when the scene was finished. I started toward the sunset. Well Dear Diary, I walked and walked not daring to look back for fear of ruining the film, and we proffessionals are trained never to spoil the film.

But after I had walked and walked, I did sort of look back. I could not see a soul. Then I give a good look, and I did not see a soul. Then I started back, and would you believe it! They had all gone and left me walking towards the sunset to be diaframed out. I can only think that Lonny in his mean way, eged on by Sally, had told Percy Lord that it was my shoe-horn, and with June Day influencing him and all, Percy Lord had been influenced to go on and leave me.

And so I am not at all sure I will keep on in the "movie" game. I begin to think it is no place for a good girl. By the time I walked back to Hollywood, I knew that if I had been willing to give in to this so-called director on the desert far from civiluzation, all would of been different. But I am not that kind of a girl, that is all. I may give the "game" another try, but I am not sure. I have not heard from Avery for over two weeks. If I do stay on in Hollywood, and become a star in spite of everything, I will see that Lonny Fish never is camera man for me. And I will bear Percy Lord in mind too.

Further naïve chapters in the diary of this blithe spirit of filmdom's fringe may be looked for in an early issue.

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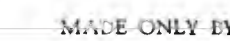

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