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January 1923

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In the same—the February—issue of The Red Book Magazine you will find fifteen other stories and features that combine to make it the most engrossing issue of the magazine thus far published.

Among the other distinguished authors whose latest work will appear in the February number are Rupert Hughes, George Gibbs, Gerald Beaumont, John Galsworthy, Charles G. D. Roberts, Harris Dickson, Samuel Merwin, Thomas L. Masson and Bruce Barton.

Instruct your news-dealer to save for you a copy of the February issue of

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

The Consolidated Magazines Corporation, Publisher, 36 S. State St., Chicago.

The 17 men in a town of 800 people

who enrolled for the Modern Business Course and Service

TEN thousand men would send for the little booklet offered at the close of this advertisement if it were not for one thing.

That thing is the fatal habit which we all have of thinking: "This may be all right for someone else, but it isn't exactly the thing for me. My situation is different."

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Plumber
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Manager Telephone Company
Doctor
County Agent
Supt. of Maintenance, Union Pacific Ry.

We cannot illustrate this by taking the names in a large city; they would fill too many pages of this magazine. Let us go to the other extreme; let us take one of the very little towns in the United States, a Nebraska village of 800 people. Read in the center of this page the business positions of the seventeen men enrolled there.

The Superintendent of Schools; several merchants; the doctor; the editor; the railroad man. Have *all* of these men problems in common? They have! Business is the great fundamental interest of every man. No man can be a successful editor who does not know what business men are thinking, and how business is carried on.

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Why Business Women say that pretty hair is worth all it costs

You business girls and business women are careful to look your best at all times, because you are always "*on view.*" It pays to take very good care of your personal appearance, doesn't it? The kind of impression you make is dependent in no small measure on the condition of your hair.

But what *is* the condition of your hair?

There are several unnatural conditions which have a deplorable effect on the appearance of the hair—hair that is dry and brittle, for example; hair that is too oily, dandruff. Such troubles (and what to do for them) are discussed in the Packer Manual, which is sent free to those who ask for it.

At this time we are going to tell something about hair that is too oily. Of course, it can't look its best. It may hang in dejected strings about the face and is not only unpleasant to look at but is often the forerunner of dandruff. Dandruff, you know, causes falling hair. But excessively oily hair—the result of over-activity of the tiny little oil glands, though dangerous is by no means hopeless, if you will try hard enough to get rid of it, remembering that pretty hair is worth anything it costs.

What Pine Tar means to women's hair

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A Helpful Suggestion to Blondes

If your hair is blond, you *particularly* need to avoid having too oily hair. Very likely your hair is growing darker year by year, as it does naturally, and oil makes it look darker than it really is. You will find Packer's of real help in removing oil and dust. It will not darken your blond hair but will help to keep it light, healthy and attractive.

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Published Monthly
On sale the 23rd of each month
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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JANUARY
1923

Photograph by Lavecchia Studio

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"THE SAND PILE"

This story is quite the most dramatic piece of work that has thus far come from its author's pen. It will begin in the next issue, and its publication will be complete in three installments.

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The Will to Learn

By EMILIE W. McVEA

President, Sweet Briar College

The choice of a school is generally recognized to be of paramount importance in the education of a boy or girl. The educational bureaus of our leading magazines, the increasing number of expert advisers, testify to the desire of parents to place their children wisely, and to the seriousness with which most of them address themselves to the task.

Before entering their son or daughter they inquire into the aims of the school, its thoroughness, the enthusiasm and scholarship of its faculty, the conditions for vigorous physical development, its moral or religious influence. Climate, location, sports, and, rather too often, society also influence selection. One question, however, of vital importance is not so frequently asked: "Is the school successful in stimulating in its pupils a sense of participation in their own education?" In other words, does it incite in them the will to learn?

Throughout the school and college period a prime requisite of education is the determination on the part of the teacher to arouse the will to learn in the student. If the student lacks this desire no effort, however conscientious, can truly educate him; he will always lack a zest for knowledge, a realization of the value of the intellect, an appreciation of the spiritual meaning inherent in the language, the poetry, the history of the past and of the present.

The exercise of the mind should be as much pure fun as the exercise of the body; yet we intimate that one is pleasurable by calling it "sport", and we dull the other by naming it "study". One word suggests to you the out-of-doors, swimming, skating, the tingle of excited blood, the joy of victory; the other, largely through the mistakes of educators, connotes weariness, restraint, reluctant cramming of facts, distasteful poring over books. There must be difficulties in the way but students can be made to see the joy of the result.

Few people, young or old, have the fun that they should have with their own minds or appreciate fully the fun of other minds. Not long ago a clergyman remarked quaintly that whenever he had the blues he read the book of Proverbs and soon found himself chuckling over its pungent, witty, and wise epigrams. How most of our students would stare at the idea of having fun with the book of Proverbs!

Not every youth is mentally able to enjoy the satisfactions and pleasures of the mind to the fullest extent but there are few, even of the dullest, who cannot be stimulated to some desire to learn. It is the business of the good school to develop an avidity for knowledge, not merely for facts but for interpretations, for the bearing of the past conditions upon the problems of our own time, for the imagination that can envisage epochs of time, periods long past and periods to come. Such knowledge is fascinating. To it we can with confidence invite our youth; they will gladly participate in such education.

Emilie W. McVea

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Practically all schools accept new students for the second term which begins the end of January. If you were prevented from entering school last autumn, you do not need to wait until next year, but can begin now with equal advantage. We will gladly help you make a selection, if you do not find a school in these pages which meets with your needs. Our information is based on data obtained through personal visits to representative schools in all parts of the country. In order to be fully helpful we shall need data on the following: Type of school you wish—College preparatory (in the case of a boy military or non-military), finishing, post-graduate, business, technical, secretarial, art, music, dramatic, dancing, etc; location in which you wish school; approximate amount you plan to pay per year for board and tuition in the case of a boarding school, tuition only for schools of special training; the exact age of prospective pupil, religion, and previous education in detail. Enclose a stamped return envelope and address:—

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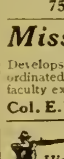

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The evening that could have been extremely happy, that could have been the beginning of a delightful friendship, is spoiled. He will probably breathe a sigh of relief when he leaves, and she will probably cry herself to sleep.

And now, at the table, both are embarrassed. Indeed, can there be any discomfort greater than that of not knowing what to do at the right time—of not being sure of one's manners? It is so easy for people to misjudge us.

Shall she invite him into the house? Shall she ask him to call again? Shall she thank him for a pleasant evening? In rapid confusion these questions fly through her mind. How humiliating not to know exactly what to do and say at all times!

How Etiquette Gives Ease

Are you always at ease among strangers, are you always calm, dignified, well-poised no matter what happens, no matter where you chance to be? You can be—if you want to. And you *should* want to, for it will give you a new charm, a new power. You will be welcomed in every social circle, you will "mix" well at every gathering, you will develop a delightful personality.

By enabling you to know exactly what to do at the right time, what to say, write and wear under all circumstances, etiquette removes all element of doubt or uncertainty. You know what is right, and you do it. There is no hesitancy, no embarrassment, no humiliating blunders. People recognize in you a person of charm and polish, a person following correct forms and polite manners.

Every day in our contact with men and women little problems of conduct arise which the well-bred person knows how to solve. In the restaurant, at the hotel, on the train, at a dance—everywhere, every hour, little problems present themselves. Shall olives be taken with a fork or the fingers, what shall the porter be tipped, how shall the woman register at the hotel, how shall a gentleman ask for a dance—countless questions of good conduct that reveal good manners.

Do *you* know everything regarding dinner etiquette, dance etiquette, etiquette at the wedding, the tea, the theatre, the garden party? Do you know how to word an invitation, how to acknowledge a gift, how to write a letter to a titled person? Do you know what to wear to the opera, to the formal dinner, to the masquerade ball, to the luncheon?

The Book of Etiquette

Complete in Two Volumes

In the famous two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette the subject of correct form for every occasion is covered completely, authoritatively. It is recognized as the most thorough and reliable book on the subject available today. It is encyclopedic in scope, answering every problem of etiquette that may be puzzling you in a clear, definite interesting way. Nothing has been forgotten. Even the ancient origin of customs has been traced, and you are told exactly why rice is thrown after the bride, why black is the color of mourning, why a tea-cup is usually given to the engaged girl.

With the Book of Etiquette to refer to, you need never make embarrassing blunders. You can know exactly what to do, say, write and wear at all times. You will be able to astonish your friends with your knowledge of *what is right* under all circumstances.

A great deal of your happiness depends upon your ability to make people like you. Someone once said, "Good manners make good company," and this is very true. Etiquette will help you become a "good mixer"—will aid you in acquiring a charming personality that will attract people to you. Because you will rarely be embarrassed, people who associate with you will not feel embarrassed—your gentle poise and dignity will find in them an answering reflection and you should be admired and respected no matter where you are or in whose company you happen to be.

Sent Free for 5 Days' Examination

The Book of Etiquette will mean a great deal to you. It has already opened the doors of social success to many, has shown hundreds of men and women the way to obtain the poise and charm their personalities lacked.

Let us send you the famous two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette free for 5 days' examination. Read a few of the chapters—you will enjoy particularly the chapter on "Games and Sports" and the chapter called "When the Bachelor Entertains." If you are not delighted with the books you may return them within the 5-day period without the least obligation. If you are delighted—as everyone who examines the book is—just send us $3.50 in full payment and the books are yours.

Don't make the mistake of putting it off. Here is your opportunity to examine the Book of Etiquette without cost or obligation. Mail the coupon now. Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Dept. 51, Garden City, N. Y.

Nelson Doubleday, Inc., Dept. 51
Garden City, New York

You may send me the two-volume set of the Book of Etiquette for 5 days' free examination. I will either return them within the 5-day period or send you only $3.50 in full payment. This does not obligate me in any way, and I need not keep the books if I am not delighted with them.

Name .....

Address .....

☐ Check here if you want handsome leather-bound set, for which send only $5 in full payment within 5-day period.

(Orders outside of the U. S. are payable $3.50 cash with order.)

Character—Confidence—Courage

These constitute the greater virtues of the significant boy and girl. An old Spanish monk, an obscure scholar of Aragon, in writing of the art of worldly wisdom, said that "virtue makes a man prudent, discreet, sagacious, wise, courageous, thoughtful, trustworthy, happy, honored and truthful". Of all these, character is the foundation. You may be ever so rich in purse and property, yet remain a beggar in influencing mankind. You may be as poor as Edgar Allen Poe, yet wield a marvelous power for pleasure over your fellowmen.

"Health, holiness and a headpiece" as another philosophic churchman declared, "are the three H's which make a man happy". So we believe that the three C's of our private schools make for a boy's or a girl's success in life. For where there is character, there is distinction.

Our private schools are not refining mills to produce pedantic highbrows. They are not merely dispensers of book learning to the exclusion of greater human development. They are the attentive and responsible trainers of the individual pupil, whether of the backward or forward type of body, mind and temperament. And therein lies their greatest advantage over all national educational systems. They distinguish the personality of each pupil and apply to that personality what, in the judgment of the faculty, is required for its fullest realization.

A clean character, a firm confidence and a hardy courage, the whole surcharged with a reasonable measure of knowledge and understanding—these are the contributions to our better national life which the properly equipped private schools of the land provide. And these are the qualities which men and women will need the more as life complicates.

If parental interest, foresight and understanding do not qualify the youth of the country to lead and drive ahead for what is still the redeemable good in our human relations, then life will stagger backward, happiness decline and national aspirations become stagnant.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE carries its educational service to the family life of the nation by consistently finding the right schools and persistently advocating their excellence and advantage. Its Educational Department is one of its major editorial adjuncts, and it is actively conducted under the direct personal supervision of educational experts with a wide and varied experience in the very important work of making significant men and women of our boys and girls. We accordingly respond with genuine interest to all inquiries concerning private schools and their judicious selection to make the best and the most of your children.

Director School Department
The Red Book Magazine

LYCURGUS

LYCURGUS, probably the world's first Bolshevist, lived in Sparta ages ago, and was worshipped after death as a god. Lycurgus set the style for caste equality. Nobles and half-nobles did not appeal to him. He provided for common table board and fixed it so that everybody, rich and poor, should gather in the market place for breakfast and dinner. Incidentally he decreed that the food eaten should be offered by all hands, and that it should be food, not money with which to secure it. In other words the rich chap had to go into agriculture and raise his share of the provender. This kept the country busy, although Lycurgus exempted himself from such labor. And another wise arrangement he made was to insist that the first man of the household should either plan ahead to protect his wife or fix it so she would get a second husband when he had died. Cash protection was not what Lycurgus sought. All he wished was that the husband keep a storehouse well filled so the wife would have this to sustain her until she could get her bearings anew. Actually this was insurance against the proverbial rainy day. In these times a well filled storehouse is not considered entirely sufficient. The thoughtful and loyal father uses life insurance to provide an estate.

MURIEL DeFOREST
in "Make It Snappy"
Photograph by Alfred Cheney Johnston, New York

KATHERINE McGUIRE
Film Star

LILLIAN RICH
Film Star

FAIRE BINNEY
Film Star
Photograph by Apeda, New York

BLANCHE GERVAIS
in "The Czarina"
Photograph by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York

DOROTHY PHILLIPS
Film Star
Photograph by Moody, New York

Spending Our Happiness

By ANGELO PATRI

Decoration by JOHN SCOTT WILLIAMS

Funny folk are we, you and I and the neighbors — sadly funny. One of the things we do, one that should make us laugh at ourselves if we weren't so desperately serious about it all, is saving up the good time we are to have some day. Save it for when the children grow up, or when we retire, or when the right time comes along!

We generally begin by saving money. We lay it by against the time when we shall need it, and then we fail to notice that the time of need has gone by, and we hoard on and on like chipmunks, with neither sense nor enjoyment in the hoarding.

Time speeds by, and we do not notice that the shadows are moving across the face of our life until at last they move no more and the gray darkness settles down and the great stillness following it tells that for us there shall be neither sunlight nor shadow nor moving of hands again. The time has passed, and the stored treasure lies dead beside us. For one's treasure is but the shadow of one's dream, and the dream vanishes with the light of the eyes.

We cheat ourselves out of the enjoyment of our children, for we save that up too. "Some day," we tell ourselves dreamily and with deep-down smiles of happy content, "some day we are going to have a real day with the kid. We're going to find out what is inside his funny old head. We're going to sit still and let him climb into our lap and have him poke his finger in our eyes and ears and pretend to gobble him up and then let him turn our pockets inside out and find wonders hidden therein and just listen to him laugh. We certainly are. Soon!"

Then we stretch out our legs and take up our newspaper and listen to his mother putting him to

bed and hushing him lest he disturb dear tired old Daddy. By and by we lay aside the paper and look about for him that we may invite him to our empty lap — and he is not there, but there is a stranger-youth who speaks to us politely and with courteous aloofness that somehow hurts. The laughing prattler flitted by while we saved up his playtime. The treasure has been spilled on the ground and wasted. We shall never taste its flavor.

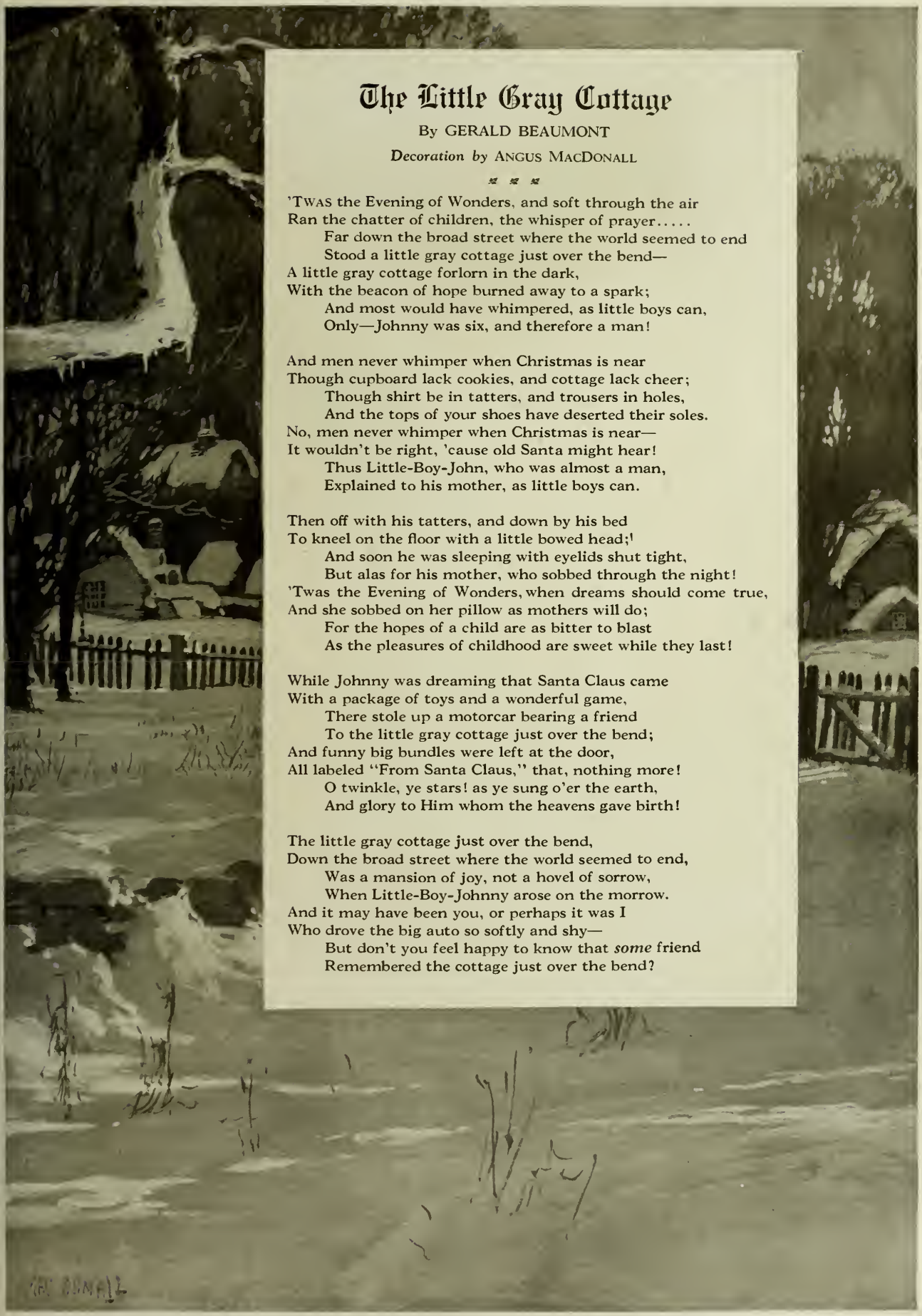
And we save up the kind words we are going to say some day. Some day when things settle down a bit, we are going right over to the old friend and tell him how much good he has done us and how we really feel about him. He's been a mighty good friend — few like him.

We'll tell him all the fine things we have thought of him all these years and have saved up on purpose for this royal occasion. Our hearts are warm with the glow of the pleasure in store for the old fellow, and then the message comes that there will never be any royal occasion. Time has passed by.

We had not noticed that while we waited and saved the pleasure, the old man with the scythe and the hourglass who marches so steadily and so stealthily through the breadth of the land, had placed his mark on our old friend's brow and promised a swift return. No. We had been too busy, too eagerly storing up happiness for the future. And now where is it?

So we save and save our happiness until in the end we die of starvation. What do the children care about our stored treasures? What good to our friends our silent thought? What do they care about our hoarded emotions? Not one fleeting moment of piping song would they give for it all, not a single thrilling note.

Swiftly, then, open up the storehouses of love and laughter. Release the happiness we hoard and see the treasure multiply. Open the springs of old friendships and let the spirit of eternal youth flow out. Search out the childish laughter, and a rill of it will grow to a river of joy to bear us straight to the Celestial City. Let us spend our happiness lest it fly from us.



The Little Gray Cottage

By GERALD BEAUMONT

Decoration by ANGUS MACDONALL

* * *

'TWAS the Evening of Wonders, and soft through the air
Ran the chatter of children, the whisper of prayer.....
Far down the broad street where the world seemed to end
Stood a little gray cottage just over the bend—
A little gray cottage forlorn in the dark,
With the beacon of hope burned away to a spark;
And most would have whimpered, as little boys can,
Only—Johnny was six, and therefore a man!

And men never whimper when Christmas is near
Though cupboard lack cookies, and cottage lack cheer;
Though shirt be in tatters, and trousers in holes,
And the tops of your shoes have deserted their soles.
No, men never whimper when Christmas is near—
It wouldn't be right, 'cause old Santa might hear!
Thus Little-Boy-John, who was almost a man,
Explained to his mother, as little boys can.

Then off with his tatters, and down by his bed
To kneel on the floor with a little bowed head;
And soon he was sleeping with eyelids shut tight,
But alas for his mother, who sobbed through the night!
'Twas the Evening of Wonders, when dreams should come true,
And she sobbed on her pillow as mothers will do;
For the hopes of a child are as bitter to blast
As the pleasures of childhood are sweet while they last!

While Johnny was dreaming that Santa Claus came
With a package of toys and a wonderful game,
There stole up a motorcar bearing a friend
To the little gray cottage just over the bend;
And funny big bundles were left at the door,
All labeled "From Santa Claus," that, nothing more!
O twinkle, ye stars! as ye sung o'er the earth,
And glory to Him whom the heavens gave birth!

The little gray cottage just over the bend,
Down the broad street where the world seemed to end,
Was a mansion of joy, not a hovel of sorrow,
When Little-Boy-Johnny arose on the morrow.
And it may have been you, or perhaps it was I
Who drove the big auto so softly and shy—
But don't you feel happy to know that *some* friend
Remembered the cottage just over the bend?

When She Grows Up

She will be beautiful, of course, in the rosy future pictured by a mother's dreams. But—this future beauty will not be left to chance, for modern mothers know how to make their dreams come true.

Her first concern will be care of the little daughter's complexion, to protect its smooth, fresh, childish texture from injury through careless treatment. Proper cleansing is the secret, and use of the proper cleanser. The skin must not be robbed of its own natural, beautifying oil, yet it must be kept thoroughly clean.

Only soap and water used daily will keep the skin properly clean, so the problem lies in the choice of soap. You want the mildest, most soothing and lotion-like soap which can be made. Such soap is yours in Palmolive.

Soap and cosmetic combined

Palmolive is the modern development of an ancient beauty secret, discovered by the Egyptians 3,000 years ago. They learned that palm and olive oils were wonderful beautifiers. Crudely blended, they were used as cleansers as well as to keep the skin smooth and soft.

These rare oils, scientifically blended in Palmolive, produce far more than mere soap. It permits thorough, beautifying cleansing without danger of drying the skin. It soothes, refreshes and stimulates, resulting in becoming natural bloom and glow.

Such cleansing, every day, results in a clear, healthy skin and is the basis of complexion beauty.

Clogging the greatest danger

Fear of thorough cleansing, or indifference to its importance, is the original cause of skin trouble. The daily accumulation of dirt, excess oil and perspiration combine with cold cream and powder to clog the tiny pores. Disfiguring coarseness from their enlargement is the first result.

The accumulated dirt produces blackheads, with the danger of infection, which causes blotches. Such a complexion is fatal to personal charm.

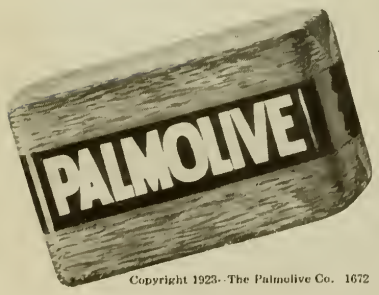
What to do

Once every day, preferably at bedtime, wash your face thoroughly with Palmolive Soap. Work up a lather with your two hands and massage it thoroughly into the skin. Then rinse thoroughly. Use a fine, soft towel for drying.

If your skin is very dry, apply a little cold cream and wipe off what isn't quickly absorbed. If your skin is normally oily you won't need it.

All can afford it

The world-wide popularity which keeps the Palmolive factories busy day and night enables us to maintain the 10-cent price. Thousands can afford the benefit and luxury of this finest and mildest soap.



THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY, Milwaukee, U. S. A.
The Palmolive Company of Canada, Limited, Toronto, Canada
Also makers of Palmolive Shaving Cream and Palmolive Shampoo

Palm and Olive oils—nothing else—give nature's green color to Palmolive Soap

10c

Volume and efficiency enable us to produce 25c quality for only 10c

Blaming It on the Interests

A Common-sense Editorial by

BRUCE BARTON

IN a little country town where I spend my summers is a man who complains about the Interests.

"But who are they?" I demanded one day.

He looked at me as if he suspected that I was having fun at his expense.

"You know well enough who they are," he answered, and mentioned certain men prominent in Wall Street.

"Your list surprises me," I said. "I know one of those men. He was the son of a school-teacher and had to work to put himself through law-school. The men who used to employ him as a lawyer think so much of his integrity that they would be willing to intrust him with the care of their whole estates.

"One of your other men started with many thousand dollars less than nothing. He paid off his father's debts—debts incurred while he was a boy and for which he was in no way responsible.

"If these are the Interests," I said, "then don't worry. They are quiet, home-going, family men like yourself —only they work harder and will die younger."

I remarked to him that I observed no great difference in virtue between my New York neighbors and my small-town neighbors. The man in Wall Street who waters stock, if he lived in a small town would water milk. The small-town man who listens in on a party line would bribe private secretaries in Wall Street to give him market tips.

It is comforting to me, of course, to blame my misfortunes on the Interests. I would like to persuade myself that if some one did not pull the stepladder out from under me occasionally, I might climb much higher.

But in my saner moments I know better. I started work at seventy-five dollars a month; the first Wall Street magnate referred to above started at forty dollars, the other at nothing.

Only one man is responsible for the fact that I did not *keep* ahead, when I had such a good head start. His name is not listed among the Interests; it is printed at the top of this page.

Magic?—No,
Intelligence holds Beauty's Secret

FOR the next while, we are going to tell you some simple but arresting truths about how cleanliness and beauty are related.

Let us start with the face.

A really healthy skin is always a *clean* skin and usually a beautiful skin.

Physicians who have studied the care of the skin say that simple cleanliness is the one most important aid to the health and beauty of your complexion.

And they dwell upon the importance of using pure, gentle soap, which is nothing *but* soap—that is, without extraneous or mysterious additions.

A word of caution, therefore:—if you buy a soap with the hope that it has magic beauty powers, you court disappointment. For promoting beauty, soap can do only one thing—clean safely!

One would say that was simple enough—to *clean safely.*

Yet before Ivory Soap, only a few people could enjoy the luxury of pure, mild, safe-cleaning soap. Now, of course, *everyone* can have it.

Safe-cleansing is the duty, the privilege and the destiny of Ivory Soap. In forty-four years no other claim has been made for it.

Ivory is always the same—always that white, mild, gentle soap which has protected hands and faces and refreshed bodies for nearly two generations. It contains no "mysteries," it offers no "magic."

When you buy Ivory, you are asked to buy only *pure soap.* Ivory helps to beautify, because it *cleans safely.*

PROCTER & GAMBLE

"My *dear* Alicia," says Mr. Jollyco in a very gentlemanly dudgeon, "why has this comic opera soap replaced the Ivory in my bathroom?" (We always know Mr. Jollyco is angry when he says "my bathroom" and is so frighteningly polite.)

"I think, Henry," replies his wife without a flinch, "that that soap belongs to your daughter Sally, who has lately gone in for colored beauty soap. The Ivory is just behind you."

Some day Mr. Jollyco is going to speak sternly to Sally about dyes in colored soap. But today he will feel so good after his lathery Ivory bath that he will forget it.

Here we see Mrs. Folderol—at home. What! *The* Mrs. Folderol, of Vanity Square? The very same! With her poor little rich baby that cries so much. Why does he cry? Listen as Mrs. F. talks with Mrs. Jollyco.

"Why I can't see how the *soap* could hurt him—it's *so* expensive and pretty and smells heavenly!"

"But, my dear, his skin *shows* it. He's *chafed!* Haven't you any Ivory?" No, Mrs. F has no Ivory, but she *will* have after Dr. Verity arrives.

IVORY SOAP

99 44/100% PURE IT FLOATS

And here, dear reader, is Dr. Verity, whose motto is: "*Keeping* well is better than *getting* well." A most lovable old gentleman, indeed, but very severe and frowny when dealing with persons like Mrs. Folderol, to whose home he is now hurrying.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1923. VOL. XL, NUMBER 3 KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*

The eminent author of "Mamselle Chêrie" and many other fine achievements in fiction has here written a novel of exceptional power—the story of a young girl "on her own," determined to wring success from New York . . . . The illustrations are by the author himself—

GEORGE GIBBS

Fires of Ambition

AFTER a few moments spent in looking at the directory in the vestibule of a loft-building on Fifth Avenue, Mary Ryan took the elevator to the offices of the Hygrade Garment Company. The elevator was crowded; but the girl, accustomed to fend for herself, made good use of her elbows and found a breathing-space where she turned and examined her reflection in the mirror. As she did so, a flashy young man beside her examined it also.

What he saw was very good to look upon. Her hair was red, not bright but deep; her eyes were brown, her skin pearly white, faintly freckled. He smiled, hoping to meet her gaze, but she did not look at him, though she could not have been unconscious of his inspection. He would have liked to speak to her; but her manner gave him no encouragement, and the definite lines of her lips and the resolute curve of her chin made him understand that though young, she was under no illusions as to the difficulties which lay about her and that she was quite capable of making him seem ridiculous. So he did not get out when she did, at the eighteenth floor, as he had thought for a moment of doing, but went on to the twenty-third, his original destination.

In the hallway the girl with the red hair paused for a moment, comparing the numbers on the office doors with a memorandum on a card, and then walked resolutely to the right. Her manner showed no hesitation or timidity. To some girls of nineteen the moment might have been tragic and full of dangerous possibilities; but Mary Ryan was not afraid of the world, for she had weapons with which to combat it—youth, beauty, health, and a determination, which amounted almost to a passion, to succeed.

While she waited in an outside office to see the person to whom she had been sent by the principal of the night-school, she watched the people passing back and forth between the inner and outer rooms. She studied the astonishing headdress of the young lady at the visitors' desk, aware of the scorn of her superiority. She also noticed that in the moment between visitors, the other girl was examining her cheap skirt and blouse, her cotton stockings

and cheap shoes, with the self-satisfaction that could only come of an artificial "wave," silk hosiery and patent-leather pumps. Mary Ryan had estimated the value of these things, but she had been too busy to think about them and too poor to afford them. They would come later. And so she smiled to herself.

Perhaps Mary Ryan had a pleasant little feeling of satisfaction too. The girl at the desk had a pudgy face unredeemed by its touches of rouge, and Mary Ryan knew that her own face was pretty. She had never needed any reassurance as to that. It was one of her assets. She would use it when the time came. Even now as she sat in this outer office, she was aware of the covert glances of the men who passed, for she had noticed that while other girls looked at her face and then at her clothes, men, if they looked at her at all, never seemed to be aware of what she wore. Sometimes they stared, but usually with a quick, searching glance which passed and then returned. Perhaps it was the color of her hair against her pale skin. She didn't know. Even when she was a child, boys had always looked at her in that way. And now men—More than once she had been thrilled with a sense of her power. It was one of the things that gave her her courage.

The girl at the desk finished dabbing at her face with a powder-puff, put her vanity-case in a bag which she stuffed into a drawer, then yawned and turned again to look at Mary Ryan's cotton stockings and shabby shoes. This preliminary to conversation was a defense of her own snub nose in the lists of such beauty as Mary Ryan's. To mark her reprobation of the cotton stockings, she crossed her legs so that the visitor could see the silver-plated buckles on her shining pumps.

"After a job?" she asked casually.

"Yes, I am," said Miss Ryan quietly. But she did not move her feet, though already aware of the desk-girl's glance. Instead she said: "I like your shoes. The buckles are very pretty, aren't they?"

The girl at the desk looked self-conscious and put both feet upon the floor, examining them to cover the awkward moment, sure that she had already lost something in the encounter.

"Oh, just an old pair I use at the office," she countered with a sniff. But she looked at the red-haired girl again before she spoke, this time with less challenge in her indifference.

"Mr. Wittmaier is very busy this morning," she said airily.

"I can wait," said Mary Ryan.

"Ever have a job before?" asked the other.

"No. I'm just out of business college."

"Where?"

"Schuler's."

"Oh!" the desk-girl smiled knowingly as she went on: "I didn't think you looked like you'd had much experience in an office like this."

Mary Ryan coolly examined the shiny buckles, and then her glance passed slowly up the desk-girl's fussy figure to her face.

"What do you mean by experience?" she asked.

The other girl moved her shoulders expressively.

"Oh, you'll find *that* out fast enough, kid." And with a final glance at Mary Ryan's shoes, she turned away, took a piece of gum from a paper and began chewing vigorously while she aimlessly fingered the papers on her desk.

Visitors to the office of the Hygrade Garment Company came and went while the desk-girl, with an undulating walk, carried their names beyond the glass partition. Mary Ryan tried not to be impatient, but she could see by the clock that she had already waited half an hour, and so when the girl went out, she got up quickly and looked over the papers on the desk. The letter of introduction that she had brought was stricking under the blotter. The desk-girl had not even presented it!

A warm flush ran under the roots of Mary Ryan's hair, but she was quite composed when the desk-girl came back.

"Don't you think you'd better give my letter to Mr. Wittmaier now?" she said quietly. "He's been waiting for me for half an hour."

The girl at the desk glanced at her, startled, and rather sheepishly took up the letter, and shrugged.

"Oh, well, I'll see," she said, and then went slowly undulating through the door.

In a moment the desk-girl came back and stood holding the door open languidly. "If you'll come this way," she said in a bored tone, "Mr. Wittmaier will see you."

She followed the girl into the inner office past rows of desks and showrooms where samples of women's waists, skirts and dresses were displayed, to an office at the far end of the floor, where the name of the man she sought was lettered upon a glass door.

Mr. Wittmaier, who was busy at the telephone, made a gesture

toward a chair without looking up, and the other girl disappeared. Mary Ryan appraised his profile quickly. He was a large man made up of convex curves, even to the thin strands of hair brushed carefully over his bald-spot. But his voice was pleasant, and the émerald in his scarf impressive.

When he had finished speaking, he made a quick note on a pad and then turned to his visitor. His eyes, black and shining as shoe-buttons, passed over her quickly. Now for the first time Mary Ryan wished that her clothing had not been so shabby; but to her satisfaction Mr. Wittmaier's eyes dwelt only briefly on her skirt. He was looking directly into her eyes, and the frown which he had brought from the telephone conversation slowly relaxed in a smile.

"Miss Ryan?"

"Yes."

"I've been expecting you for half an hour."

"I've been waiting for half an hour." She hesitated and then added: "Er—I don't think the young lady outside understood that you were expecting me."

"Miss Kramer? Oh, I see. Miss Kramer doesn't understand anything."

His grin, which produced more convex curves, reassured her. He had a gold tooth. Meanwhile he had been looking at her face intently, and his voice, which had at first been brisk, was more gentle.

"I'd expect twenty-five a week at first—and thirty after a month, when I make good," she replied. Wittmaier put on a quizzical expression. "How soon would you expect an interest in the business?"

"I told Mr. Schuler very definitely what I wanted here," he said dubiously, "a skilled secretary with a head on her shoulders."

"I have a head on my shoulders," said Mary Ryan.

Wittmaier shook his head. "I'm afraid you're too young. How old are you?"

"Nineteen. But— I'm older than that."

"Um—ah!" Mr. Wittmaier took up the stub of his extinguished cigar and regarded it critically. "I hope you don't mind my saying it, but—I think you're too pretty to be useful."

"What have my looks got to do with my usefulness?" she asked.

The man seemed to like her reply and the manner of it. If she had simpered, he would have shown her the door. She knew that she was pretty. Why shouldn't she? So he went on, watching her eager eyes intently.

"This house is doing a big business—growing bigger every day. I've a big correspondence. My secretary was married last week. I told Mr. Schuler I wanted a girl with experience, one I could brief my letters to and forget 'em—a woman who could take a lot of responsibility off my shoulders in arranging my engagements. Miss Roselle did all that."

"How long did it take Miss Roselle to learn what she had to do?"

"Oh—a few weeks."

"How old was she?"

"About thirty."

"Then I ought to do it in about half the time."

Wittmaier smiled.

"You've got a quick tongue, Miss Ryan. You're Irish?"

"Not enough to be offensive."

"You know we're Jewish here?"

"I know it. The Jews and the Irish are the only people that haven't any nationality. That's why we ought to get along together."

Wittmaier laughed.

"So you think we ought to get along together. Why?"

"Because I know I can make good. And I'd rather make good with a concern that was prosperous."

"And you think we're prosperous?"

"Yes. I know you are. I looked you up in 'The Commercial Blue Book.'"

Mr. Wittmaier gasped.

"Well—" She had succeeded somehow in creating the impression that he and not she was under probation. "And you really think we'll do?" he asked with delicate irony.

"If I hadn't thought so, I wouldn't have come to you with my application," said Mary Ryan quietly.

This was the most extraordinary stenographer with whom Wittmaier had ever conversed. Mentally he would have liked to appraise her as a "fresh kid," but there was an earnestness in her expression which gave her replies a dignity all their own. And as they talked, her beauty, which he had at first thought a possible liability, became imbued with some of the qualities of an asset. And his shrewder judgment approved of her unassuming blouse and skirt and shabby shoes. There was no nonsense about this girl.

Finally, after a pause, "You're a good stenographer?" he asked.

"Of course."

"What salary would you expect?"

"I'd expect twenty-five a week at first—and thirty after a month, when I make good," she replied.

Wittmaier put on a quizzical expression.

"How soon would you expect an interest in the business?"

She looked up quickly.

"Do you think I want too much? Just give me a trial, Mr. Wittmaier. That's all I ask."

He compressed his lips and frowned at the mass of correspondence.

"All right, I'll do it." He took a letter from the pile on the desk and glanced over it. "This is from a good customer of ours in St. Louis, Missouri. He says the shipment of misses' waists

does not correspond with the order—that three dozen Number Eights were shipped instead of Number Threes, and that four blouses Number Five were slightly soiled in handling." He passed the letter to her. "Read that and tell me how you'd answer it."

He watched her intently as her glance ran quickly down the page. When she had read, she looked up thoughtfully.

"First, Mr. Wittmaier, will you tell me if it's your policy to be liberal?"

"In all that concerns satisfying our customers—yes."

"I understand. Then my reply would be this:

"'J. Haber and Company,

"'St. Louis, Missouri.

"'Gentlemen:

"'Replying to your favor of the twenty-eighth instant, we regret sending three dozen of our Number Eight instead of our Number Three, a mistake which was made in our stockroom owing to the difficulty at this time of obtaining capable clerks to handle the large increase in our business. We have already shipped the proper order, together with one half-dozen Number Five blouses, to replace the four which were soiled.

"'We hope that this will be satisfactory to you. Kindly return the shipment of Number Eight and the four blouses Number Five to us at our expense.

"'With hope of a continuance of your very valued patronage, we are—

"'Very truly yours—'"

SHE looked up at Mr. Wittmaier, who had relighted his stub of a cigar and was gazing at her, his eyes distended in interest and acumen. He leaned suddenly forward, one hand on the arm of her chair.

"Who told you that we had difficulty in obtaining capable help in our stockroom?"

"Nobody."

"You just guessed it?"

"Yes. The mistake couldn't have happened any other way. Could it?" she asked with a quick smile.

"And why send a half-dozen of Number Five when only four were soiled?"

"You said your policy was generous, didn't you?"

Wittmaier relaxed in his chair and blew a cloud of smoke toward the ceiling

"Who told you about the large increase in our business?"

"You did. Sure, haven't I a pair of eyes in my head?"

"H'm! And you've kissed the Blarney Stone."

"And why not, Mr. Wittmaier? You can catch more flies with sugar than vinegar."

"Meaning me?" he asked with a grin.

"Yes—if you like," she flashed back at him.

Wittmaier got up and paced the floor two or three times while Mary Ryan waited.

"Half a dozen blouses," he muttered. "Well, maybe. That wouldn't be bad business with J. Haber."

He puffed his cigar a few times more, frowned at the huge pile of unanswered mail in the basket on the desk and then turned with a brisk air to his visitor.

"All right, Miss Ryan. Twenty-five a week. Hang up your hat."

MARY Ryan rose, obeying, and he handed her a pencil and note-book, looking meanwhile at his watch.

And so, denying himself to all callers through the morning except the secretary of the company, Mr. Braun, to whom he introduced the new stenographer, Wittmaier dictated and directed, his satisfaction increasing with the intelligence of Miss Ryan's questions and the assurance of her replies. At half-past twelve he took down his hat.

"Those should go tonight, but I don't dare send 'em without reading. You better get lunch now. When you come in, finish as many letters as you can. I want to go to Philadelphia at one o'clock. I'll be back in the morning to sign them. Good-by."

But the new stenographer did not take any lunch that day. She was out for a record. She had won more than one speed-competition at Schuler's, but there was more at stake than honors here—the security of her first step up in the world. And better than mere speed, in this case, were style, neatness and accuracy. All through the lunch-hour she hammered at the keys of the typewriter, which happened to be a good one, gaining assurance as she worked on uninterrupted until late in the afternoon—when, the news having spread that Mr. Wittmaier had hired a new secretary, various persons in the more responsible positions entered and offered both services and information.

It was after six when Mary finished the last letter and added it to the neat pile, face upward upon the glass-topped desk. Then she glanced at the clock and stretched her arms with a deep sigh of satisfaction. When she went out, the office was deserted and the charwomen were already at work in the corridors. While waiting for the elevator, she watched them with pity and a little, just a little, contempt. In this new land of promise, where Fortune had stranded her, one needed courage, temerity even, but even more than these, ambition and intelligence; for in New York as everywhere else in the world, the devil always takes the hindmost.

Chapter Two

IT was past the dinner hour at the boarding-house in East Twenty-ninth Street where Mary Ryan lived, and so she found a small restaurant on Sixth Avenue, where she spent a dollar of her meager store. This was an extravagance, but she felt that she had earned a good dinner, and she ate it with the relish of youth and perfect health, rapidly recuperating her energies. When she reached the boarding-house, instead of going directly to her room, which would be stuffy and reminiscent of dinner, she sank upon the deserted steps to think about her good fortune.

She was sure that she had done well. A little thrill of pride went over her as she felt herself at her very first trial a part of the machinery of one of the prosperous businesses of the great city into which she had entered not so very long ago by the arches at South Ferry upon Bowling Green. She could look back now with the magnificent assurance of her new position and her nineteen years upon the various scenes of her life. They emerged in pictures out of the background of recollection, all judged in the scale of her present achievement. The white stones in the churchyard and the ugly upturned soil; the last view of the old place in Taghmon, around the turn below the hill across the turf-bogs; the familiar road to Wexford with the smell of the salt across the marshes; the ship with its interminable voyage; the first of the pale green wraith in the harbor with its upraised arm which beckoned the ship and its passengers upon the way; the long wait at Ellis Island; the suffocating odor of carbolic, the cuspidors, the rows of benches filled with dark-skinned men with rings in their ears and women in gay headdresses; the terrifying officials in blue coats and brass buttons who chucked her under the chin and because of the color of her hair asked her if she was a "Red." It was their little joke.

But the most wonderful picture of all was the sight of the towers across the harbor—fairy towers spearing the heavens of this new land of promise. They had seemed so near. She remembered wondering again and again if she would ever reach them. And then at last the stout, weary-looking old woman who emerged from the crowd and claimed her as a niece, the welcome permission to take the barge to the Battery, and the joyous departure with her Aunt Katherine, who had given oath to her ability to take care of the new arrival.

Aunt Katherine had done that as well as she could, God bless her! for her own ways had been cast in rough places. It had been her duty to Mary's mother, but there were two children of her own, and times were hard. Mary helped as soon as she understood what was required of her, working at first as an errand-girl in a store on the East Side. It was Aunt Katherine Brady, aware of her own deficiencies, who had insisted on the continuation of Mary's education, which had been broken off in the old country at the Fourth Standard. Of course it was hard to work all day and then go to work again at school after supper. But it was not long before the meaning of it all became clear. Education! That meant not having to work with your hands as Aunt Katherine Brady did, until she died. Mary Ryan was an American now; she would live as other Americans did, so that she could take a part in the tremendous stir of accomplishment which had made the fairy towers possible. She began to understand the meaning of money and how it was made. She saw girls of her own age, dressed in silk, with furs at their necks. Her aunt had told her that their father had been as poor as her own Uncle Thomas, but that he now owned a grocery store—a prodigious achievement.

It was in that moment that ambition had been born in the child. The day would come when she too would wear silk and furs bought with money that she would make. There was no one to help her. She would have to succeed alone. She hadn't minded working hard, for she knew that she was bound to succeed in the end. And today she had taken the first step on the road of her ambition.

"Wait a moment!" he said with miniature imperiousness. "Oak-leaves. The cut is right. I could call it the Oak-leaf—"

THERE were other pictures in Mary's mind, more colorful. The miracle of the city itself, the roar of the Elevated, the constant destruction of old buildings—even in their antiquity more splendid than any she had known in Ireland—for new white structures which stretched upward far into the sky; the river with its bridges; Coney Island on a Sunday; the kids in the street dancing to the hurdy-gurdy; girls, young like herself, who already aped the manners of their older sisters in an impatient search for pleasure. They worked too, by day, in factories and commercial houses, but the desire for an education beyond the grade-school period had passed them by. After the drudgery of the day, amusement was all that they thought about. And the boys—triflers, with whom most of the girls were well matched.

All except Joe Bass—who from selling papers in Park Row, had bought a little news-stand of his own, and was now studying law at night at the Temple Law-school. It was Joe who had won the battle with Patsy Roggen when he had tried to get gay with Mary one night in the Avenue; Joe who believed that he was going to be a great man when he passed his Bar examinations. She liked Joe. He was clean. She was going to miss those walks with Joe back from their night-school. She smiled a little as she thought of him. She didn't believe that for any reasons of his own Joe was likely to give her up. Perhaps he had been around earlier in the evening to find out what luck she had had with her letter from Schuler's. She meant to triumph gently over Joe when she saw him. Twenty-five a week—and Joe's news-stand at best had never cleared more than eighteen!

A young man came up the steps. He was dressed in closely fitting clothes and wore his felt hat over one ear. This was young Mr. Sabatino, who lived in the back room on the third floor, and who worked as a clerk in a fruit-stall in the Terminal. He had frequently asked her to "go out" with him, and one Saturday night she had accepted his hospitality at the "movies," much to the disgust of Joe Bass, who had the American youth's suspicion

Mary had a sense of uncleanliness in the air, without the saving grace of beauty. "I don't like this place," she said. "Please take me out."

of olive complexions and small mustachios. According to Joe he was just a "wop," and that ended the matter.

Mary Ryan moved her skirts aside to let Mr. Sabatino pass, but he took off his hat and greeted her with Calabrian politeness.

"Oh, signorina, I hope' I meet you. See!" He handed her a paper parcel. "I breeng you basket of fruit."

"For me?" she exclaimed. "Oh, thank you."

"It is nothing," said the Italian with a fine gesture. "Just a little geeft so as we be frien', yes?"

"Of course." She had broken the paper, and offering it to him, was already peeling an orange.

"You frien'ly, maybe. But why you no go out with me again?"

"I'm too busy."

Another figure loomed at the bottom of the steps. It was Joe. At the sight of the wop he hesitated and would have gone on, but Mary called him.

"Come on up, Joe. Mr. Sabatino has robbed the fruit-store. Have a banana?"

And with a smile at the young Italian, she deftly tossed Joe Bass a banana.

Joe Bass slouched up, and with a quick glance at the Italian sat on a step munching the banana. The fruit had lost none of its virtue because it had belonged to Mr. Sabatino. It was significant of their relations that though Mary Ryan was burning to tell Joe Bass her news, she did not wish to speak of it before the Italian. Her first success was too sacred for that. And so she talked easily of other things, amused at the silence of her companions. After a long while Mr. Sabatino rose, bowed, said good night and went indoors, for Joe Bass knew better than he how to wait.

Mary Ryan did not tell her friend Joe at once of her good fortune. She liked the feeling of holding her news in reserve, and so she sat on the steps, hugged her knees and waited, enjoying the delectable moment.

Joe Bass jerked his thumb over his shoulder toward the door behind them.

"You can't make me think you like that wop—just a clerk in a fruit-store," he said. He laughed as he took out a package of cigarettes and lighted one. "You wouldn't waste your time on a poor fish like him. You think too much of yourself. You know what you're about. You know what you're after. So do I. You might fool him into thinking he was somebody, you might fool other people about what you want to do and be; but you can't fool *me*, Mary Ryan."

She knew that Joe spoke the truth. It was always Joe Bass who understood her best. She had resented it at first, but his battle with Patsy Roggen in her defense had changed all that. At times she thought he understood her better than she did herself. But it wasn't wise to let Joe be aware of this omniscience.

"Maybe you're not thinking yourself clever, now, Joe Bass."

He grinned. "I'd have to get up before you in the morning, then," he said.

There was a silence. She wanted him to ask about the new job, but he didn't. It was often that he failed to do the things she expected him to do. So she snatched off his cap and rumpled his hair.

"Well," she said, "why aren't you asking me?"

"Oh, say! I forgot. Was it today?"

She nodded. "I got it."

"No! How much?"

She fingered her hair and then picked up another of Mr. Sabatino's tangerines—even began peeling it before she replied.

"Twenty-five," she said with studied carelessness.

Joe Bass turned, his eyes sparkling generously.

"No! You don't mean it! Twenty-five—at first! Why, you're just a kid."

"I'm secretary to Mr. Wittmaier, the president of the Hygrade—no less."

A silence from the young man, and then a quick suspicious question:

"What's he like?"

"Sure he's young and slender, beautiful and dark, Joe Bass, with a handsome gold tooth and an emerald for a scarf-pin."

"H-mph!"

"He said he thought I was pretty, too."

"You'll want to watch yourself," he ventured.

"Maybe I will. Maybe I wont. He's a nice man," she said gayly. "I like him."

He put on his cap, shrugged and rose. "Because he said you were pretty!" he said scornfully. "That's like a girl!"

"And why shouldn't he say that I'm pretty? Maybe if you said I was pretty once in a way, we'd be getting along no worse."

He smiled down at her and spoke more gently.

"I don't have to tell you that, Mary," he said. "It's just because I know how pretty you are, that I'm anxious. And this too—you've let me be your friend. You've let me sort of keep an eye on you. But now that you've got a good job, you're going to be slipping away from me. I know it. I'd like to marry you tomorrow if you'd let me, but I've got sense enough to know that you want more than I can give you—"

"Please, Joe!" she said, her voice softening.

"Oh, I know. That's the reason I never had the nerve to ask you. And I don't ask you now. I know it wouldn't do any good. You've made up your mind what you want, and it's a good deal more than I can get you. You've got to go your own way, the way you've started, and nobody can stop you. But I've got sense enough to know that you wont need me much from now on—"

"I will, Joe," she broke in warmly. "You haven't any right to speak like that."

But he shook his head. "I guess I've got some sense," he muttered. "But I want you to know one thing," he finished with desperate earnestness: "If any guy in that office gets gay with you, I'll put him in a hospital."

At that, Mary Ryan laughed, and caught his hand in both of hers.

"Oh, Joe! You'll be the death of me," she gasped. "I was only fooling. Mr. Wittmaier is old and fat and bald—and it's not so fine an emerald at all."

"Fat! Is he? Well, the older they are, the harder they fall."

"Joe," she said, "I believe you're jealous."

"I am," he said simply, "jealous of anybody who comes near you." He twisted suddenly and caught her by the arms. "Say, Mary, you wouldn't wait for me, would you? I'm going to be a big man some day. I am."

"I know you are, Joe," she said, her head averted, "but—"

He slowly released her, shrugged and dropped his hands to his sides. "Yes, that's it. I know you're going up quicker than I am. I oughtn't to have asked you." And then quietly: "Just forget it, will you?" He turned and went down the steps.

"Good night, Mary," he said.

But she called to him softly: "Will you stop for me at the office tomorrow evening?"

"All right," he called.

And so she let him go. But she stood upon the top step and rather wistfully watched his figure until it passed beyond the arc-light on the corner. He didn't turn around to look. Joe was always one to keep his dignity.

MARY RYAN was quick to learn the details of her employer's office. Her letters were neater than Miss Roselle's, and as the weeks went by, and Mr. Wittmaier gained confidence in her ability, he merely passed the mail across his desk with a muttered comment or a penciled scrawl. And though, upon Mary's first visit he had thought her too pretty to be useful, he now discovered a pride in finding her both.

But business came first with Isaac Wittmaier. Efficiency was his fetich. He knew a good thing when he saw it. And so since the morning when he had returned to his office and found the accumulated correspondence of a week carefully written, neatly piled, the copies ready for filing, Mary Ryan had felt certain of his approval and patronage. And at the end of the month, though her reminder of her expected increase in salary to thirty dollars a week had made his brows tangle, he called Mr. Braun into his office and ordered the money paid on the following Saturday.

Meanwhile subtle changes were taking place in Mary Ryan's appearance. The blouse and skirt and (*Continued on page 140*)

Illustrated by Arthur Litle

The Barnacle

By

Sophie Kerr

No American writing woman sees clearer or farther than Sophie Kerr, who here tells a story that for penetration and power even she has never surpassed, the story of a girl of old Virginia and a man of the "icy North."

THE blue haze on the Virginia hills beyond the river was just the color of Mattie Gainsley's eyes, even now, when they were troubled and darkened with doubt and indecision. She did not see that blue haze today, though she was looking at it. She drooped against her husband's arm, her slim, almost boyish body, in the riding clothes which she was accustomed to wear all day and every day, taking on a sudden wistful femininity in its yielding, its dependence.

"I'm afraid to go, Ned," she was saying. "Everything will be so grand, so different from home, here." She put her hand on his sleeve, and it was a caress.

"Oh, be a sport, Mats," urged Ned Gainsley. "You've been buried down here all your life; I should think you'd be glad enough to get away. Most girls would be crazy over the prospect. We'll live with Dad—this summer we'll be in the big new Long Island place. Gee, I'm crazy to see it; he was just getting plans for it when he got sore on me and threw me out."

He jumped up and walked up and down the wide veranda, his color high with excitement, a handsome boy, dark-haired, dark-eyed, straight and tall. If his mouth was too mobile, too sensitive for strength, his clear, tanned skin, his clean-cut features, showed no traces of dissipation.

Mattie, watching him, loved him as she had loved him from that first day when he had appeared at the farm and hesitantly asked for work for his board. Her father, Talbert Lansing, dead this year, had been doubtful about taking him, save for a night, as the law of Virginia hospitality required, but Mattie had urged it. He had been allowed to stay through her urgency, and he had won his way into her father's heart through his love of the horses he bred. He had become the older man's companion and pupil. He had even won over the crabbed overseer, Clem Tone, until he admitted that "young Gainsley's the only city feller I ever saw that could gentle a colt right." All that had been more than two years ago. Now Talbert Lansing was dead, and Mattie was Ned Gainsley's wife; but in all this time, and for all these changes, Ned had said almost nothing about his own people, and had never made a move to go back to them. He had had a little money from them, and that was all. One of his pet jokes on Mattie was that she was an heiress marrying a penniless adventurer. Yet old Richard Gainsley's wealth was undoubted and enormous.

Just why he had banished his only son, "threw him out," as Ned had said, Mattie had never quite known. There had been an attempted explanation on Ned's part just after they were engaged, but beyond the fact that it was for gambling, Mattie had gathered little. Gambling was only a word to her, and not a repellent word. There had been a picturesque Lansing ancestor who had been known to stake even his silver shoe-buckles.

"Are you going to be glad to see your father again?" she asked.

Ned Gainsley paused in his swift stride. "Well, Dad and I were never what you might call pals," he offered, nonchalantly. "He doesn't give a hang about anybody or anything except his business. He's a cold fish. And he's an awful autocrat. You do as he says, or you go."

"He wont make me do as he says," said Mattie, setting her lips. Generations of Lansings within her ridiculed the idea of autocracy. But in a moment she left that behind. "But oh, Ned, how can I leave—all this? No,"—catching a gleam of his eye,—"no, I *wont* sell. I don't care what that rich Washington man offers, I wont sell. Clem Tone can stay here, and run things, and we'll come down every spring, and every fall for long visits. But I wont give up this place."

She looked about at the old straggling house; she thought of the dear bare rooms within, shabby and plain and comfortable. She looked at the trees, tupelos, oaks and cedars, which had stood sentinel for the comings and goings of many Lansings. She glanced down toward the barn and the long stables, and the fields beyond, the little shacks of the negro laborers. She knew it all, to the last lichen of the unpainted roofs, the latest foolish gangling little colt. "I'd just as soon cut off my fingers and toes and sell them," she added. "Oh, I wish we didn't have to go."

Ned Gainsley came back to her side and sat down on the old broken hickory settee. "Now, see here, Mats, darling, you're just going to love it. I suppose it does seem rather a break, but when you're there, and get going with the crowd—you're going to be crazy about it. I don't believe you'll like Thérèse or Sis much, but then again, maybe you will. And later we'll travel, and you'll have dinners and dances, and the theater, and opera, and clothes; golly, when I think of you all done up in silks and furs! You'll put their eye out. Nobody in the whole crowd will be able to touch you, take it from me."

"I hate fussy dressing," said Mattie, obstinately. Then she relented. "Oh, I'm a pig, I suppose, but—I've never lived like that. I've never had anything but riding breeches and shirtwaists, and a little gingham and muslin or two for summer, and a wool for winter. My things will look awfully country and

She sat still, and ate a little, and looked about her and at her new kinfolk.

queer to your mother and sister. I wish—I almost wish you'd leave me here and you go without me."

They looked at each other, troubled girl and troubled boy, loving and lovable, clinging yet divided. "Oh no," she cried, after a second or two of this gaze. "Oh no, I didn't mean it. I couldn't let you go without me, anywhere."

He flung impetuous arms around her. "I wouldn't go anywhere without you, Mats, never, never. Don't feel so upset, darling. It'll be strange at first, maybe, but it'll be lots of fun. You can put it all over the other girls. Wait till they see you ride. And honestly, Mats, can I afford to miss this? If I don't do as Dad says this time he'll never give me another chance."

Mattie ventured on another question, or at least a statement that had the quality of a question. "Your mother will be awfully glad to have you come back."

Ned's face lowered. "Thérèse! No, she wont be specially glad. And largely on your account. To have a grown son, and a married one, about, makes her too definitely middle-aged. I've heard her say that on the day she becomes a grandmother she'll commit suicide. She's blocked Sis' marriage, more than once."

Here was revelation. Up until now Ned had been close-lipped concerning his family, but as he caught sight of Mattie's stricken face, he laughed. "Oh, don't worry, Mats. She's not nearly so bad as she sounds. She's really rather amusing—and she's terribly pretty and *chic*. By the way, we don't call her 'Mother.' She never would let us. We call her 'Thérèse.'"

"Thérèse!" murmured Mattie.

"Oh, I'm no good at description. You'll have to wait until you see them to know what they're all like. They're not queer, really—they're just like everybody else. Let's forget 'em. The thing we've got to do now is to plan to get away from here, and the quicker the better. Dad's not a patient man."

THE Frenchwoman who was unpacking Mattie's little trunk was suppressing horror and amusement in equal parts (and Mattie knew it), but outwardly she was all deference. Still, the way in which she handled the dresses, held them up and looked at each, her head a little tilted, enraged Mattie. She was Mrs. Gainsley's maid, and she had been sent to take care of Mattie when the incredible news was bruited about that she had brought no maid of her own. Mattie sat and watched her and hated her.

She also hated the room she was in, and the house. It was an Italian place, grim and forbidding as Richard Gainsley himself, and strangely like him. It suited his medieval robber-baron style, thought Mattie.

She went to the window, tired of watching the silent impertinences of the servant. The garden was in the spirit of the house, the straight walks, the stiff dark shrubbery, the classic fountains of Italy, utterly alien to the sprawling homyness of the untrimmed Virginia lilacs and mock-orange. She felt a lump in her throat, a hard, unconquerable, bitter lump. To live here would be simply impossible.

"And what will Madame wear this evening?" asked Louise, the maid. "The white silk?"

Mattie turned. The white silk was her wedding-dress, and she had only worn it twice since that great event. It was distinctly for state occasions. "Is there a party?" she asked.

"But no—maybe a few friends—Madame Gainsley does not fancy dining *en famille*—but it is all very informal."

"I'll put on the blue organdy."

"Very good, Madame. I will 'ave it press and bring it back. And if Madame will tell me what slippers?"

She knew perfectly, reflected Mattie, that there were but two pairs of slippers in the trunk, white kid, and black patent pumps.

"The black ones."

"Ah, yes, Madame." Louise had been deftly sorting underwear as she spoke. "I do not find Madame's silk hose."

"I haven't any. I'll wear the lisle."

She could see Louise's thin mouth give ever so slight a twitch of laughter. "Very good, Madame," she answered respectfully enough. "Now I will prepare Madame's bath, and I will return with the gown, and do Madame's hair."

Mattie reflected a moment. After all, could it matter to a Lansing what a servant thought? She became more at ease. "I'll do my own hair, and dress myself, thank you," she said, quite easily. "Just bring back the dress. I sha'n't need you after that."

Her tone had the desired effect. Louise suppressed her furtive contempt, and there was a genuine respect in the way she took herself off. Mattie knew she had scored, but it did not take away the lump in her throat. This, she felt, was the slightest of her ordeals. She wished Ned would come, but he was downstairs with his father, and had been ever since their arrival an hour and a half ago. So far, the elder Gainsley was the only member of the family she had seen. She contrasted her reception with the stories of welcome to the brides of the Lansing

family, stories she had heard from her father and Clem Tone, and the older negroes on the farm. There had been warmth for the stranger, there, warmth and welcome and love. But that great beetle-browed man downstairs, with his penetrating gray eyes, and his cold voice—to him she knew she was nothing but an incumbrance. Yet she had liked his hard gripping handshake, and if he was hard she had a reassuring sense that he would be just. She liked justice.

They had told her that Mrs. Gainsley and Miss Eleanor were off at some outdoor charity fête, a kermess or some such outlandish name—she couldn't remember. They would be home to dinner. Home!

Mattie Gainsley could have laughed aloud at the word. Well, why not laugh? It would be better than tears.

Ned did not come in until she was dressed. He was flushed and preoccupied, but he kissed her enthusiastically. "The old man's been a prince. He's going to put me in as one of the assistant purchasing agents in the New York office, and he's giving me a whale of a salary. We're to live here for the summer, and if we want to we can live with the family in town when they go back, or we can get a house of our own. By golly, I must hurry. Lucky I saved my old dinner coat. Hope to the Lord it isn't moth-eaten."

He disappeared into the next room. She followed him, hesitantly, and beheld an apartment as large as her own, but in Jacobean oak.

"Shall I put your buttons in?" she asked.

"Oh, Father's man, Jaynes—he's an old pal of mine—has done that. Wait for me, Mats. We'll go down together. I've got to hustle like the deuce, too, because it makes Dad sore if anyone's late."

She watched him wistfully as he dashed about, flinging himself into his clothes. But when he was ready she exclaimed:

"Oh, Ned, I never saw you all dressed up before! Oh, you look —wonderful."

"In these rags! I only hope Thérèse will let me come to the table in 'em. I've got to get to a tailor right away."

There was a knock at the door. "Dinner will be served in five minutes," said an obsequiously hushed voice.

"That's the way Dad manages it, you see," said Ned. "We're called just like actors in the theater before the curtain goes up."

They went together down the sweeping stair with its wide stone steps carpeted to a cushion-like softness, its wrought-iron balusters, its handrail of walnut polished into satin. Against its luxurious beauty Mattie had the same sense of helplessness that she had at first in Louise's presence. She felt oppressed and forlorn, and clung to Ned's hand.

They went directly into the dining-room, and two bewildering women came to meet them, with a third fluttering behind them.

Mattie had the feeling that she had been kissed by cool, unfriendly flowers. High, yet not unpleasantly cadenced voices, gave a casual welcome.

"This is Thérèse and this is Eleanor," said Ned. "How are you, dears and beautifuls? And this is Gabrielle Marsh—my first love. She's horribly jealous of you, but is trying to hide it. And oh, George—how corking! This is George Marsh, Mats, Gabrielle's brother. He'll make love to you, but you mustn't take him seriously."

"We came because Thérèse wanted to spare you the horrors of a family dinner," said Gabrielle. There was something in her voice that warned Mattie that she had appraised the organdy and was fully aware of the cotton stockings, the patent leather pumps. Her own little feet were adorned with intricately strapped slippers of gold brocade; her dress was golden lace, with a line of emerald chiffon that trailed from the shoulders into a floating train.

Some one else was speaking to Mattie—she turned and slowly became aware of the remarkable person who was Thérèse.

"You must sit by Richard," she was saying. "We're all hoping and praying that you'll be the one person who can make him malleable."

"And I'll sit on her other side to rescue her if the ogre is in one of his terrific moments," said George Marsh. Then Richard Gainsley entered, and they promptly seated themselves.

"They're making fun of me," something warned Mattie. "I must be very cautious." So she sat still, and ate a little, and looked about her and at her new kinfolk.

There was heavy old lace over the table, and the lights were candles, unshaded, set in tall sticks that had once been treasures of a great cathedral. Midway down its length was a silver platter, held by laughing naked cherubs in silver, and filled with white grapes and rose-flushed pomegranates. It was so beautiful that Mattie looked at it again and again. But she knew she must know and understand these women, so she deliberately studied them, one by one.

There was Thérèse, with black bobbed hair, in a dress of rosy net that was at once of ingénue simplicity above, and extreme nakedness beneath. A string of pink pearls, matched, not graduated, fitted exquisitely around her exquisite throat. Ned's mother! Mattie found herself reeling with wonder.

Eleanor was fairer, a cool, tall girl with discontented, weary eyes. "She looks older than Thérèse," thought Mattie. "What disgusting clothes they wear! And what have they all done to their eyebrows?"

She laughed a little at some absurd remark of George Marsh's and felt more at ease. "They're just painted funnies," she thought. "I'll deal with them as I did with the maid." She was aware that they were all covertly watching her.

"It must have been terrible to travel in this weather," Thérèse flung at her, presently.

"It wasn't bad," said Mattie.

"Why didn't you motor? That might have been rather fun." This was Gabrielle.

"We have no car."

"No car—but, my dear, how did you get about?"

The women were baiting her, and she knew it. She knew, too, that Richard Gainsley was watching her and listening.

"The horse isn't obsolete yet, in Virginia," she offered, with a tolerantly amiable smile. She would show them that she could meet them in their own way.

"Mats is the most wonderful rider," said Ned, and from his tone she knew that he realized nothing of the situation. "She'd rather ride than eat, any day."

Richard Gainsley's strong cold voice broke in. He was still looking at Mattie. "You must go down to the stables tomorrow morning," he said. "You can have anything that's there, and if there's nothing there that suits you, we'll get something."

Eleanor, Thérèse and Gabrielle exchanged quick and meaningful glances.

Perhaps the country mouse would appeal to Richard Gainsley —so, she would be useful.

Pale wine was poured, in Venetian glasses of amber, making globes of soft color that caught and broke the candle light into faint prismatic golden points. Mattie, absently watching the play of these, was addressed again by Thérèse:

"But you're not drinking your wine. Don't people drink—in Virginia?"

She leaned forward, smiling, her eyes curious, but not unkind. She confused Mattie a little.

"Why, not young people, usually."

She was quite unprepared for the shrieks of laughter that this brought from Eleanor and the Marshes. "There, Thérèse, my dear, poor ancient," said Eleanor. "*You'd* be quite all right, in Virginia, you see. We're the ones who'd have to be prohibs—"

Mattie started to stammer an apology, an explanation, but could not make herself heard. Even Ned laughed with them. Thérèse laughed, too, but Mattie knew that she had made an enemy.

Then, as Ned flung her his bright adoring smile, the smile that was just hers, as she knew, she braced herself again. "With Ned, nothing else matters," she decided. "I'll soon get accustomed to everything. It's these first days that are the worst."

But all the same she did not dare to think of the supper hour in Virginia with big black Linda bringing in waffles and quince

Mattie had loved him from that first day when he had appeared at the farm and hesitantly asked for work.

jelly, and Ned and herself at the little table, so little that they could easily hold hands over it. Here he was out of reach, and it hurt her intolerably. It seemed a prophecy.

After dinner they went into a drawing-room that no lights could warm or mellow into intimacy. Thérèse and Gabrielle, George and Ned sat down at once for auction, at Thérèse's command, to be sure, but with such unfeigned keenness on Ned's part that Mattie was astonished. She had not known that Ned cared at all for cards. Richard Gainsley disappeared. Eleanor flung herself on a couch, and lay there, motionless, save when she lit a fresh cigarette. The smoking table beside her, with its silver paraphernalia, Eleanor's long jade holder, and Eleanor's accomplished inhaling, fascinated Mattie.

SHE wandered about the room, finding strange and lovely things. There was a box of Lalique glass, clear, with curving nymphs etched on the inner surface, that held her for minutes; some curious old watches of gold and enamel were another find; little Chinese snuff bottles, green, blue, scarlet, yellow, amused and delighted her; but at last she found something worth all of these, a dozen Lumière plates of Ned and Eleanor in a garden, taken while they were still in their early leggy teens. Not that Mattie looked much at Eleanor. But Ned! She had always wanted to know how he looked when he was a little boy! She found his knickerbockered youth dear and appealing.

She looked over at him, as he sat at the card table, and felt a throb of surprised pain that he could be so absorbed, so intent. He was curiously dramatic in his oblivion to everything save the cards. She could not bear it. She *would* not. On a sudden impulse she went over to the card table.

"Ned, dear," she said, "let Eleanor take your hand. I want you to tell me about these pictures."

She could have laughed at the mixture of expression on the faces of the two women at the card table. Thérèse would have liked to slap her as she stood there. George Marsh, after an instant's surprise, grasped the situation and gazed discreetly down. There were knives in the air. Only Ned was unaware. His tense manner dropped away like a mask.

"Surely," he said blithely. "They'll never miss me, I'm so rotten—a million years behind the times. But it's gorgeous to get in a game again! Come on, Eleanor, don't be a slacker. Now is the time for all good girls to come to the aid of the party. I'll settle later."

Eleanor got up reluctantly, and Ned settled himself beside Mattie. "I didn't realize you were so neglected," he confided. "Thérèse is such a shark at cards—crazy about them. And she hates to play unless the stakes are high. Well, so do I, but I've got a lot of brushing up to do to play with her—been out of the world so long." His eyes softened, and he laid his hand on Mattie's. "Been out of the world so long, in heaven."

Later that night, as she lay under the draped canopy of the great Italian bed, Mattie reviewed the evening as dispassionately as it was possible for her to do. "They're as hard as nails, all of them," she thought. "And it's no use to try to win their affection. They haven't got any, except for themselves. I've got to be just as hard as they are—to them. And I've got, somehow, to keep Ned with me in this queer, hard, glittering life. I mustn't let go of him for a minute, or he might turn hard, too, and then—then—"

She set her will against this. "They sha'n't get him; they sha'n't get him. He's mine, and I'll keep him the way he is." And even in sleep her hands stayed clenched, as if by that gesture she would hold Ned from his people.

In the morning she came down in riding clothes and breakfasted with Ned and his father. It seemed that Thérèse and Eleanor never appeared at this ungodly hour. Mattie was glad to find that out.

"I'm going down to look at your stables," she told Richard Gainsley, "as you told me. And if I find a horse I can ride, I think I shall ride all morning."

The old man gave an approving grunt. "Take a groom," he commanded.

"I never ride with a groom," said Mattie serenely. She had determined that the autocracy of the Gainsleys should touch her nowhere against her will. She was glad when Richard Gainsley answered her only with a stare of amazement, with perhaps a flicker of respect in it, for if he had persisted, it would have been awkward. She did not want to quarrel with Ned's father. With the women it was different.

She watched the car start with the two men for the station, and the New York train. Then she got her old soft riding hat, her well-worn crop, and sauntered through the vistas of the garden to the stables. To the head stableman she spoke with the kindly authority she had been wont to use with Clem Tone, and he responded to it. She could see that the story of her had spread from the servants' hall. The man was discreetly curious, but his curiosity changed to respect and interest as she inspected his horses. Finally she chose a bay mare, selected a saddle, corrected the stirrup length, mounted and rode slowly away. She made no flourish in all this, no display of horsemanship; she did not even attempt to try the mare's paces until she was out of sight of the stables. Such swank, she knew, would be ridiculous.

But once far down the road, she changed her tactics. She put the mare at a trot, broke her into a gallop, slowed her, and finally, with a little coaxing, forced her into a smooth singlefoot.

The shrieking rush of passing motors annoyed both Mattie and the mare, so presently she turned into less frequented ways. It was wonderful to be riding in the sunshine, and the Long Island farms reminded her of Virginia. Virginia! Far-away haven, voluntarily abandoned. Why, why had Richard Gainsley reached out his grasping hand and dragged them from it? "Oh come, Mats, this wont do," she sternly addressed herself. "You'll be weeping in a minute. And tears are the last thing to help, as I told you. No, I've got to hang on, to make my place here, to hold Ned. I shall have to have clothes, first of all. I wonder how I ought to go about it. I've got to show these women that I can play their game and my own, too. And I wont ask either of them for any help. If they'd only shown the least gleam of kindness, of sympathy! I suppose to them I'm a hideous incubus. All the same, I'm better blood than they are, I'm not a fright, and I'm Ned's wife. Common everyday decency might have made them—but there. They didn't. I've got to do it alone."

She rode for miles, her mind busy with questions. When she finally returned to the Gainsley mansion it was near luncheon time. She hastily dropped off her riding clothes and slipped into one of her home ginghams. She found Thérèse in hemstitched thin pink linen, Eleanor in gingham also, gingham that made her own dress a caricature, a joke.

"My dear child," said Thérèse, "you must have some things. Sha'n't I go into town with you and help you choose?"

For an instant Mattie's heart rose—she thought it was genuine kindliness. But Thérèse went on, with a light little laugh: "If only for the sake of the servants, Ned's wife mustn't dress badly."

Mattie felt the sting of blood in her face, but her tone was as light. She barbed her reply: "Oh, you dress for the servants here? How quaint!"

It was Thérèse's turn to color now, and Mattie added sweetly: "Of course my clothes will not do—I know that. I must, as you say, have some new things."

She left the matter there and the luncheon proceeded, silently, so far as Mattie was concerned. The two others talked a little. They were going to see some tennis in the afternoon, and to tea at a country club; they were going out to dinner—so much, Mattie gathered. She also gathered that she had not been included in any of these gayeties.

AFTER luncheon she rang for Louise and chose her words carefully. "Since Mrs. Gainsley is to be out this afternoon, I suppose you are free. I want to take you in to New York with me, to buy some clothes. I do not know the city or the shops, and I need some one who does."

"Yes, Madame. And shall we start at once?"

On the hour's trip to the city she told the woman: "I want only simple things, simple and not extreme. Two evening dresses, some thin ones, and I suppose I must get riding breeches and shirts."

The Frenchwoman's eyes glistened—to assist in buying clothes, this was delight. "If I might suggest, madame—"

"Yes."

"Lingerie, slippers, negligees, and little things—a purse, handkerchiefs, veils—yes? Also a motor coat for day, and an evening cloak. And Madame will need more than two evening dresses."

It was a hard afternoon. Mattie Gainsley had never gone through such an ordeal. In the end she came away with a small wardrobe ordered, a wardrobe that would at least put her in the picture. Later she would enlarge it.

Louise was a great help. She had good taste, and she took clothes seriously, as every Frenchwoman does. It was plain, also, that she was developing the germ of respect for Mattie that had been implanted the day before. It was Louise who suggested that she herself carry one of the gowns home, so that Mattie might have something to wear that night. *(Continued on page 100)*

"Ho-ho!" Don Tostado roared. "There is then no sweetheart who geevs ribbons and would dispute for the favor of the lady."

The Blue Ribbon

Illustrated by Charles Sarka

Mr. Beaumont awoke to find himself famous for his Red Book stories last year; this new tale of roses and gunpowder, of swift love and hot hate, again justifies your enthusiasm.

By GERALD BEAUMONT

MADAM DOUBLE-CHIN will tell you that much depends upon a hair-ribbon. The Madam is not respectable, but she is very wise. If you ever go to Mexacana (and for the good of your soul keep away!) you will probably meet Madam Double-chin. She is to be found either behind the cash-register in the Mexacana Café or back of her desk at the Inn which is next door. Her form is portly and perfumed; her hair is henna-ed; and whether you are fifteen or fifty, she smiles as you pay your check, and murmurs:

"Thank you, dearie."

From her you may learn what hour mass is said at San Miguel; or if your mood runs along other lines, she will write you a passport to the Devil's Garden, which is but a block distant. She aims to please.

When one is fifty, hair-ribbons are no longer proper—*"no es costumbre,"* as the Mexicans put it. Therefore, Madam Double-chin's hands are heavy with diamonds, because of which some day she will very probably be killed. This she understands, but then there is a risk to everything at Mexacana, where authority speaks through a phonograph, and the class of music depends upon the one who has bought the records. The Madam sleeps behind barred doors. At other times, there is always within calling distance the figure of Little Bill, who with his automatic can hit a tin can across the street ten times while you are drawing your breath.

Time was, when little Dolores sang *canciones de amor* at the Purple Pigeon, and Mike Morwych sat in a corner of the Palace spinning the web of the Devil's Spider, and Johnny Powell ran the dice-game at Brayfield's. That was when José Maria Lopez Tostado—referred to in certain quarters as "Señor Sap"—came up from the West Coast to squander much gold, imbibe much whisky and emulate the exploits of Don Juan.

Now little Dolores is gone; so are Señor Sap, the Spider and

Johnny Powell. Madam Double-chin remains, and the story is this:

Where the lights are brightest, there the weak moths flutter and are mangled. Mexacana received the border drainage of two countries, and is one of the last refuges of His Satanic Majesty. Hang-town, Whisky Hill and Dead Man's Gulch are but memories; the Wild West is gone, never to return. But at Mexacana—there Venus, Bacchus and Fortuna still rule in the time-old trinity: the clink of silver dollars mingles with the blare of the trombone; girls with ribbons in their hair greet strangers with a—"Buy me a drink, honey," and the voice of the gamekeeper calls to his customers: "Come on, boys; a monkey can play it as well as a man!"

Underfoot there is mud—persistent and most besmirching mud; but overhead the sky is cerulean. At night stars and moon weave a mantle of turquoise, and the visitor becomes always sentimental and frequently drunk. Nationalities are as mixed as in hell itself. Reformers go there to study this last relic of iniquity. Tourists flock thither, later to regale respectable friends at home with accounts of things that never happened. Mexacana laughs and takes their money. Those who live there are wise in some things and very foolish in others; and their philosophy of life is akin to that expressed in "La Valentina"—the popular ditty which the peons chant when ordered out for another revolution.

You remember the refrain? Translated freely, it runs:

If I must die tomorrow,
I might as well die today.

THERE are, of course, exceptions to all things. Even among moths, there are those who, by some saving grace, still flutter in apparent safety just beyond the dead-line. For them Destiny is an interrogation-point, to be settled by a roll of the dice, or—as Madam Double-chin will tell you—by a lady's hair-ribbon. Among the moths of Mexacana then were Johnny Powell and Dolores Romero.

A pale face, a silk shirt, a pistol eye: that was Johnny. He was an ivory-turner, which is a profession that began with Palamedes during the siege of Troy and has boasted such artisans as Julius Cæsar, King Richard and Lord Fitzgerald, none of whom knew as much about the business as Johnny Powell.

"Dice have their laws," says St. Ambrose, "which the courts of justice cannot undo." Johnny knew these laws—every one of the sixty-four; and it was his business to see that no one broke them—at least not at his table, where the natural house-percentage totaled ten thousand a year. According to his own lights, Johnny was on the "up and up." Never in all his life had he cheated a man or wronged a woman, and from his own viewpoint he was not a gambler. Those who stood in front of his layout did the gambling. Johnny merely reaped the mathematical percentage of the Ivory God; in return for this he ran the game, performing mental miracles as he paid off—and preserving law and order with a smile and an automatic. Some day, if he lived, Johnny would go down to the West Coast, hang a hammock under a mango tree on his own *ranchita*, and never touch dice again. The blue eyes that looked out of Johnny's pale face were very tired, though he had seen but twenty-four summers.

Sometimes, when the take-in had been particularly large, Johnny dined at the Purple Pigeon, which professed respectability, selling nothing that was not on the bill of fare, and then only at prices which none but the elect could afford. Here the entertainment was first-class. For example: there was Billy Nicholls, who would make the saxophone laugh or weep in nine languages; La Belle Hélène, the whirlwind dancer who was Billy's wife; and there was, also, Señorita Dolores Romero, "The Border Nightingale," who was a rare little moth indeed.

If you are familiar with the *favoritas* of the high-class music halls in Latin America, you will know there are but two types: the self-assured, electric Carmens of the stamping heels and castanets; and the demure, deep-tinted *chiquitas* with the grace of fawns, and faces like the Madonna. Combine the two types, and you have the girl who was singing *canciones de amor* at the Purple Pigeon.

When the lights were lowered a trifle and Dolores sang "The Dove's Lullaby," sauntering between the tables with that gliding walk which rivals the grace of the swimmer, Johnny Powell used to take two lumps of sugar, mark them dreamily with his pencil, and roll them on the tablecloth. But they had not yet come up the right way, and so he held his peace until they should. Meanwhile some one else used to lean in the doorway, listening to Dolores, and pursing his thick lips thoughtfully.

It is impossible to describe Mike Morwych. But if you are a mother and have an innocent daughter, sometime in a nightmare you may be unfortunate enough to behold a great barroom filled with men and girls. The latter wear short dresses and bright red ribbons in their hair. Every little while, a man, who is usually drunk, and a girl who is laughing wildly, go through a back door into what is called the Devil's Garden.

Presently they return and buy more drinks. Still later the night's receipts find their way to a huge safe in the corner of the room where sits a corpulent and blinking spider, chewing a black cigar, and watching with beady eyes the moths that flutter at the edge of his web. The Spider is Mike Morwych.

Morwych owned the Palace, a fact which everyone understood; but he was also the real proprietor of the Purple Pigeon, and this was something that Johnny Powell didn't know and little Dolores had found out to her sorrow.

(May you awaken from the nightmare and hurry to your daughter's room to assure yourself that she is still there!)

"Bueno!" Up from his oil-lands on the West Coast came Don Tostado to earn the sobriquet of "Señor Sap" because of the ease with which he was plucked.

"What I care?" said the Señor. "I am a ver' gran' *caballero* I lose more dam' money, and ween more dam' women than anybody else—tha's me! *Vamos*—I buy one dreenk!"

The Señor was short and fat and fifty. His black mustachios curled up at either end, and he perspired freely. His conquests of the heart at Mexacana were far too easy. He yearned for a señorita who would inspire all his talents. Thus it was that he first heard of, and then beheld, the Border Nightingale singing in the Purple Pigeon. One pudgy hand went to his bosom, and his eyes rolled.

"Ah, *Dios,*" he cried, *"que niñita tan bonita!* At last have I found the one dream of my life. Hither, leetle one—you shall at the same table sit with Don Tostado, and we will talk—no? Maybe I buy thees place, and you too! Maybe I geev you thees diamon' from off my hand. Who can tell what I—a gran' *caballero* —do for his leetle *amiga.* Come!"

When one is an entertainer, even at the Purple Pigeon, certain things are incumbent. Dutifully, Señorita Romero smiled upon her host, and fed the little man's vanity, striving all the while to play the game as squarely and skillfully as though she were Johnny Powell behind his layout at Brayfield's; for she too sought only a legitimate percentage. But alas, this was a more difficult game.

"Nombre de Dios!" vowed the Señor. "Never have I beheld such eyes, such lips! Look you, leetle one, did I say that I have own t'ree t'ousand acre of oil, and am the *amigo* of the Jefe Politico? Ho-ho! I see in your eyes that now you comprehend. *Bueno!* In one, two, t'ree day I leave, and I take you wiz me—most assuredly."

"Oh, but I could not," laughed Dolores. "Already I have a *querido*—"

"Bah! You have a sweetheart, and yet you wear no diamonds—not a ring! He is a poor lover. What he geev you, eh?"

Señorita Romero bit her lips nervously.

"*Mi querido* is not rich," she acknowledged. "So I do not ask for diamonds. But always he bring me a ribbon for my hair, and with his own fingers does he tie the bow. See, is it not *beau*-tiful?"

She turned her small head, better to display the gay ribbon affixed to her braids.

"Ah, *Dios!*" she continued. "How he loves me, and how ver-ee jealous, he is! You are kind, señor; but truly—he may even now be watching, and he is mos' quick with the *pistola.* You must excuse me—"

MANY times little Dolores had saved herself by that whitest of lies; but Don Tostado was a very great gentleman, indeed. One puffy hand pulled the Border Nightingale back to her chair. His little black eyes grew red. The silverware clattered under the bang of a fist.

"Am I a peasant?" he roared. "No! Ten t'ousand *pesos* I lose in Brayfield; twenty t'ousand more I have spend with Señor Morwych. One word to my friend, the chief of police, and Mexacana—she close up! But I weel not say the word. Instead, I geev one *baile* on the night of the tomorrow—*caramba,* yes! You know why—leetle dove? Because, after we have dance' all night, you shall of your own accord go way weeth me."

Dolores quivered like a bird under the spell of a serpent. Some one apprised Morwych of what was going on, and he came hurrying in. He took in the situation at a glance, eased himself into a chair by the side of the Border Nightingale, and sent for more drinks. No one could spin a quicker or more artful fabric in less

There was a flash of blue, a spurt of red—and the man from Tres Pinos went down.

time than the Mexacana Spider. Señorita Romero's frail excuses were brushed aside, and in their place Morwych wove a web of his own fashioning. Don Tostado's mood changed to one of merriment.

"Ho-ho-ho," he roared. "So, it ees what the Americanos call only a 'stall,' eh? There is then no sweetheart who geevs ribbons and would dispute weeth Don Tostado for the favor of the lady he have select? *Bueno!* That ees ver' good. Señor Morwych, I hold the *danza* in your place, and I pay for everysing. Now, I must go San Rey for sell fifteen t'ousand barrels oil. But when I come back—we have gran' times! *Adios, amigo!* —Flower of my heart, I say the sweet good night!"

"That you may pass it well, señor." Dolores spoke in her native tongue, small head lowered to hide the torture in her eyes. Under the table, one wrist was being slowly turned in the grip of Morwych.

The Señor waddled from the room. The Spider released his clutch.

"Nice work, kid," he complimented. "Now I'm going to tell you somethin,' and I aint going to say it with flowers.....I know these greasers like a book. Flatter 'em, and it's like shaking money out of the baby's bank. Cross 'em, and it's—good night! He's good for fifty thousand more if he's kidded along; otherwise—well, the Jefe Politico is into him already for a sweet fortune, and you know what that means. Tostado owns the town. Be a sensible kid; and when you come back from your vacation with Señor Sap, I'll show you how to make some real dough."

The Border Nightingale toyed with her fan.

"Mexacana—it is a ver' bad place," she mused. "It should close, señor. Rather than do what is in your mind, little Dolores—she kills herself."

Morwych rolled the black cigar thoughtfully between his lips.

The orchestra struck the opening bars of "La Valentina," and Dolores glanced at her wrist-watch. It was time for her to resume her professional rôle of the Border Nightingale. She arose mechanically.

"Never mind," said Morwych. "You don't sing around here until we've reached a better understanding. Take a coupla drinks, and think it over."

He got up, nodded carelessly, and went out to see what new moths had fallen into his net at the Palace. Señorita Romero sank into her chair, eyes on her untouched glass of wine.

At that moment the Ivory God rewarded the patience of Johnny Powell, sitting alone in one corner of the room, and rolling little

"Go 'way, leetle mens, go 'way. I am ver' gran caballero. Dios, yes! All by myself I desire to have my revenge."

sugar-lumps across the table. He looked up to see the Border Nightingale sitting silent and alone. As if reading his thoughts, the little singer turned her head, and regarded the young American wistfully. He grinned and pointed to the vacant chair opposite him. In a moment she had fluttered, wide-eyed, to his table.

"*Amigo mio,* was it an angel of God who bade you not to leave me alone?"

"*An angel?*" said Johnny. "In *Mexacana?* Sister, there's only one angel here, and I can't figure out why she's hangin' around. I get my tips from the dice."

"Dice?" Her quick eyes searched the table, and beheld the sugar-lumps. Before he could guard them, one small hand took quick possession. On the upturned face of each cube there was a penciled heart. Johnny Powell was caught with marked dice. He grew very red.

"Just kiddin' myself," he explained. "Wanted to talk to you, but didn't know whether you cared for home talent. I run the game at Brayfield's. Been shooting sugar-lumps six nights now, and this is the first time I threw the double house sign."

Señorita Romero veiled her eyes under long lashes, and spoke with difficulty because of the beating of her heart.

"Thou art Señor John-*nay* Pow-*ell,*" she pronounced, "—who have never wrong a woman, and who have kill men who cheat. They say that the *pobrecitas*—the poor little ones at the Palacio—those who wear the red ribbons—they get the money from you to go home when no one else will give. You see, I know much."

"You sure do," admitted Johnny. "I'm a bad *muchacho,* but I guess I aint what you would call rotten. Who's been talking to you?"

"Madam Double-chin. I live at her house."

The face of young Brayfield's gamekeeper hardened.

"What?"

"Nay, but thou must not look at me like that. Ah, *Dios,* please! She does for each only what is asked of her. To me she have been a mother, and have give me the room that is next to hers. With her own hands one night, did she almost strangle the man who would have—"

She shuddered and concluded: "*Amigo,* I wish that I was brave, and could use the *pistola* too, *Dios,* yes!"

The jazz orchestra blared into a fox-trot, and the floor resounded to the *pit-pat* of shoe and slipper. Johnny Powell looked at the Border Nightingale.

"Want to take a chance?"

"With you, Señor? Ah, so gladly!"

She floated into his arms, and for a few precious moments forgot everything else in the realization of a dream that she had often conjured.

Hitherto he had been a distant Sir Galahad, the one maiden knight of Mexacana, whose phantom she had summoned to her aid in the name of womanhood. Now she was actually in the shelter of his arms, and he had called her to his side because of sugar-lumps that showed a pair of hearts. The wonder of it all was still in her eyes as they returned to their table. As for Johnny—he was young, and she was very pretty.

"I have an aunt," she told him shyly, "an aunt who have one time love an Americano. He was an engineer, and veree brave and handsome. But he was kill', and so all her life Tia Christina was veree sad, like me."

Johnny looked incredulous.

"Nay," she told him, "I speak truly. The Romeros have once owned all San Rey, but with the revolutions, it go until there was nothing but my voice to keep my father and mother alive. So for them I sing at Mexacana where there is money and I am near home. Now they are dead, and Dolores is alone. A little while now—and the Border Nightingale is no more. The name itself means 'Sad One,' señor. May I keep thy lumps of *azucar?*"

Johnny Powell studied the girl in front of him. Brayfield himself used to say about his young gamekeeper that the man did not live who could stand at Johnny's table for five minutes without having been classified correctly.

"Girl," said Johnny, "you seem to be in trouble, and I'd like to help. Fact is, I've been kidding myself along with a nutty sort of hunch, and you're the great big part of it. See what's on them sugar dice? Well, that's the way I play the game with a woman. The house wins on a pair of hearts or not at all."

Señorita Romero beat her small hands softly together, and he saw that they were innocent of adornment.

"I was thinking of riding across the border tomorrow on business," he ventured. "I'd like to bring a little souvenir. Maybe a ring would bring you luck—or is that rushing things?"

The blood flamed into the cheeks of the Border Nightingale. She lowered her eyes, and was silent a moment.

"Thou art not rich," she said softly, "and so diamonds I do not ask for. But *ah, amigo*—if thou would bring me a ribbon for my hair!"

It was Johnny Powell's turn to color a little. Madam Double-chin is right. A hair-ribbon is a most fundamental thing. Give a little girl a doll for her arms and a bow for her hair, and the two instincts of the sex are satisfied. And to a man, does not a bit of ribbon spell both sentiment and intimacy? It has ever been the *gage d'honneur*, the emblem of chivalry and knighthood, the mark of my lady's favor—as simple and primitive a thing as the passion for gambling; and that, mark you, swayed our first parents as they sat under the original fig-tree playing "odd and even" with pebbles!

"Sure I'll bring you a ribbon," said Johnny. "I was prepared to get the town-hall clock if you'd asked for it. What color would you like?"

Dolores studied the eyes of Sir Galahad.

"It must be a *blue* ribbon," she decided, "a most heavenly blue. For look you— it is also the color of the Virgin, who was most pure; and I assure thee, John-nay *mio*, little Dolores, she has the right to wear it. Dost thou believe?"

Johnny nodded his head to show that he both believed and *knew*.

"Leave it to me," he told her. "I'm the blue ribbon kid. Feel a little happier now, don't you?"

She nodded dumbly.

"Me too," said Johnny. "Now I have to get back on the job and swing a cane for a while. Nobody bothering you, is there?"

She shook her head. The safety of Johnny Powell had suddenly become very precious to the Border Nightingale.

"In that case," he told her, "I'll have (*Continued on page 120*)

Have you ever looked at some old house and wondered what curious secrets the ancient walls kept? This is the deeply impressive story of such a house, and of the strange dramatic scenes the silent walls witnessed—the masterpiece of one of America's most distinguished men of letters—

RUPERT HUGHES

Within these Walls—

Illustrated by Arthur I. Keller

The Story So Far:

PLAGUE had fallen pitilessly upon old New York, and soon panic added its terrors to pestilence.

Patty Jessamine was one of those whom fear drove to rash decision. Among her suitors were the dashing young engineer Harry Chalender and the steadfast lawyer David RoBards. When the disease had in succession killed an uncle, a cousin and her brother, then struck down her father and Chalender, her courage failed her and she fled to RoBards, crying: "Marry me, Mr. RoBards! And take me away before I die!"

"God knows how gladly!" RoBards responded. And arranging a hasty wedding, he drove off with her to his birthplace, Tulip-tree Farm, up in Westchester, beyond White Plains.

There they remained while the plague ran its course; and presently they learned that both Patty's father and Chalender had recovered. Somehow RoBards felt that it was the latter's return to health that pleased her the more; and when Chalender drove over to call from his home near Sing Sing, whither he had gone to recuperate, RoBards was sick with jealousy.

Chalender pretended a professional reason for this and other calls. The plague, he averred, was caused by lack of adequate water-supply in New York, and he was examining the feasibility of a project to bring the pure water of either the Bronx, the Passaic or the Croton to the city; and when the Croton was decided upon, he undertook a portion of the work. Because of Chalender's continued vicinity RoBards gladly acceded to Patty's desire to escape the loneliness of Tulip-tree Farm, and moved with her back to New York.

They went back to Tulip-tree, however, for the birth of Patty's first baby. A few months later Patty enjoyed a brief interval of gayety at Saratoga. And the following year, after the birth of her second child, she plunged into the social whirlpool with an enthusiasm that provoked gossip.

One frozen night in 1835, RoBards was aroused by the alarm-bell and a flame-reddened sky. David hurried to his volunteer fire-company. With Chalender and the others he did his ineffectual best to stay the flames, and on one occasion Chalender saved his life. Finally they had to fight the conflagration by blowing up buildings with gunpowder. And RoBards, with his marine-officer

When RoBards seized Immy and tossed her aloft, she was wildly afraid of him. "What's the matter?" Patty cried. And Immy sobbed: " I thought Papa was Jud Lasher."

companion. sacrificed the warehouse of his father-in-law Jessamine, like the others. Patty forgave him in time; but her impoverished father was not appeased by David's long and futile endeavors in the courts to obtain compensation.

Years passed; the city was rebuilt; work on the Croton waterway progressed. Patty's third baby came—and died; so too a fourth.

Chalender was injured in separating two fighting workmen and was carried to Tulip-tree Farm. Some time later RoBards returned joyfully home from a trip to New York—to find Patty in the arms of the convalescent Chalender!

RoBards could not bring himself to kill a wounded man; Chalender remained unaware that he had been discovered; and Patty's remorse seemed keen and sincere. So with the passage of time, and with the realization that but for his mercy toward Chalender his family would not now be happy around him, RoBards' anguish and bitterness abated.

And then—a new blow fell. Little Keith came crying to him that a half-witted youth, Jud Lasher, had carried off his sister. Near a lonely pool among the rocks, RoBards overtook young Lasher. Though he all but drowned the creature in the pool, he could not bring himself to the final vengeance; and upon Lasher's promise to ship aboard a whaler and never return to the region, RoBards spared him. He left poor Immy to the ministrations of his farmer's wife, and swore her and Keith to secrecy, for he wished to keep the knowledge from Patty, who was away.

But a few days later Lasher passed by on his way to sea, saw Immy and carried her off again. RoBards rescued her in time. And now he did not stay his hand. That night Keith was awakened by a noise, crept downstairs and led by a light from the basement, watched his father engaged in dreadful masonry—walling up the body of Jud Lasher in the thick foundation of the chimney.....Next day RoBards took the children, again sworn to secrecy, to New York to see the celebration of the completed Croton aqueduct. (*The story continues in detail:*)

ONE pitiful forlorn little old woman was seemingly the only human being left behind to guard Weschester County till its populace returned from the excursion to New York City. Westchester had presented the metropolis with one of its rivers, and it went down to make the bestowal formal.

Mrs. Lasher had not the money nor the time for such a journey. Water to her was the odious stuff she lugged from the well to the washtub or the stove. New York meant scarce more to her than Bombay or Hongkong. She hardly lifted her eyes from her toil to note who passed her hovel, or in which direction. Yet she had watched for RoBards and had run out to taunt him with his cruelty to her.

And now she was multiplied in his eyes into an endless procession of visions more terrible to him than an army with banners, more numerous than the parading hosts that poured along the streets of New York.

She was like a cinder in his eye—like that newest and most fashionable of distresses, a cinder in the eye. The steam railroad was the latest toy of the restless populace, and with each new amusement comes its new anguish.

The first time he ever rode behind a locomotive, RoBards caught a mote in his eye, and it felt like a beam. Before he could extract it from his tear-drenched bloodshot orb, it had rendered everything else invisible and unimportant. Once it was out, it was itself almost invisible. Yet it had hidden the whole landscape from his view.

While the bands thumped and brayed and the horses' hoofs crackled on the cobblestones, and the soldiers and firemen and temperance folk strutted, he seemed to see only that little despondent hag wringing her work-tanned fingers over the loss of her good-for-nothing son. She was bitter against RoBards for sending the lout away to be a sailor. What would she have said if she had known—what would she say when she learned, as learn she must—that RoBards had saved her boy from the perils of the seven seas by immuring him in the foundation walls of his home?

What if the blood of her son should cry aloud to her like Abel's from the ground and draw her to the cellar? What if she should see through the clumsy disguise of spider-webs and begin tearing at the foundation stones with those old hen's-claw fingers of hers? It was a ridiculous image to be afraid of, but RoBards could not banish it. It came back like a shrill nipping mosquito that one strikes at but cannot drive away.

THE children had apparently forgotten the tragedy. The newness of the train-ride, the fear of missing something, of being late somewhere, of not being everywhere at once, kept their little minds so avid that there was no thought of yesterday. When they descended from the train at the station, RoBards could hardly keep them in leash long enough to get them into a hack. As it bounced across the town to St. John's Park, he had only their backs and heels for company. Each child hung across a door and stared at the hurrying mobs.

At length they reached the house, and all their thoughts were forward. Nothing that had ever happened in the country could pit itself against the revelry of the city. Their young and pretty mother looked never so New Yorkish as when she ran down the front stoop to welcome them. When she cried the old watchword, "How have you been?" they answered heedlessly: "All right!"

Even RoBards forgot for the brief paradise of embracing his gracious wife that everything was all wrong. She had to take him about the house and show him the improvements she had made, especially the faucet in the kitchen for the Croton water when it should come gurgling through the pipes. From a parlor window she pointed with delicious pride to the hydrant at the edge of the front porch as if to a new altar. Most marvelous of all was a shower-bath that she had had installed upstairs. It would be possible to bathe every day!

Old Jessamine, himself a child now, tried to quiet the children by belittling the significance of the Croton day. It would be nothing, he said, to the great day when the Erie Canal was opened and the first boat from the lakes started its voyage through the canal to the Hudson and down the river to the sea.

The children wriggled impatiently and said: "Please, Grampa—the bands are playing. We'd better hurry."

The old man held them tighter and went on:

"When the canal-boats reached New York, there was a grand procession of ships, and there were two elegant kegs of Erie water with gold hoops and Governor Clinton emptied one of them into the ocean to marry the sea to the lakes; and another man poured in phials of water from the Elbe, the Rhine, the Rhone and all the rivers and seas. Today will be nothing to what people did when I was young, for in those days—"

But the children had broken away from his sharp knees and his fat stomach and his mildewed history. The band outside was irresistible, and their father was waiting to tell them good-by.

Keith was mighty proud of his father in the fireman's uniform which he had donned for the parade. But when RoBards seized Immy, tossed her aloft and brought her down to the level of his lips, she was as wildly afraid of him as Hector's child had been of him in his great helmet. Immy was easily frightened now. Her scream pierced the air.

"What's the matter? What on earth?" Patty cried. And Immy sobbed:

"I thought Papa was Jud Lasher."

"What a funny thought! Why should you—"

Patty's father called to her opportunely, demanding with senile querulousness who had hidden his walking-stick, and where. RoBards forgave the old man everything for playing Providence this once.

As Patty turned aside, Keith seized Immy's foot and warned her to keep still, for heaven's sakes.

The loyalty of Keith and his quick rally to his father's protection from Immy's indiscretion touched RoBards deeply. The boy had evidently inherited the family love of secrecy for the family's sake.

But RoBards was sick with fear, realizing on what slender threads the secret hung. He dreaded to leave the children with their mother lest they let slip some new clew to the agony he loved Patty too well to share with her. But he had to take his place with his fire-company, though the sky fell in his absence.

Chapter Twenty-two

THAT procession was seven miles long, and probably every one who marched or rode, and each of the massed spectators, had his or her terror of life at the back of the heart. But RoBards knew only his own anxiety.

The Fire Kings had left their engine-house by the time he reached the place, and he had to search for them in the welter of humanity. The Battery was the point from which the parade was to start, and every street within two miles of it was filled with men and horses and mobs of impatient people already footsore with standing about on the sharp cobblestones.

New York had increased vastly in population since the Erie Canal festival. It had more than doubled its numbers, and had now nearly three hundred and fifty thousand souls within its bounds, as well as thousands on thousands of visitors.

It gave RoBards' heart another twinge to stand an obscure member of a fire-gang and watch Harry Chalender go by in a carriage as one of the victorious engineers. RoBards had fought him and his ambitions, and must haul on a rope now like a harnessed Roman captive while his victor triumphed past him in a chariot, or worse, a barouche.

Life had defeated RoBards again and again. With the loftiest motives, he had been always the loser, and he could not understand things. Chalender was a flippant fencer with life; yet somehow he fought always on the winning side and the worthier side. He had flitted through RoBards' home stealing something infinitely precious, and had been rewarded with no punishment so ever. He had stolen honor from the home and had been repaid with hospitality and gentle care in his illness, and with a conspiracy of silence. And now he rode in a barouche while RoBards walked. His mortal offense had been condoned, outlawed, and the offended ones helped to conceal his guilt.

YET it was bitter for an earnest man like RoBards to go afoot before such a rake as Chalender. He stopped short on the march, and his heel was trodden by the next man after him. One had to keep going or get trampled underfoot. RoBards moved on, sullenly.

Why should he have killed Jud Lasher and hidden him in a wall, and let Chalender, who had been as evil, ride by in state showered with the cheers due a hero, a savior of New York? RoBards would never cease to shudder lest it be found out that he had spared Chalender; and he would never cease to shudder lest it be found out that he had punished Jud Lasher. A jury would probably acquit him for killing Lasher, but only if he exculpated himself by publishing the disaster that had befallen Immy. If he had killed Chalender and published his wife's frailty, a jury would have acquitted him for that too. But why should it have befallen him to be compelled to such decisions and such secrecies?

The procession moved along with the usual open and shut effect. There would come an abrupt halt with everybody in a jumble, then a quick start-off and a lengthening gap that must be

Patty listened with awe . . . . . They felt that only now were their souls made one in a marriage of grief.

closed on the run. It was annoying, wearisome, and soon began to feel foolish. Why should one-half the town wear its feet off marching past the other half of the town whose feet were asleep with the long sitting still?

By a stroke of luck, the Fire Kings made a long pause near the residence on Broadway where Patty and her two families, old and young, had been invited to watch the parade. RoBards was as confused as a silly child when his son Keith recognized him and advertised him with loud yells of "Papa!" He and Immy then came bolting to the curb, followed by Patty.

People stared and made comments on the amazing thing that a man's wife and children should violate decorum with such public friendliness. It was as bad manners as greeting a friend cordially on a Sunday.

Patty edged close to her husband and said—as if she knew it would help him on his journey:

"Did you see how fat Harry Chalender is getting? He looked like an idiot sitting up there while a man of your ability walks. It's simply disgusting!"

Oh, mystic comfort of contempt! The lean man's for the fat; the fat man's for the lean, the failure's for the conqueror.

By the strange alchemy of sympathy, RoBards' anger was dissipated by finding its duplicate in his wife's heart. He smiled at her earnestness in a matter that had but lately driven him frantic. It is thus that men prove women excitable. He also pooh-poohed, with a comfortable silliness, her praise for his own splendid appearance.

Then the bands ahead and abaft struck up at the same time but not with the same tune, and he had to move on, his mind and his feet trying in vain to adapt themselves to both musics.

It was two o'clock before the advanced guard of the Washington Grays galloped up in front of the City Hall. The mayor and foreign consuls and other guests took their stations, and the parade passed in review. It was half-past four when the last man came up, and Samuel Stevens, Esq., president of the Board of Water Commissioners, began his address.

From his post on the sidewalk RoBards could hear snatches of the speeches, bursts of song. He joined in the "Nine hearty cheers for the City of New York and perpetuity to the Croton Water!" that the grand marshal called for.

Then the ceremonies were over, and a cold collation was served in the City Hall, with Croton water and lemonade, but no wine or spirituous liquors. Patty sent the children home with her parents and joined her husband at the feast.

The night was as brilliant as the day. All the places of public amusement were crowded, and at the Tabernacle a sacred concert was given. The fair at Niblo's was suffocatingly frequented, and the fireworks were splendid. At Castle Garden there were fireworks and a balloon ascension. The museums and hotels were brilliantly illuminated; and at the Astor House seven hundred window-lights were hung, with a servant at each window who applied the tapers at the sound of a gong.

By midnight the town was as weary as a boys' school after a holiday. When Patty and her husband reached home, they found Keith awake and waiting for them. Immy was asleep, her head enarmed like a bird's head curled under its wing But Keith was staring from his cot. His little eight-year-old head was athrob with gigantic plans that made doorknobs of his eyes.

"Papa, I been thinkin'. You know when I was little I was goin' to be the man who lights the street-lamps; an' 'en I was goin' to be a night watchman when I got grown up; an' 'en I was goin' to be a lawyer like you are, and help you. But now I guess I'll be

"Oh, Mr. Senator! If only you would take my father's case against this wicked city!" Patty stared up into Webster's eyes as if she had never seen a man before.

a nengineer an' build waterworks an' aqueducks like Uncle Harry. And some day they'll have a percession for me too. You just wait and see."

There was no need for restraint of the laughter with which oldsters mock youngsters' dreams. That fatal reference to Chalender wrung the lips of Patty and her husband with sardonic misery. They had once been innocent too, and they were still innocent in ambition. It was life that made fun of them. What sport would it make of their children?

THE house in St. John's Park was not large, and the incursion of the old Jessamines, who required two rooms, and of the children, so crowded the house that Patty and David had to share the same room. But fatigue was like a sword between them, and in the morning she slept so soundly that he rose and dressed without waking her.

He was awake very betimes, driven from needed sleep by an onslaught of terrors. A thousand little fiends assailed him and bound him like *Gulliver* held fast with threads. RoBards would never take anxiety lying down, but rose and fought it. So now he broke the withes of remorse and prophetic frenzy and met the future with defiance.

He took up the morning paper to make sure that yesterday's pageant had actually occurred. He glanced hastily through the pages first to see if his own history had transpired. He half-expected to read some clamorous announcement of a mysterious body found in an old house in Westchester near Robbins' Mill.

There was no mention of such a discovery, and he read of the immortal yesterday, "the most numerous and imposing procession ever seen in any American city."

The town had apparently solved its chief problem. His own had just been posed. How long could he hope to escape discovery? Perhaps the news was already out. Perhaps the jaded revelers returning to Westchester had been met by Mrs. Lasher screaming like a fury. Perhaps the house had caught fire and the cellar walls had broken open with the heat and the collapse of the timbers, as he had seen big warehouses during the Great Fire broken open like crushed hickory nuts.

An unendurable need to make sure with his own eyes of the state of affairs up there goaded him to action. He ran to tell Patty some lie about the necessity for the trip. She was so heavenly asleep that he could not break the spell. The children were asleep, too. So he told Cuff to tell them that he had been called back to the country.

He had the luck to meet a cab, and the driver had a good horse that reached the City Hall Station of the New York and Harlem Railroad just in time to catch a train north.

As the carriages rolled through Center and Broome streets and up the Bowery and on out through the mile-long cut and the quarter-mile tunnel through solid basalt, RoBards blessed the men that invented steam-engines, and the good souls who borrowed the money and paid the good toilers to lay these rails of stout wood with iron bands along the top. He blessed the men that ran that blessed locomotive. A demon of haste inspired them, and they reached at times a rate well over twenty miles an hour. He covered the fourteen miles to Williamsbridge in no time at all, compared to stage-speed; and the fare was but a shilling! He had now only eighteen miles to make by the old-fashioned means.

He was a little cruel to the horse he hired, and spared the poor hack neither uphill nor down. But then he was fiercelier lashed by his own torment.

At last his home swung into view—benign, serene, secure. No lightning, no fire, no storm had ripped open its walls. There was no excitement visible except in the fluttering of a few birds—or were they belated leaves? The tulip-tree stood up, awake, erect, the safe trustee of the home.

When he passed the Lasher place, he was afraid to go fast lest his guilt be implied in his haste. He let the galled jade jog. He even turned and looked the Lasher hovel straight in the face. As the guilty do, he stared it right in the eyes. . . . .

He dared not visit the cellar till the farmers had gone to bed, and then he went down into it as into a grave. It was morbidly cold, and the lamp shivered in his hand.

He found everything as he had left it, and marveled at the neatness of his work. Yet it seemed not to be his work but the work of somebody who had borrowed his frame and used his scholarship for cunning purposes.

He went back to the library. In this room his soul had found its world. But now it was an impossible place. The hearthstone there—Chalender had brought it: it was a headstone over a buried honor. He had often resolved to tear it out and break

it to dust. But now it covered Jud Lasher, and served him as an anonymous memorial.

What was the quicklime doing down inside there? His heart stopped. Perhaps it would not work, sealed away from the air. He ought to open the walls and see.

And this set him to trembling in utter confusion, for he recognized in his own bewilderment the unintelligent maudlin reasoning of the criminal. Already he had revisited the scene, already debated an exhumation, already longed to talk to some one, to boast perhaps!

He was afraid to trust himself to the house, and making an excuse of having come for some books and papers, set off again for the city. When he got down from the cab in front of his home, he found Keith in the bit of front yard. The boy was so absorbed in his task that he greeted his father absently, as if RoBards were the child and he the old one. He had dug a shallow channel from the hydrant to the iron railing, and was laying down pipes of tin and cardboard and any other rubbish he could find.

"I'm buildin' a naqueduck from our house to London," he explained. "London got burned down once, and so the king has sent for me to get him some water right away so's the folks wont get burned up again. They're goin' to give me a big immense parade and I'm goin' to ride in a gold barouche like Uncle Harry did."

RoBards managed a wry smile and went in. Patty met him with an ancient look of woe and motioned him into the drawing-room. She spoke in a voice like ashes stirred with a cold wind:

"Immy told me—" she began and dropped into a chair sobbing. "She didn't mean to, but she screamed again at nothing, and let slip a word or two, and I got it out of her. She has cried herself sick with remorse at disobeying you. How could you let that monster live? How could you?"

"He's dead," RoBards sighed, and sank on an ottoman, crushed with weariness.

But Patty was startled to new life. She demanded the whole truth, and he told her in a dreary matter-of-fact tone. He told her everything, including the secret of Jud's resting-place.

The story came from him with the anguish of dragging a sharp chicken bone from his throat. It cut, and left a bleeding and an ache, but it was wonderful to be free of it.

Patty listened with awe, wide-eyed and panting. There was such need of being close together under the ruins of their life, that since he could not find strength to lift his head or a hand, she leaned forward toward him till she fell on her knees to the floor and agonized across the space between them, and creeping close into his bosom, drew his arms about her, and wept and wept—with him.

Their only words were "Oh!" and "Oh!" eternally repeated; yet they felt that only now were their souls made one in a marriage of grief. They had no bodies; they were mere souls crushed under the broken temple of their hopes, bruised and wounded and pinioned together in their despair.

Yet there was a kind of pitiful happiness in groping and finding each other thus, and a bitter ecstasy in being able to love and be loved utterly at last.

Chapter Twenty-three

THEREAFTER Patty and RoBards felt a need of keeping close They slept together after that, her throat across his left arm. She called it "my arm," and when his travels to distant courts took him away from her, that arm of "hers" was lonely.

Like galls that torment old trees for (*Continued on page 107*)

HOLMAN DAY

The gifted author of "The Rider of the King-Log" here tells a blithe tale of movie madness—of a frenzied film-producer, of a lady unclothed and in her wrong mind, and of a bear, a bobcat, Mr. Trask and other wild, wild animals.

"Madam, I'm Adam"

Illustrated by Chase Emerson

MR. Henry Koshland destroyed the earth—toppled its cloud-capped towers and mashed flat the embellishments of civilization and the works of man. Made a clean job of it—bingo! Just like that!

Then, having destroyed the earth and the fullness thereof, Mr. Koshland, searching his mind for something bigger in the way of an idea, found himself up against it!

After he had sold out the Empyrean Sweets Company and had invested the proceeds in the Royal Arcade Theater, and had studied the films for three months, Mr. Koshland was thoroughly qualified to tell the world what was the matter with the movie industry. The main trouble was too much sweet stuff, averred Mr. Koshland, having been weaned from sweet stuff by the candy business.

"Torch 'em up with a title, and knock 'em down with a bam—and you've got 'em," summed up in one declaration Mr. Koshland's conclusions as an empiricist after his three months of exhibitor's experience; he had no use for theorists: he *knew*.

Therefore, Mr. Koshland went into producing on his own hook. And how he happened to think of something to produce was this:

The city went eminent-domaining it one day, extended the reservoir system, took in Diamond Lake and ordered off the shore the Ne Plus Ultra Recreation Park, a private enterprise. There was an auction sale of the buildings. Mr. Koshland went along to bid, as a silent partner, in behalf of his brother Pete, a building-wrecker who had himself just been wrecked by a building to the extent of a broken leg and a few fractured ribs.

After Mr. Henry Koshland sat into the auction game, thriftily jacking the bids by the offer of odd dollars, being a man who believed in the magic of odd numbers, there was born to him a specific idea out of the general notion that he was buying for wrecking purposes all those buildings that ranged from popcorn booths to the Castle of Splendor. Mr. Koshland had the inspired conviction that if the structures of the Ne Plus Ultra were going to be wrecked, the thing to do was to wreck 'em good and proper, and make the wrecking process pay its way.

So it happened that Mr. Koshland got control of enough of the world for his purposes, and annihilated it so utterly by fire and earthquake that all the folks who beheld the tumultuous doings, as caught by the camera's eye, were agreeably willing to meet Mr. Koshland halfway and be convinced for the time being, till they were out on the street waiting for cars, that all the world was actually destroyed. The drama was produced under the title: "The Last Man."

"And a helluva good title, too," declared Mr. Koshland, who had been convinced by his Royal Arcade experience with posters that the title was half—if not three-quarters—the battle. He released for a lump price through ready takers, and settled with Pete after a session which wrecked the wrecking partnership. Pete bewailed this unorthodox system of wrecking; he considered that if the thing had been held up till he was around and about again on his game leg, he could have done a profitable job of salvaging while the hurry and scurry of demolition was going on.

Mr. Koshland expressed his contemptuous sentiments regarding the figure that Pete would have cut, sorting shingle-nails and piling scantling while the world was being destroyed. "It shows how far apart

The bobcat squalled. Mr. Trask leaped up, fell over the log, and was more frightened by what he beheld than he had been by the rock that whizzed past his ear.

we are on business notions, now that I'm a producer. Producers don't take expense into account! Not no more! You'll see how I'll produce!" Thus, Henry.

But after having tried for the space of a whole week to produce a solid precipitate, so to speak, from his boiling thoughts, considering the problem of a successor to "The Last Man," Mr. Koshland had not been able to secure anything for a "bam" that would top his first killer. There was a nebulous idea, to be sure, but he was not getting anywhere with it!

Capturing no full-fledged story, after such frantic mental galloping, he seemed to be wasting time. He assured himself that nothing could be the matter with his brains—he had always been quick as a flash in meeting the candy-market with novelties. Afterward, discussing the matter, he dwelt with astonishment on the fact that the idea of "The First Woman" to follow "The Last Man" had not come to him in the snap of a finger.

"But I'm all go-ahead in business," he declared. "I don't look behind. Progressive, that's me! I was thinking all the time what a fine picture it would be to make it a thousand years from now. I'm so lively on the jump up close with the times, that to hop ahead one or two thousand years—it's nothing. But the darned fools say they don't know how to write it out for me, what it will be so far ahead. I'm progressive enough so that I know. I'll write it myself when I have time."

Any fair-minded person would have agreed with Mr. Koshland that there was no time for that writing after the second "helluva good title" came along. He knew it for what it was worth, the moment it rang in his ears.

He had been calling Lew Keyes names because Lew seemed to be irritatingly uncertain in regard to what sort of scenario would hit off conditions a thousand years hence. Mr. Koshland insisted that contemporary affairs had been done to death; for the last three weeks of his ownership of the Royal Arcade, the only way he had been able to hold his attention in leash as a critic, in order to see a picture through, was to plant himself in the middle of a row, flanked right and left by matrons with laps heaped high with

hats and purchases. By reflecting that women would advise their friends to stay away from a theater where the proprietor was such a boor that he walked on patrons' feet, right in the middle of a picture, he managed to stick in his place.

"And your best idea of what is going to happen a thousand years ahead, it aint so good as what's happening on the screen now, bad as it is," he declared to Lew. "I have hired you off that newspaper, Keyes, in the hopes that you could keep it up right along, writing about things that have never happened. What you quit so soon for, now that you work for me?"

"It takes time to think up a big thing."

"But I thought how to destroy the world when I was between bids at Ne Plus Ultra. Quick, like that!" He clacked his finger into his palm. "Next I think quick to make a picture a thousand years from now."

"I reckon it's *ne plus ultra* on that dope, so far as I'm concerned. I'll resign, if you say so."

But Mr. Koshland, who was of an inquiring turn of mind, had his interest piqued by Keyes' qualifying reference to the dope.

"Is it something besides a park name, the Ne Plus Ultra?"

"It means nothing ahead—nothing more to come, as you might say!"

Mr. Koshland wiped his forehead. "I hope I haven't bought a hoodoo name along with that park," he fretted. "It's a whole week that I've been thinking, and I haven't even got a title. And that's half the battle, as I have always said, because the story writes itself after we have the title. And you have always wrote about the things that never happened, and now you can't write. If it aint a hoodoo, then why can't you?"

Mr. Keyes had a certain sort of satiric humor in him, even if he did not have inspiration always on tap. "I might say with Napoleon, answering the question about ability, 'Able was I ere I saw Elba.'"

"You don't mean that I hurt your eyesight so much that you can't get your mind onto your work, hey?" demanded Mr. Koshland with considerable truculence.

"Oh, it's nothing personal. I only quoted that for fun—because it's a palindrome."

"It's what?"

"Pal-in-drome."

"Then what is a pal-in-drome?" Mr. Koshland's inquiring propensity was right up on its hind legs.

"Write down what I said."

The employer was at his desk, and he wrote slowly and carefully while his press-agent dictated.

"Spell it backward. It reads the same."

Mr. Koshland painstakingly convinced himself of the truth of that peculiarity.

"There are plenty of 'em," writer Keyes informed him. "There's 'Yreka Bakery' and—"

Mr. Koshland, taking nothing for granted in this new activity as a philologist, wrote down those words too.

"But the best one of all, to my mind, is 'Madam, I'm Adam,'" pursued the press-agent indifferently.

Keyes was jumped out of that indifference by the prompt and galvanic manner in which Mr. Koshland displayed his emotions. The latter lifted his voice into a shrill, "What?" Then he leaped up and stood in his chair, in order, evidently, to lift his voice to the height which the occasion demanded. "What? Say it so I don't think I'm dreaming it."

Mr. Keyes repeated.

"And you had that in your head all the week while I've been putting my brains on night and day shifts, and you don't tell me? Were you holding out on me? What for? Do you intend to produce for yourself? It's *it*!"

"*What's* it?" demanded Mr. Keyes, much mystified.

Mr. Koshland's next phase of emotion—repressed, inforced

calm, calm secured by the throttling method—was more impressive than his outspoken violence. He was ominously satiric when he slid down and sat in the chair and explained meticulously to Mr. Keyes that what *"it"* was was a little dog playing marbles with the goldfish in the beef stew and having such a good time; *it* was a lovely grapefruit all so nicely served with drawn butter; *it* was—

But Mr. Koshland banged his fist and got back to business and called Mr. Keyes some more names and informed him that what *"it"* was was a *title*—and that if it were not for him, Mr. Koshland, there would never be any producing done by the firm; but that it was hard lines when he was obliged to do mental pocketpicking in order to get an idea out of an employee. "But it's why I'm in the game—why I belong in the game. I see where others don't see!" He rapped his knuckles on top of his head, in the middle of the bald spot, and averred that he harbored a thousand of 'em in there. Whatever they might be, he did not say; nor did Mr. Keyes say what he wanted to say, that they'd better stay there because they couldn't pick up much of a living in the aridity on the outside of Mr. Koshland's head.

"One, or two thousand years ahead—the idea—it's easy for me! Two or three thousand years backward for a jump—it's just as easy. Talk about your pal-in-drome—aint I one?"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Keyes, getting a little comfort by viewing the word as an epithet.

"'Madam, I'm Adam!' You see now, eh? Now that I'm so quick to show you!"

"Sure! It's the First Woman, following the Last Man."

"You're waking up. It's slow. But I have hopes. You're mumbling in your sleep."

"Well, what else would it be but an Eve story?"

Mr. Koshland tossed up his arms in a gesture of despair. "Gone to sleep again!'

"But it's got to be an Eve story!"

"Because she's another pal-in-drome—her name is—you think she has got to be signed on for that, eh? Don't you think nothing about anybody else but Eve, and she has been done to death? And where's the second-wife interest to come in unless there's children by the first wife to wean away the husband and get it so that the sacrifice is made? Or unless the second wife has a past to be shown up? And Eve had no past. She didn't even grow up. Keyes, don't you know the facts about your own relations, way back? Is it that a reporter on a newspaper don't have to know anything about facts?"

Mr. Keyes had opened his eyes in frank amazement. He had been giving Mr. Koshland grudging credit for knowing how to make candy and money, and the money was giving Mr. Keyes twice the pay he had been getting on a newspaper. But Mr. Koshland as a historian—well, Mr. Keyes would have laughed in his sleeves if his sleeves had not been rolled to his shoulders so that he could enjoy the summer salubriousness and get at his typewriter more conveniently.

"I ask you a plain question, easy answered," pursued Mr. Koshland with heat, not liking Mr. Keyes' expression, "and you look at me like I don't know all about Adam's first wife, and the trouble there was in the family before he was married to Eve."

"You're raving!" adventured the press-agent, unable to endure any more onslaughts on his journalistic omniscience.

MR. KOSHLAND set his fat hands on the arms of his chair and leaned low and far forward, and his posture and his bulging eyes made him look like a particularly indignant frog. "And you don't know about Lillie?"

Mr. Keyes said he didn't, and said so with derogatory emphasis.

"Perhaps in the next job you get after you have lost this one, which is lost already, you can make good if you tell 'em there is one thing you know. It's a thing I'll tell you!"

But Mr. Koshland sat back in his chair and sighed and shook his head, like a man who had started to climb a mountain and had given up the project in despair. Tackling this monumental ignorance was too much of a job! "No, you'd better not know it. As it is you win a prize for being what you are. But, yes, I will tell you so that you can see that a man like me has knowledge to give away and makes no account of it, while a man like you wants to sell something he don't have; it's a fine living you can go and make on the curb, if you aint called in a hurry to cover after selling short!"

He put up a pudgy forefinger: "Lillie, she was Adam's first wife. I say nothing against her. But there was trouble. I leave that as it is. What I know privately I keep to myself," declared Mr. Koshland, blending his generosity in giving away information, free of charge, with the generosity of friendly tact in handling a touchy matter. "But what's on the records, it's all right to speak about. After Adam got married the second time, Lillie, she used to come round in the night and scare the children.

"But this jabber to you gets me nothing," pursued the boss, plunging back to business with a snap. "It's for me to go ahead! I have to do it myself. 'Madam, I'm Adam!' It writes itself for him and Lillie! He slaps his chest and brags about himself, and the trouble starts! You see it?"

"It ought to be great stuff," agreed Mr. Keyes.

Mr. Koshland's eyes glistened. "You give me credit, eh?"

"I'll have to, boss. And I reckon I can see the drift, now that you have passed me the hunch. I've been playing the thing all along on the idea that there was only one woman. But if there was another besides Eve, then it's natural to assume there were still others, and—"

Mr. Koshland put up his open hand and sliced the air, remorselessly cutting off the suggestions that he saw on the way.

"Nix! I make clean pictures. That's me! There are too many scandals already on the releases without you and me going back into a scandal in our own family. She is a new woman, that first one. She starts to run Adam and the world. It's Thorna Poole for the part—sure it is!"

THE press-agent, in an agreeing mood, indorsed the suggestion. Miss Poole, at the climax of the world's destruction, in the sacrificial spirit of true womanhood, had lugged the overwhelmed Last Man on her shoulders for three hundred feet (of film) and had supported him on upstretched and sinewy arms for two hundred more film feet while smoke and flame and serpents wreathed around those arms; Miss Poole was perfectly wonted to snakes, having juggled certain lissome and lethargic pythons in a Ne Plus Ultra sideshow, besides shimmying with a dancing bear.

"She has the snakes still. There's her bear, old Nicodemus, that she will meet in the cave. She lives in the cave, and the rent is raised, or something, and she has to go and live in a new cave and has to evict the bear that lives there; and I guess the women, when they see that, will say that flat-hunting, tough as it is in these days, aint having to put out snakes and a bear before the phonograph and the rubber-plant can be lugged in—and that's why the picture will make 'em contented and forget some of their troubles—and that's half the battle in putting over a picture good and strong. And the title—we have it!" rattled on Mr. Koshland breathlessly. "And you see I have the picture writing itself so fast I can't keep up!"

He put his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat and surveyed Mr. Keyes with complacent superiority.

The boss had been a hard man to live with during the week that had been devoted to the thousand-years-ahead scenario. In this new and triumphant mood his personality was decidedly more engaging. Mr. Keyes had been quite willing to quit, considering what he had been going through in order to earn his salary. Now, Mr. Keyes, viewing the new good humor, was willing to hang on. And in the way of hanging on, he set his mental teeth into the thing, so to speak. Lively and energetic thinking in a crisis does bring results, if one is sufficiently desperate!

"By jiminy, boss, I see, and I'm cantering along with you neck and neck on the press stuff. But hold on!" He assumed an expression that was properly contrite and doleful. "I'm fired! You don't want it from me!"

"I gave you facts you didn't know—free, glad," declared Mr. Koshland. "And now when you can give me something, and you haven't given me nothing for a week, you dry up."

"I'll meet you halfway. Knowledge for knowledge!" Keyes assured him. "Then we'll part square, at any rate. Here's the dope! Don't you remember that fellow who went into the woods a few years ago—went in without clothes or tools or weapons—went in and made his way barehanded and fed himself, and all that, and come out clothed in skins? Sure, you remember him!"

Koshland shook his head. "I was in the candy business then," he said.

"Well, he went in, and the papers were full of the story. A killer for press-stuff. Now do you see?"

"You're telling *me*, now. Go ahead!" But Mr. Koshland was exhibiting lively interest.

"For press-stuff—before we start work on the picture—send in a woman to do the same trick! Cave-stuff! Like that woman probably had to do for herself before she hitched in with Adam. No hint at first that our dame is tied up in any way with a moving-picture proposition! Can't you see the headlines, boss?"

"Yes!" admitted Mr. Koshland; he added avidly: "Free!"

Full of raspberries and fraternal feeling, Nicodemus apologetically shuffled in at the door. Mr. Trask was frightened and cursed horribly.

"Sure, all free! They'll eat it up!"

"But what will the *woman* eat? For the screen play she does the cave-stuff in the studio, of course. But for the press-stuff it must be outdoors."

"Hish!" Mr. Keyes put his hand to the side of his mouth. "Fake it! Plant clothes, grub and gun and knife. It'll be easy. I know the right kind of a place. When I was a boy I lived up that way. It's named Misery Gore. It's all rocks and gorges and streams and woods. Nobody lives there. There's only two or three ways of getting into the place by passes through the rocks, unless you climb mountains; we can let her loose and keep out the rubbernecks. Do you need to have *cinch* spelled out any plainer than that?"

Mr. Koshland tried to hold himself down to a judicial air of reserve, wishing to keep Mr. Keyes in the strictly clipped-wing state. "I'll say this much; it's feasible!" he agreed. "Of course, it aint a new idea, seeing that the man has done it."

"But this is a *woman*—the interest will be twice as big."

"I'll admit that it may be a little more than feasible, seeing that it's a woman. You take my car and go bring Thorna Poole."

ON the way to fetch Miss Poole, Mr. Keyes stopped at the public library, desiring to post up on a lady to whom he referred familiarly as "Lillie" when he made inquiries of a considerably shocked attendant, who proceeded tartly to set him right. He discovered that Mr. Koshland had not been far out of the way in dealing with the high spots in Lilith's career. "But when it comes to putting the trimmings onto this thing," he assured himself, "I'll be the main lad on the top of the stepladder with my mouth full of tacks!"

When the "trimmings" had been hitched on, Mr. Koshland admitted that Mr. Keyes did have capabilities of his own. "But the big idea being mine, it's like I have the brains to own the store and hire you to dress the windows. It's nice pieces they have in the papers about her this morning."

Miss Poole's declaration of what she proposed to do to show a woman's up-to-date nature in this era of feminine assertiveness won plenty of space in the news-prints. Mr. Keyes fixed up the public declaration for the lady, who said privately that she would stand for anything provided it could be made certain that nobody could see her wearing clothes, after she had hopped off into the wilderness without garments. "And that aint as funny as it sounds, being unlike what most any lady would say," she stated. "But the duds and the eats must be planted for me, for I've got my health and my looks to take care of, now that I'm in the fillums. On the other hand, my professional reputation aint ever been smirched by a fake, and that reputation is twice as important now. But I know my limitations—and it's hard enough these days to get grub and clothes with cash, to say nothing of going after 'em with a stone hatchet."

The big idea on which Mr. Keyes hung all his trimmings was this: Miss Poole would drop from the apex of today right down through all the thousands of years and land on the bedrock of the primitive, and when Mr. Keyes said "*drop*," he meant just what he said.

MISS Poole arrived in the neighborhood of Misery Gore in a flying-machine, and the pilot maneuvered skillfully, and she dropped with a parachute into a small clearing, carefully located in advance, and where the cameras and newspaper men were waiting. She was garbed as an aviatrix and came down spick-and-span and smiling, and was caught in her progress and in her poses by stills and the cinema.

Mr. Koshland was the first to shake her hand when the billowing folds of the parachute had been pulled away from her. He slipped to her a folded paper that he had been palming. "As a friend and a well-wisher, I give you a hearty welcome," he declaimed; then he bent down to pull away a guy-cord and whispered: "It's all on the paper—map and marks where we planted the stuff. We did it last night. You needn't worry."

Under pretense of adjusting the hair beneath her cap, Miss Poole tucked the paper into her coiffure.

"As a friend and a well-wisher for this lady," stated Mr. Koshland, for the benefit of the lads with pads and pencils, and having already aired his knowledge of history, "I'll say that she is on the square to do as Lillie done, and she starts as Lillie herself was—only there aint any fig-leaves growing around here."

The bystanders exhibited plenty of interest.

"But as a friend I have picked these burdock leaves and fastened 'em together so she can be as Lillie was in the summer weather. And she will kill savage beasts and make herself skin clothes to show that she could live here in cold weather, too, if she didn't have to go home away from here pretty quick to—to—"

It was such a beautiful opportunity to slip in a word about Miss Poole's pressing professional engagement, to follow her essay at stone-ageing it, that Impresario Koshland almost choked when he shut off his speech and walked to Miss Poole with the primitive garment. He found his chance to whisper: "You'll see on the map where we have hitched Nicodemus in a raspberry patch. He's having such a good time eating berries that when you hit him in the back of the head he wont notice it, only to die happy."

Mr. Koshland felt that he could not afford to have the attendant publicists too greatly offended by Miss Poole's modest avoidance of the ultra-realistic in the career of Lilith. Therefore he appointed a committee to get busy and receive the lady's garments as they should be flung over the canvas screen behind which she retreated; he assured the gentlemen of the camera that they would be allowed to shoot at will when the lady came forth in her burdock attire.

"Miss Poole will also do an interpretative dance," explained Mr. Keyes, steadfastly intent on the trimmings of the affair. "Lilith about to plunge into the darkest ages! Lilith facing the dangers of the wilderness!"

In view of that promise, the newspaper men became expectantly and entirely absorbed in the affairs in the clearing that was just outside the fastnesses of the wilderness of Misery Gore.

RIGHT in the middle of the fastnesses, down in the bottom of the deepest gorge, Mr. Ravelo Trask was absorbed on his own hook. He was contending with a mystery that had split his placid life wide open and was causing him to marvel wildly what the blue blazes was happening in the world—and for him, as a recluse trapper for fifty years in that region, the world was bounded by the mountains of the Gore.

Anybody looking down into the gorge would have beheld a slouchy and mangy black bear sitting on a log, smoking a corncob pipe and surveying with grunts and moans of amazement and trepidation a heterogeneous collection of objects heaped on the ground.

The bear was Mr. Trask.

As a trapper, tamer and breeder of mink, fisher and their like, he had evolved an unique system of his own in making himself as much a part of the life of the region as possible; on his rounds he wore a bearskin and plodded on all fours a good part of the time, accompanied by two domesticated minks and a bobcat. He found that he was accepted by the general run of fur-bearing animals as a compatriot, rather than a death-dealing human being. An undisguised man would have precipitated an exodus of his means of livelihood; in his furry domino Mr. Trask was complacently tolerated by all, and his native companions served as decoys. He even masked his habitation, dwelling in a cozy little nook that resembled a boulder covered with brook mosses.

Mr. Trask, having made a business of following trails and detecting signs, knew the status quo of his own locality as an art-collector knows his canvases.

Mr. Koshland was more or less of an Indian in business, but he was far from having an Indian's traits in woodcraft, and his tracks and his clumsily marked hiding-places were open to an expert's view—as plain as a connoisseur of paintings would find vandal scratches across his choicest works. Therefore Mr. Trask, beginning his placid rounds of the day, had been successively interested, alarmed and stupefied by discoveries, and at last sat on the log and dragged on his pipe and made funny noises in his throat. He had ferreted faithfully and had collected from their hiding-places every rag and stitch of the cachéd clothing—a woman's clothing—tins of queerly named food, a gun, ammunition, a keen hunting-knife and any amount of assorted truck, including scented soap, tooth-paste, and other toilet appurtenances.

Considering the amazing collection that he had heaped in front of him in the bottom of the gorge and surveyed in a state of mind only one removed from panic, Mr. Trask gave merely languid side-glances at an airplane when it came whirring and whizzing into view over the distant tree-tops. He had never seen a flying-machine; he had never heard anything sensible regarding one, and would not have believed in any such thing, even if somebody had told him about it; his settled principle was—having been hoaxed in times past when he had gone to the nearest town to sell off his skins—never to believe in anything that was told to him about what was going on in the world at large.

"That thing, whatever it is, is simply and predickly more of it, and the same," he informed the goggling bobcat. "Only it don't come up to this here stuff for taking up my attention and interest

and making me wonder what's going to bust out next in this world."

He saw the parachute drop in its first terrifying thrust through the air, open its top and float downward. The bobcat got behind the log and squalled. "Yes, interesting enough probably, perviding I had time to give it attention and thought," stated Mr. Trask, turning his back on the spectacle and poking at the collection in front of him with the claws of his adoptive hind foot. "But this here is more ponifferous to me right at the present time. All I've got to say is this: that if they're distributing women and their fixings around in these parts, they haven't got the system ringdinkled up right; it's too hit-or-miss and scattering."

He gathered up all the stuff in his arms and went waddling down the gulch and disappeared in the mossy wart that served him for a home. "This here aint no kind of a shower that I want to be caught out in. I reckon I'll stay under kiver till it's over," he informed Nature, in general, as he stepped into sanctuary.

MISS Poole tripped about her prehistoric job after she had terpsichoreally interpreted Lilith's emotions, clad in her garb of leaves and holding a threatening rock in each hand. Everybody present assured her that her costume was very fetching.

"I'll tell you what, boss," said she to Mr. Koshland, passing a word in private before the plunge into the wilderness, "I aint going to snuff out old Nicodemus. What's the use? Let him enjoy life! The leaves is enough for togs—and they're all saying a good word for 'em."

"But unless you kill the savage beast and wear the skin when you show up to the world, the story aint no good," objected the employer. "And he aint no use, anyway. His teeth is gone, and he'll die pretty quick, so we aint destroying money."

"He has been my pet, and it would give me the wallopies to wear his skin. I wont kill him."

"But you've got to be the wild woman, and you're supposed to eat him, too. It makes the story," pleaded Mr. Koshland.

"I wont do it," insisted the lady. "I'm feeling wild enough to have my own way."

Miss Poole was still having her own way when black night filled all the crannies and gulches of Misery Gore with the opaque completeness of coal-tar in a bucket. She continued to be wild, too! She was much wilder than she had ever expected to be. And that way she was still having—the way of her own—had become a much muddled proposition as to routes and direction, because she had succumbed to an ecstasy of rage and had torn up her chart and stamped on the tatters.

What kind of a chart it was, according to her belief, was thoroughly understood by all the abashed little birds within hearing distance. In her strictly stone-age mood she had flung words at that chart as she would have heaved rocks at a viper. Instead of finding clothes and food and weapons, she had been finding only fresh incentives to invent further expletives to use in her summary of the general mental, moral and business qualifications of Mr. Henry Koshland. She decided that she was at that moment a prehistoric woman all right enough, in point of equipment, even if she had not really intended to go the limit in the matter. To say nothing of not being able to find a stitch of clothing or a morsel of food, she was not sure of even finding the solid earth in the stifling blackness. The earth, in that rugged country, had a queer way of dropping out from underfoot whenever she tried to walk.

Miss Poole arrived in the neighborhood of Misery Gore in a flying-machine and dropped with a parachute into a small clearing

A hearty and unexpected thunder-shower had banged a sunset salute and mixed pellets of hail in its downpour; the rain kept up during the evening. It was a hard night for a lady in a burdock-leaf costume. Furthermore, in the panic that always overtakes neophytes who are conscious of being lost in the wilderness, she had ripped through undergrowth without reflecting that burdock leaves will not stand really rough wear. Miss Poole came to have strong personal convictions in regard to a man who would turn her loose in the wilderness with a slip of paper for aid and a lettuce salad for garb.

She raised her voice and clamored in the night for Nicodemus.

Her intentions in regard to him were not well defined just then. She knew that she was wild enough to alter her opinions of him as a pet and to slay him for the pelt he wore, even if she were obliged to skin him with her teeth and a sharp rock. On the other hand, she would have been grateful for his companionship and knew that he would meekly serve as a foot-warmer if she could find him and snuggle up beside him. She reckoned that Nicodemus must be frightened and lonesome too. He was of the city as much as she.

She guessed right in regard to Nicodemus. He truly was frightened and lonesome when the tempest

(*Continued on page 134*)

The celebrated author of "The Forsyte Saga" and numerous other famous works, here contributes a fiction gem which has many scintillating facets.

Illustrated by H. Weston Taylor

The Smile

By JOHN GALSWORTHY

MR. JUSTICE BELLIVER, divested of wig, sat in the armchair of his retiring-room, at close of his day's work, twisting up one of his still dark eyebrows between his thumb and finger. He usually sat for ten minutes in this manner, reviewing the case in hand before throwing it off his mind till after dinner. His pepper-and-salt knees were crossed, and his other hand, thin, with darkish hair on it, rubbed them without seeming purpose. About sixty-five, and if not handsome, at least impressive, he still had on his face the somewhat dehumanized look of the last six hours. Owing to the pressure of divorce proceedings, he had been dissolving marriages all the week—it was not his general game, and he had rather enjoyed it for a change; but today there was a point of irritation in his mind, such as a hair unlocated causes in a mouth. He had just pronounced *decree nisi* in a suit where Counsel had made an appeal that, in spite of her guilt, the respondent should be allowed to keep the child of the marriage. In his judgment he had made it plain that no talk of temptation, no throwing of the blame on the co-respondent, was to the point; she was a married woman who had been false to her vows, and he had felt no hesitation in following the usual practice, giving custody of the child to the party not in error.

He had no doubt about his judgment, but he was uneasy, because he could not, as it were, put his finger on that vague spot of irritation. And, searching for it, his mental eye reviewed the figures of the parties: the petitioner, cold and well-dressed; the respondent, in black, perhaps twenty-six, slim, pretty, fair-haired, seated beside a tall, large woman with a full-blown face, also in black, and evidently her mother.

He rose impatiently, and, going to a drawer, took out some brushes and began brushing his gray hair vigorously.

Ah! He had it! Somebody had smiled while he was delivering judgment. His tongue had found the hair—a sort of contempt of court. But who—where? In the gallery—body of the court—Counsel's bench? No—no! That large woman with the full-blown face—the mother—she had smiled! Hardly the moment for a mother to smile; and the smile itself—his mental eye isolated it on those full lips and swimming blue eyes; it had a queer, concentrated meaning, a sort of threatening quizzicality, a—yes, altogether, a piece of infernal impertinence! If it had occurred again, he would have had the court cleared of—h'm—well!—a smile!

He opened his toilet cabinet and washed his face and hands, as if rubbing off a smear. Then, taking his top hat, with a few words to his attendant, he made his way out of the Law Courts. It was fine weather, and, beckoning up his chauffeur, he sent the car away—he would walk.

While he was turning out of Lincoln's Inn Fields into Long Acre, a closed car passed him, moving very slowly. Mr. Justice Belliver looked up. The window space was filled by a lady's face under a large black hat. So slowly was the car moving, that for almost half a minute the face, full-colored, full-blown, with blue swimming eyes, was turned toward him, and on the face was that smile. It seemed to travel up and down him, to quiz him from the soles of his boots to the top of his hat; it rested on his angry eyes, burrowed, dug into them with a clinging deviltry, annoying and puzzling him so intensely that he could not take his eyes off it. Men's glances are supposed sometimes to divest women of their clothes; this woman's smile divested Mr. Justice Belliver, not exactly of his clothes, but of his self-possession, self-importance, almost of his self-control. He was ashamed to stop, turn round or cross the road; he just walked and stood it, his nerves quivering, his face flushed; and all the time he could see that the woman was extremely pleased with the effect of her smile. Then the car suddenly speeded, and he was alone, using a most unjudicial word.

What was the meaning of it? He racked his brains to re-

He was awakened by voices. Two women were talking somewhere close to him. "And he doesn't know me from Eve—isn't it priceless? *He*—of all men!"

member the woman's name—it had been mentioned in the case; Mac—Mac—something—quite unfamiliar to him; and her face—no—unless—no, quite unknown!

Again he used the unjudicial word, and with the power that his life had given him, turned his mind to other things—almost.

Before taking his seat in court next morning, he perused the shorthand report of the case; the names of the parties conveyed nothing to him. Toward lunch-time, while he was pronouncing his second *decree nisi,* his eyes, roving over the court, were arrested by a large black hat in the front row of the gallery. Beneath it—yes!—that woman's face, and smiling! The impudence of it! By heaven, he would have her removed! Removed! He lowered his eyes, broke a pen angrily against his desk, and with an effort finished his judgment and adjourned the court.

He sat before his lunch without eating, enraged. At that distance, the smile, endowed as if with enchantment, had been more irritating, baffling, damnably quizzing than ever. It was such contempt of court as he had never known, and yet there was nothing to be done about it! He was exposed to her impudence whenever he sat in public, so long as she wished. Well, who cared? It was absurd—a smile! And yet—there was something behind that smile—it had some cursed meaning that he could not reach. Had he said anything foolish in his judgment yesterday? He took up the report a second time. Nothing! Nothing but what he would say again this minute; he agreed with every word of it! Well, one thing was clear, if he couldn't commit her for contempt of court, he must ignore her.

He attacked his risotto, nearly cold by now, drank his glass of claret; brushed his hair, put on his wig and again went into court.

When Counsel sat down after opening the new case, Mr. Justice Belliver saw in the gap made by the dropping of the gowned figure, that woman under her large black hat—smiling, with the same meaning deviltry, the same quizzing, burrowing seizure on his face. His stare, fierce for a moment, became grim and stony. He leaned back, gripping his chair with both hands. He had been on the point of saying: "If a certain person in court cannot behave with the respect due to justice, I shall have her removed."

Phew! What an escape! This was a question of will-power! One would see whether a woman could beat him at that! It was clear to him now that she was bent on a petty persecution. If that were so—he would see! And he did. For whenever his eyes in the business of the case were raised, there was that woman's face, and at once the smile broke out.

Never—not even after influenza—had it been so great a strain to keep his mind on the business of the court. When at last he adjourned, he beckoned the usher. He would point out the woman, give instructions for her exclusion.

"Yes, my Lord?"

"The ventilation was not all it might be this afternoon. See to it, will you?"

"Yes, my Lord."

And my Lord rose, and as he rose, the woman rose, and smiled.

Driving home that day, he sat back with his eyes closed. Not a particularly unimaginative man, he was unimaginative enough to see that he was making a fool of himself. The woman was annoying him in revenge for his judgment about her daughter's child, but if a judge had not the strength of mind to disregard such petty persecutions, he was not fit for his job! He smiled best, anyway, who smiled last! Yet, racking his brains for a way of smiling last, he could not find one.

Next morning he forced himself at once to scrutinize every corner of the court. No woman—no smile! She did not appear. The next day was Sunday. By Monday morning the matter had almost passed from his mind, leaving the unpleasant dent of a sinister dream. He was back in King's Bench, too, with his old work; and he reflected sardonically that no woman would put up with the boredom of Common Law cases for the pleasure of annoying him.

(*Continued on page 116*)

Illustrated by Gustavus C. Widney

The inimitable Mr. Wodehouse is always good fun—as witness "A Very Shy Gentleman," "Three Men and a Maid" and other pleasant memories. And this story is a real contribution to the gayety of gods and men and golfers.

The Plus Fours

By Pelham Grenville Wodehouse

For the first time in his life, he thought, he looked like a man who could play golf.

"AFTER all," said the young man, "golf is only a game." He spoke bitterly and with the air of one who has been following a train of thought. He had come into the smoking-room of the clubhouse in low spirits at the dusky close of a November evening, and for some minutes had been sitting, silent and moody, staring at the log fire.

"Merely a pastime," said the young man.

The Oldest Member, nodding in his armchair, stiffened with horror and glanced quickly over his shoulder to make sure that none of the waiters had heard these terrible words.

"Can this be George William Pennefather speaking!" he said reproachfully. "My boy, you are not yourself."

The young man flushed a little beneath his tan; for he had had a good upbringing and was not bad at heart.

"Perhaps I ought not to have gone quite so far as that," he admitted. "I was only thinking that a fellow's got no right, just because he happens to have come on a bit in his form lately, to treat a fellow as if a fellow was a leper or something."

The Oldest Member's face cleared, and he breathed a relieved sigh.

"Ah! I see," he said. "You spoke hastily and in a sudden fit of pique because something upset you out on the links today. Tell me all. Let me see, you were playing with Nathaniel Frisby this afternoon, were you not? I gather that he beat you."

"Yes, he did—giving me a third. But it isn't being beaten that I mind. What I object to is having the blighter behave as if he were a sort of champion condescending to a mere mortal. Dash it, it seemed to bore him, playing with me. Every time I sliced off the tee, he looked at me as if I were a painful ordeal. Twice when I was having a bit of trouble in the bushes, I caught him yawning. And after we had finished, he started talking about what a good game croquet was, and he wondered more people didn't take it up. And it's only a month or so ago that I could play the man level."

The Oldest Member shook his snowy head sadly.

"There is nothing to be done about it," he said. "We can only hope that the poison will in time work its way out of the man's system. Sudden success at golf is like the sudden acquisition of wealth. It is apt to unsettle and deteriorate the character. And, as it comes almost miraculously, so only a miracle can effect a cure. The best advice I can give you is to refrain from playing with Nathaniel Frisby till you can keep your tee-shots straight."

"Oh, but don't run away with the idea that I wasn't pretty good off the tee this afternoon," said the young man. "I should like to describe to you the shot I did on the——"

"Meanwhile," proceeded the Oldest Member, "I will relate to you a little story which bears on what I have been saying."

"From the very moment I addressed the ball——"

"It is the story of two loving hearts temporarily estranged owing to the sudden and unforeseen proficiency of one of the couple——"

"I waggled quickly and strongly, like Duncan. Then, swinging smoothly back, rather in the Vardon manner——"

"But as I see," said the Oldest Member, "that you are all impatience for me to begin, I will do so without further preamble."

TO the philosophical student of golf like myself (said the Oldest Member), perhaps the most outstanding virtue of this noble pursuit is the fact that it is a medicine for the soul. Its

great service to humanity is that it teaches human beings that, whatever petty triumphs they may have achieved in other walks of life, they are after all merely human. It acts as a corrective against sinful pride. I attribute the insane arrogance of the later Roman emperors almost entirely to the fact that, never having played golf, they never knew that strange, chastening humility which is engendered by a topped chip-shot. If Cleopatra had been outed in the first round of the Ladies' Singles, we should have heard a lot less of her proud imperiousness.

And coming down to modern times, it was undoubtedly Wallace Chesney's rotten golf that kept him the nice, unspoiled fellow he was. For in every other respect he had everything in the world calculated to make a man conceited and arrogant. He was the best-looking man for miles around; his health was perfect; and in addition to this he was rich; he danced, rode, played bridge and polo with equal skill; and he was engaged to be married to Charlotte Dix. And when you saw Charlotte Dix, you realized that being engaged to her would by itself have been quite enough luck for any one man.

But Wallace, as I say, despite all his advantages, was a thoroughly nice, modest young fellow. And I attribute this to the fact that, while one of the keenest golfers in the club, he was also one of the worst players. Indeed, Charlotte Dix used to say to me in his presence that she could not understand why people paid money to go to the circus when by merely walking over the brow of a hill they could watch Wallace Chesney trying to get out of the bunker by the eleventh green. Wallace took the gibe with perfect good-humor, for there was a delightful camaraderie between them which robbed it of any sting. Often at lunch in the clubhouse I used to hear him and Charlotte planning the handicapping details of a proposed match between Wallace and a nonexistent cripple whom Charlotte claimed to have discovered in the village—it being agreed finally that he should accept three bisques from the cripple, but that, if the latter ever recovered the use of his arms, Wallace should get a stroke a hole.

In short, a thoroughly happy and united young couple! Two hearts, if I may coin an expression, that beat as one.

I would not have you misjudge Wallace Chesney. I may have given you the impression that his attitude toward golf was light and frivolous, but this was not the case. As I have said, he was one of the keenest members of the club. Love made him receive the joshing of his fiancée in the kindly spirit in which it was meant, but at heart he was as earnest as you could wish. He practiced early and late; he bought golf-books; and the mere sight of a patent club of any description acted on him like catnip on a cat. I remember remonstrating with him on the occasion of his purchasing a wooden-faced driving-mashie which weighed about two pounds and was, taking it for all in all, as foul an instrument as ever came out of the workshop of a clubmaker who, when a baby, had been dropped on the head by his nurse.

"I know, I know," he said, when I had finished indicating some of the weapon's more obvious defects. "But the point is, I believe in it. It gives me confidence. I don't believe you could slice with a thing like that if you tried."

Confidence! That was what Wallace Chesney lacked; and that, as he saw it, was the prime grand secret of golf. Like an alchemist on the track of the Philosopher's Stone, he was forever seeking for something which would really give him confidence. I recollect that he even tried repeating to himself fifty times every morning the words: "Every day in every way I grow better and better." This, however, proved such a black lie that he gave it up. The fact is, the man was a visionary, and it is to autohypnosis of some kind that I attribute the extraordinary change that came over him at the beginning of his third season.

"Quick!" she said. "Pop back into the changing-room before I have to look again, and remove the fancy dress."

You may have noticed in your perambulations about the city a shop bearing above its door and upon its windows the legend, *"Carlock Bros., Secondhand Clothiers"*—a statement which is borne out by endless vistas seen through the door of every variety of what is technically known as Gents' Wear. But the Brothers Carlock, though their main stock in trade is garments which have been rejected by their owners for one reason or another, do not confine their dealings to Gents' Wear. The place is a museum of derelict goods of every description. You can get a secondhand revolver there, or a secondhand sword, or a secondhand umbrella. You can do a cheap deal in field-glasses, trunks, dog-collars, canes, photograph frames, attaché cases, and bowls for goldfish. And on the bright spring morning when Wallace Chesney happened to pass by, there was exhibited in the window a putter of such preëminently lunatic design that he stopped dead as if he had run into an invisible wall, and then, panting like an overwrought fish, charged in through the door.

The shop was full of the Carlock family, somber-eyed, smileless men with purposeful expressions; and two of these, instantly descending upon Wallace Chesney like leopards, began in swift silence to thrust him into a suit of yellow tweed. Having worked the coat

"Good heavens!" he cried. "I'm on fire." "That's what I wanted to mention," said Peter.

over his shoulders with a shoe-horn, they stood back to watch the effect.

"A beautiful fit," announced Alfred Carlock.

"A little snug under the arms," said his brother Irving. "But that'll give."

"The warmth of the body will make it give," said Alfred.

"Or maybe you'll lose weight in the summer," said Irving.

Wallace, when he had struggled out of the coat and was able to breathe, said that he had come in to buy a putter. Alfred thereupon sold him the putter, a dog-collar and a set of studs, and Irving sold him a fireman's helmet; and he was about to leave when their elder brother Lou, who had just finished fitting out another customer (who had come in to buy a cap) with two pairs of trousers and a miniature aquarium for keeping newts in, saw that business was in progress and strolled up. His fathomless eye rested on Wallace, who was toying feebly with the putter.

"You play golf?" asked Lou. "Then looka here!"

He dived into an alleyway of dead clothing, dug for a moment, and emerged with something at the sight of which Wallace Chesney, hardened golfer that he was, blenched and threw up an arm defensively.

"No, no!" he cried.

The object which Lou Carlock was waving insinuatingly before his eyes was a pair of those golfing-breeches which are technically known as "plus fours." A player of two years' standing, Wallace Chesney was not unfamiliar with plus fours—all the club cracks wore them; but he had never seen plus fours like these. What might be termed the main *motif* of the fabric was a curious vivid pink, and with this to work on, the architect had let his imagination run free and had produced so much variety in the way of chessboard squares of white, yellow, violet and green that the eye swam as it looked upon them.

"These were made to measure for Sandy McHoots, the Open Champion," said Lou, stroking the left leg lovingly. "But he sent 'em back for some reason or other."

"Perhaps they frightened the children," said Wallace, recollecting having heard that Mr. McHoots was a married man.

"They'll fit you nice," said Lou.

"Sure they'll fit him nice," said Alfred warmly.

"Why, just take a look at yourself in the glass," said Irving, "and see if they don't fit you nice."

And, as one who wakes from a trance, Wallace discovered that his lower limbs were now encased in the prismatic garment. At what point in the proceedings the brethren had slipped them on him, he could not have said. But he was undeniably in.

Wallace looked in the glass. For a moment, as he eyed his reflection, sheer horror gripped him. Then suddenly, as he gazed, he became aware that his first feelings were changing. The initial shock over, he was becoming calmer. He waggled his right leg with a certain *sang froid*.

There is a certain passage in the works of the poet Pope with which you may be familiar. It runs as follows:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Even so was it with Wallace Chesney and these plus fours. At first he had recoiled from them as any decent-minded man would have done. Then, after a while, almost abruptly he found himself in the grip of a new emotion. After an unsuccessful attempt to analyze this, he suddenly got it. Amazing as it may seem, it was pleasure that he felt. He caught his eye in the mirror, and it was smirking. Now that the things were actually on, by Hutchison, they didn't look half bad. By Braid, they didn't! There was a sort of something about them. Take away that expanse of bare leg with its unsightly sock-suspender, and substitute a woolly stocking, and you would have the lower section of a golfer. For the first time in his life, he thought, he looked like a man who could play golf.

There came to him an odd sensation of masterful-

"I'm too good," he admitted. "Everybody's jealous of me. Nobody loves me."

ness. He was still holding the putter, and now he swung it up above his shoulder. A fine swing, all lissomeness and supple grace, quite different from any swing he had ever done before.

Wallace Chesney gasped. He knew that at last he had discovered that prime grand secret of golf for which he had searched so long. It was the costume that did it. All you had to do was wear plus fours. He had always hitherto played in gray flannel trousers. Naturally, he had not been able to do himself justice. Golf required an easy dash, and how could you be easily dashing in concertina-shaped trousers with a patch on the knee? He saw now—what he had never seen before—that it was not because they were crack players that crack players wore plus fours; it was because they wore plus fours that they were crack players. And these plus fours had been the property of an Open Champion. Wallace Chesney's bosom swelled, and he was filled with joy—with excitement—with confidence. Yes, for the first time in his golfing life, he felt really confident.

True, the things might have been a shade less gaudy, they might perhaps have hit the eye with a slightly less violent punch: but what of that? True, again, he could scarcely hope to avoid the censure of his clubmates when he appeared like this on the links: but what of *that?* His clubmates must set their teeth and learn to bear these plus fours like men. That was what Wallace Chesney thought about it. If they did not like his plus fours, let them go and play golf somewhere else.

"How much?" he muttered thickly. And the Brothers Carlock clustered grimly around with notebooks and pencils.

In predicting a stormy reception for his new apparel, Wallace Chesney had not been unduly pessimistic. The moment he entered the clubhouse, Disaffection reared its ugly head. Friends of years standing called loudly for the Committee, and there was a small and vehement party of the left wing, headed by Raymond Gandle, who was an artist by profession and consequently had a sensitive eye, which advocated the tearing off and public burial of the obnoxious garment. But, prepared as he had been for some such demonstration on the part of the coarser-minded, Wallace had hoped for better things when he should meet Charlotte Dix, the girl who loved him. Charlotte, he had supposed, would understand and sympathize.

"Send a caddie to the clubhouse to fetch my gray flannel trousers," he whispered tensely.

"Come, Wallace," I said. "Charlotte, I am sure, is just as fond of you as ever."

Instead of which, she uttered a piercing cry and staggered to a bench, whence a moment later she delivered her ultimatum.

"Quick!" she said. "Before I have to look again."

"What do you mean?"

"Pop straight back into the changing-room while I've got my eyes shut, and remove the fancy dress."

"What's wrong with them?"

"Darling," said Charlotte, "I think it's sweet and patriotic of you to be proud of your cycling-club colors or whatever they are, but you mustn't wear them on the links. It will unsettle the caddies."

"They *are* a trifle on the bright side," admitted Wallace. "But it helps my game, wearing them. I was trying a few practice-shots just now, and I couldn't go wrong. Slammed the ball on the meat every time. They inspire me, if you know what I mean. Come on, let's be starting."

Charlotte opened her eyes incredulously.

"You can't seriously mean that you're really going to *play* in—those? It's against the rules. There must be a rule somewhere in the book against coming out looking like a sunset. Wont you go and burn them for my sake?"

"But I tell you they give me confidence. I sort of squint down at them when I'm addressing the ball, and I feel like a pro."

"Then the only thing to do is for me to play you for them. Come on, Wally, be a sportsman. I'll give you a half and play you for the whole outfit—the breeches, the red jacket, the little cap, and the belt with the snake's-head buckle. I'm sure all those things must have gone with the breeches. Is it a bargain?"

Strolling on the clubhouse terrace some two hours later, Raymond Gandle encountered Charlotte and Wallace coming up from the eighteenth green.

"Just the girl I wanted to see," said Raymond. "Miss Dix, I represent a select committee of my fellow-members, and I have come to ask you on their behalf to use the influence of a good woman to induce Wally to destroy those plus fours of his, which we all consider nothing short of Bolshevik propaganda and a menace to the public weal. May I rely on you?" (*Continued on page 112*)

Illustrated by R. L. Lambdin

"I can get to sleep after I down this," he said by way of thanks. The old lady nodded her sympathy as she glanced at the clock.

The Drop-in

By Hal G. Evarts

The distinguished author of "The Yellow Horde," "The Settling of the Sage" and other noted novels, has here written a vividly dramatic story of the modern West which you will find engrossing indeed.

A GROUP of four men on the veranda of the frame hotel constituted the sole evidence of life or human habitation. A stranger rendering snap judgment would have proclaimed Marsten a deserted mining-camp—whereas in reality it was not dead but merely wrapped in the lethargic inactivity of an inland county-seat town on a glaring Sunday afternoon.

The windows of the dozen buildings blinked lifelessly upon the dusty main thoroughfare. Off to the south the waves of gray sage rolled away to the far horizon. The white threads traversing the baked flats were roads converging on the town. On the north the hills rose green and cool. A little river poured from the mouth of a valley opening out back of the town, and a straggling line of cottonwoods marked the course of the stream across the flats.

A figure emerged from the fringe of trees and plodded toward the town.

"One of that outfit of sage-brushers that pulled in this morning and made camp on the creek," commented Fletcher, the hotel proprietor.

The others nodded and regarded the approaching pedestrian in silence. With three of the group—the proprietor of the general store, the hotelkeeper and the sheriff—this Sunday afternoon gathering was established custom. The fourth man was a newcomer. The pedestrian reached the raised board sidewalk that bordered the main street, his footsteps echoing hollowly as he headed for the group of men on the hotel porch. Accosting them, he made abrupt inquiry as to the possibility of purchasing supplies in Marsten on Sunday afternoon. Babson, the merchant, hitched his heavy frame from his chair and ambled across the street with the prospective customer to the general store.

"Likely he's wanting a quarter's worth of something Bob hasn't got in stock," Fletcher prophesied.

"And again, he may spring himself and purchase a hundred-dollar bill of goods," the sheriff stated. "No man can forecast the possibilities of a drop-in. He can count on his regular run of trade almost to a penny, after years of serving local folks across the counter; but a drop-in just can't be reckoned with in advance."

The hotelkeeper grinned and rolled an eye at the outsider.

"That's Turner's pet theory of life," he explained. "All things hinge on the drop-in. Turner, here, is the sheriff," he amplified, "and he chalks up his successes or failures to the drop-in."

The stranger was a reticent man and had contributed but little to the conversation. He now accorded Turner his close attention, as if estimating the caliber of the man who was sheriff of the county. Babson rejoined the group as the chance customer passed back down the street with his purchases. The sheriff reverted to his theory, addressing himself to the newcomer.

"And why not?" he demanded. "Mr. Ross will bear me out." The newcomer Ross nodded encouragement, and Turner stated

his thesis. The drop-in, he insisted, constituted the unknown element in every man's operations, the accidental speck which drops into the elaborately planned cogwheel of all mortal schemes and operates either to facilitate or to retard them, the unknown quantity which cannot be discounted in advance.

"He's the chance factor in every man's business," the sheriff elaborated. "The unexpected transient that drops in to brighten the business day by leaving outside dollars in the till; a stray passer-by who drops a chance remark which prevents the consummation of a sale."

Whenever the sheriff enlarged upon this favorite theme, it was inevitable that he would soon narrow it down to the manner in which it applied to his own profession; for Turner deemed the drop-in responsible for the early downfall of the criminally inclined. A crime might be planned to the most minute detail, he explained, the ground covered a dozen times and every element of chance eliminated. Then, at the psychological moment, the drop-in would saunter across the stage—a hobo crawling from the rods of a freight-car in the railroad yards, a belated reveler straying homeward along some darkened thoroughfare, the man who returned to his office at night for the first time in a dozen years, the loving couple spooning in the shadow of the schoolhouse.

"If you find it so easy to unravel a well-planned crime," said Ross, "then the average case, committed without forethought, would be quite simple."

"Queer about that," Turner observed. "The cleanest get-aways occur in the case of unpremeditated acts—a haphazard homicide or a robbery pulled off on the spur of the moment. The signs are disjointed and don't lead anywhere in particular. The trail shows incoherencies, so to speak, patterned on the thoughts and actions of the man who left it after he'd realized that he was in considerable of a mess. The man on his track is handicapped by trying to reason out the next move of a human in a normal frame of mind. Even if you pick him up, it's a ten-to-one shot against conviction. The evidence shows so many apparent inconsistencies that the jury, thinking along normal lines, just can't conceive of a man's acting up thataway."

Ross nodded. "And a carefully planned affair," he encouraged, "what about that sort?"

"Every move dovetails into the next as natural as you please. Instead of a scattered pattern of inconsistencies, like a man leaves when he's in a panic, there's a sort of sequence of thought, and one logical mind can follow the progress of another. If you don't dwell too much on the obvious,—which you don't need to, for it'll speak for itself in any event,—but instead hunt for the bug under the chip, you'll most likely uncover it. With a scatter-brained misdeed, one more loose end doesn't signify much, for loose ends are the rule; but with a carefully thought-out affair, just one little flea-bit accident—one which no human ingenuity can foresee in advance—looms up big and operates to everlastingly cinch a man. The drop-in will down him sure."

The four men sat on in silence. Ross waited for the heat to lift before resuming his journey. Most men would have chafed against delay, but time meant nothing to Ross. The gray walls which had shut him off from the world for the better part of two decades had schooled him in patience. He pondered the substance of the sheriff's discourse. Was this oldish officer merely a pedantic theorist, or was he capable of a practical application of his theory?

Ross knew something of the path of the wrongdoer. As a boy he had schooled himself in petty thefts and had escaped detection. Later he had planned the robbery of the little

Then a sudden report jarred his eardrums, and a brilliant flame seemed to spurt straight for his eyes.

country bank for which he worked, and had planted evidence which would fasten the deed on a dissolute old fellow who lived on the outskirts of the town. But this disreputable character chanced to be in jail in a neighboring city, and Ross had been caught with mask and gun. The general sentiment of the bank's officials had tended toward leniency in view of the culprit's youth; but one director, a youngish farmer with sternly puritanical views, had turned the wrath of the righteous man upon the evildoer, and his representations had resulted in a sentence of twenty years for bank robbery. Without influence and lacking friends to bring his case before parole- and pardon-boards, Ross had served eighteen years; and through them all he had nursed a settled conviction that his plight was attributable to one man's interfering righteousness rather than to his own misdeed.

A cool breeze stole down the slope of the hills and lifted the oppressive blanket of heat. Ross picked up his battered suitcase and plodded along the road leading up the valley behind the town. He rounded a bend and passed from sight and from the thoughts of the three men on the hotel porch.

OVER a year later Ross sat in a little cabin a dozen miles up the valley. The dim rays of a kerosene lamp flickered down across a face drawn and furrowed by pain. Ross slumped forward in his chair, his elbows resting on the table to support his head. A whistling breath was expelled between set teeth; the sound, slight as it was, proved sufficient to reach the ears of the little old lady across the table, and Aunty Hodges looked up from her reading and clucked with ready sympathy. Presently the man rose and turned to his room.

There would be no more sound in the house that night. Ross had made it clear that the least noise or confusion, even the soft opening of his door to inquire as to his welfare, served only to bring on a recurrence of the pain. Quiet—absolute quiet; that was all he required to fight off an attack.

These spells always left Ross weak and faint, and he frequently felt the need of black coffee to strengthen him after one had passed. Aunty Hodges banked the fire in the kitchen range and left a pot of coffee to simmer on the back of it. Before retiring, she wound the clock on the mantleshelf, noting that the hands indicated eight-twenty-two.

Ross had thrown himself face down upon the bed after removing his shoes. Anyone glancing in upon him would have concluded that a stupor had brought partial relief from the pain. But the soft closing of Aunty Hodges' door seemed to revive him, and he rose and thrust an arm beneath his mattress. His groping fingers touched cold steel and recoiled from the contact, then persisted in their search for an article of different texture, and were eventually withdrawn, bringing forth a pair of moccasins. Donning these, Ross dropped from his open window and followed the ranch lane to the point where it led into the valley road. He struck a steady swinging jog-trot and headed upcountry. The road clung to the left-hand flank of the valley, skirting the base of a long spur that jutted out from the main mass of the hills. On the downhill side of the road the bottom-lands sloped away to the river; a few twinkling lights marked the sites of cabins along the course of the stream. Beyond these loomed the bulk of the hills on the far side of the valley.

The road reached the point of the outcropping spur, rounded it and turned back upon itself in a hairpin-bend along the opposite base. Something over two miles beyond this point the main thoroughfare looped back in another bend. A ranch-lane branched off toward a lighted window, the first house on the uphill side of the road. Aunty Hodges' place, situated in a similar notch, was but two miles in a straight line across the backbone of the spur; yet Ross had traveled nearly five miles by the more roundabout level course, covering the distance in less than an hour with his swinging stride.

He turned off on the branching lane and took shelter in a clump of bushes twenty yards from the window. The lane led on past the outbuildings and followed the course of a tiny creek that tumbled from the higher hills to the river. This extension of the lane led to a homestead cabin nestling in an open meadow two miles up the creek.

The lighted window served as a frame for the head and shoulders of a man whose impassive, thin-lipped countenance seemed in absolute harmony with the plain severity of the room. Perhaps the most pretentious house in the valley, its interior reflected the life of the occupant. The walls were quite unadorned by pictures or other ornaments, as the floors were devoid of rugs; not a single homelike touch of warmth or coziness.

That was quite in keeping with the owner's whole theory of life, Ross reflected. Jonas Gregory was not the man to squander his dollars for such unessential vanities, or even to permit the installation of any costless trinkets. Owning the bulk of the best land in the valley, it was typical that he should live on this rocky sidehill piece himself, the poorest of all his holdings, and rent the rest to good advantage. There was no dog to raise its voice and apprise Gregory of the skulker outside in the bush, for the scraps which would be required to keep life in a dog could be far better employed in putting fat on a hog.

A shadow momentarily dimmed the window, and a girl crossed to the table and sat down half-facing Gregory, a girl whose charm was so essentially feminine that her presence in that setting of cold simplicity seemed highly incongruous. Mildred Trainor's father, somewhat improvident during his lifetime, had sought to rectify matters on his deathbed by leaving his small affairs in the hands of a capable cousin to administer for his girl. And Gregory had willed that his ward should marry a middle-aged man of his own choosing, stern, frugal and hard-working. But Millie Trainor, isolated in this comfortless habitation, had striven against this and had found one human link connecting her with youth and love and life as she had once known it—all these personified by the young homesteader whose cabin nestled up the creek and who rode so frequently through the lane.

All of this mattered nothing to the man who lurked outside except in so far as it concerned his own immediate plans. Ross divided his attention between the house and the lane. He listened intently, and his eyes sought to pierce the obscurity beyond the corrals. It was apparent that he expected a possible interruption from that quarter.

Gregory addressed the girl; and his voice, precise and passionless, matched the impassivity of his face. Ross was familiar with the substance of the discourse, having frequently listened in before; and Gregory's text was ever the same.

"He's a loafer and a waster," Gregory proclaimed; and Ross knew he referred to young Matt Caulkins, who lived up the creek. "Riding the hills when he should be at some honest work!"

"The Major pays him two thousand dollars a season for guiding him," the girl defended. "That's more than the best of your renters makes in a solid year."

"Money so gained shall not profit a man," Gregory stated.

They had covered this ground frequently before, and the girl was not impressed by his dollar-righteousness.

An owl raised its voice from down behind the corrals, and Ross crouched deeper into the sheltering bushes, his eyes trained on the spot from which the hoot had sounded. Presently the girl rose, busied herself for a moment in the kitchen, and slipped quietly from the back door. Ross knew that somewhere near the corrals she had met the man who was the subject of the recent controversy. Her uncle read on undisturbed, and in less than ten minutes she had returned to the house.

ROSS waited only to make sure Caulkins had departed before leaving his hiding place. Instead of returning by the road, he headed up the side of the spur. The timber had been cut from the lower slopes, and a heavy second-growth had sprung up to cover the scars. He made his way through this, then veered to the left toward a pine-snag that loomed against the sky, tacked back toward an outcropping ledge of rocks, and from that point laid his course for a lone spruce that stood sky-lined on the rims above. These landmarks had served to guide his footsteps on many another night. Once over the rims, he struck an old game-trail that led through the timber on the mile-wide flat-top of the spur, an ancient crossing worn by countless hoofs in the days when game had ranged the lower country.

Ross paused in his stride as a faint report sounded from far back in the hills. He had heard these reports rather frequently of late, and always at night. A rumor, emanating from Jonas Gregory, held Matt Caulkins responsible for these shots; too shiftless even to hunt for game, he was said to set spring-guns on the trails in defiance of the law. Gregory had twice reported his suspicions to the sheriff, but in lieu of more convincing proof, that officer had declined to move against Caulkins on such flimsy evidence as the sound of occasional rifle-shots in the hills at night.

Ross dropped down the far slope of the spur and entered the window he had left some hours before. He removed the moccasins and thrust them beneath the mattress. When he entered the main room, the hands of the clock pointed to eleven-fifteen, and with the light of a flickering match he turned them back to nine fifty-five, applied the match to the lamp-wick and knocked

"Oh, do something!" she begged. "Everybody is against Matt."

on Aunty Hodges' door. She found him seated, his head propped in his hands, and in five minutes she placed a cup of steaming coffee before him.

"I can get to sleep after I down this," he said by way of thanks. "It's the only thing that seems to help."

The old lady nodded her sympathy as she glanced at the clock, reflecting that the attack had lasted nearly two hours. She left him sipping the scalding coffee, and returned to her room. Shortly thereafter, Ross reset the clock and sought his bed.

The following day, just as Ross prepared to return from the field for the noon-hour, two men rode past on the valley road. Matt Caulkins waved a casual greeting to the man in the field. Ross knew that the small, oldish man who rode with Caulkins was the Major, of whom the girl had spoken the previous night. It was said that the Major was interested in the most ridiculous trivialities, that he would sit all day beside an anthill and watch the industrious colonists at work. He had been known to revisit a bird's nest every day for two weeks to note the growth and development of the fledglings. And for accompanying him through the hills on such missions as these, he paid Matt Caulkins an absurdly high price. Some had pointed out where he could effect a substantial saving by employing them at half the figure, but the Major had declined on the ground that Caulkins, being rather well versed in such matters himself, was consequently valuable as an assistant.

During the noon meal Aunty Hodges discussed the feud between Gregory and young Matt Caulkins. The valley had become more strictly a small-farming community than was typical of the surrounding country as a whole, where big outfits were the rule, and valley dwellers were well-posted on all their neighbors' affairs. The little old lady had small respect for Jonas Gregory's outlook upon life, but Ross offered a mild defense of the man's stand in regard to his ward.

"He's a just man, Gregory is," he said, "and a wise one. The girl's not of age, and too young to decide for herself. Gregory will never do anything but what is absolutely right."

"Oh, no, he'll never do a wrong thing in his life—or a human one," Aunty Hodges stated. "Always right and righteous, always harsh and hard; that's Jonas! Don't I know him, though? Matt's a nice boy. He's a human being, and Jonas is a frozen conscience. Millie will be of age in a few more months, and then she can do as she likes."

"But Mr. Gregory has her best interests at heart," Ross insisted. "He's a man that makes very few mistakes in judgment."

It was well known that Ross cherished a profound respect for all that Jonas Gregory stood for in the world. On several occasions, when others had mentioned Gregory in disparaging vein, Ross had spoken up in his defense.

WHEN Ross returned to the field, he performed his work mechanically, his mind occupied with the one thing which had become the guiding factor of his nature.

Every human mind must have some point or purpose that furnishes an interest in life. The most aimless drifter cherishes some fond hope or desire, no matter how slender the chance of attainment; for the human brain, in order to carry on, must have some goal. Ross had found his incentive in hate, the desire to exact the penalty from the man he deemed responsible for his wrecked ambitions. This thought had sustained him through the years and supplied an objective upon which to hang his thoughts.

His plans were now complete, and he checked them over to discover a possible flaw in his reckoning, but failed to uncover a single weak link. He had planned well. His very existence had been forgotten through the years. His release had been a matter of so little importance that the press had failed to comment upon it. Instead of returning to the village of his youth, he had learned by roundabout inquiries that the one man whom he planned to meet again had long since moved to a far locality where land was cheap. Ross had not sought him out at once, but had tramped the country for a year, living an outdoor life and learning the duties of a farm-hand. The prison pallor had been replaced by a coat of rich tan by the time he had come to the valley and found a place on the Aunty Hodges farm. His true identity had been lost long since, and he had built up a reputation as a steady, plodding farm laborer. From the very first he had been subject to these night attacks which furnished opportunity for him to prowl the countryside. The years had changed him, and his face had failed to stir even a flicker of recognition in Jonas Gregory. No living soul suspected the enmity he cherished toward the man; on the contrary, Ross had established the idea that he entertained a profound respect for Gregory. The feud between Caulkins and Gregory helped his purpose. He could not have asked a better stage-setting. Soon now—perhaps in a week or possibly not for a period of months; it mattered little to Ross—Jonas Gregory would discover the identity of the owl that hooted from the corrals and summoned the girl from the house three or four nights a week. Discovery would mean an actual fight, or at least an intensification of the present ill-feeling between the two. Gossip would speed word of the affair throughout the valley. Then Ross would strike.

Since that first meeting with the sheriff on the hotel porch, Ross had weighed every possibility, endeavoring to eliminate that chance element which the sheriff designated as the "drop-in." He had faithfully studied the habits of every neighbor; yet even with this knowledge at his command, he had on several occasions run afoul of the drop-in, personified by neighbors straying from their regular ways. In each instance he had managed to conceal himself in the brush by the roadside and escape detection, but the margin had been too narrow for comfort.

The sheriff had been right. One slip would be fatal to his plans. If he were seen and recognized, then that strange malady which clutched him on certain evenings would loom up as a very apparent deception and rouse the suspicion that he had prowled the valley for no good purpose on a score of nights. For another month Ross waited patiently. Several times he heard the report of a rifle from the hills at night; and by day, as he worked in the field, he practiced the hoot of an owl.

EVENTUALLY there came a day when the valley was abuzz with the news that Gregory had discovered Matt Caulkins and Millie Trainor trysting in the shadows an hour after nightfall. There had been a rather trying scene, the gossip went, and Jonas had threatened to apply a blacksnake whip to Matt Caulkins if ever he set foot upon the Gregory place again. This affair fitted in even more admirably than Ross had hoped. Now was his time, while the countryside speculated upon the outcome.

Some days after the occurrence, Caulkins rode down the valley in midafternoon. Ross noted that his rifle reposed in its usual place in the saddle-scabbard. If Caulkins followed his regular custom, he would return in the evening, for it was seldom that he stayed in Marsten overnight on his infrequent trips to town. A half-hour after dark Ross was seized by one of his periodical attacks. Aunty Hodges retired at twelve minutes past eight—and at eight-fifteen Ross dropped from his window. On this occasion he had removed another article from his secret cache beneath the mattress, a rifle of the same make and caliber as the one Matt Caulkins carried on his rambles through the hills.

Except for one point, upon which he must make doubly sure, Ross would have taken the route across the spur; but there was a possibility that Caulkins, traveling at a swifter pace on his horse, might pass the Gregory place before he reached it, and in the event that the young homesteader should reach his cabin and be in the Major's company at a certain time, he would have a most perfect alibi, which was no part of the plan Ross had in mind. He covered the five miles of road at a swift trot, momentarily fearing that Caulkins would overtake and pass him, but he reached the Gregory place without having heard a sound to indicate the other man's approach.

Ross stationed himself some seventy yards from the window, availing himself of the cover afforded by the strip of heavy brush on the far side of the lane. Gregory was reading, his head bowed over the table, and the girl sat across from him, engaged in some sort of needlework. A half-hour passed; Ross caught the sound of hoofs on the road. The horseman turned up the lane, and as he neared the man in the brush, the horse loosed a whistling snort of surprise and fear, crowding to the far side of the lane. Caulkins quieted his mount and urged him past the point which he seemed so reluctant to approach. Ross silently cursed the animal and his own lack of foresight in not considering such a contingency in advance. His choosing a stand so near the lane might easily have resulted in the animal's betraying his presence. Both Gregory and the girl lifted their eyes from their work at the thud of the hoofs on the lane, knowing well the identity of the horseman.

It was not until he estimated that Caulkins had covered half the distance to his own cabin that Ross left his place of concealment. It would not do to give him time to reach home. The sound of a shot might carry that far, and the Major could swear that the boy had been with him when it was fired. Ross moved across the lane and stationed himself behind a tree. He took a cartridge from his pocket and thrust it into the magazine of the rifle, then worked the lever and threw it into the chamber. His fingers fumbled awkwardly at the task, for he was unfamiliar with firearms, never having fired a gun more than half a dozen times in his life. When the lock closed on the shell, he raised his voice in an imperfect imitation of the hoot of an owl.

AGAIN Gregory and the girl looked up from their work; their glances met across the table, the girl's eyes widening in sudden apprehension, while Gregory's narrowed with anger.

Jonas rose from his chair and came outside. Ross had intended to reveal his true identity by giving a name which Jonas would remember from the days before he had come to this part of the country. He wanted Gregory to know the reason for his end, and the hand by which he was to fall; but Ross now recognized hat this was impossible. The girl had come through the kitchen and now stood outlined in the doorway. If Ross spoke his name, the day was lost. So instead of the anticipated conversation, he fired from behind the tree before Gregory was aware of his presence.

It seemed to him that the report crashed on the stillness of the night with a roar like that of a quarry-blast, and he suddenly feared that Caulkins might return to investigate. But there was one thing yet to be done before he fled. The empty shell must be ejected and left on the spot as one more link in a perfect chain of evidence. He had schooled himself on this point, repeating the necessity of it to himself, lest he should forget in the excitement of the moment. He fumbled at the lever and threw out the shell as the girl called anxiously from the doorway.

After gaining the shelter of the slashing, Ross felt absolutely safe. What could it matter if Caulkins did return to investigate? It would only mean another black mark against him if he were seen round the place immediately after the shot. Ross gained the crest of the spur and followed the game-trail. When halfway across, his nostrils were assailed by a disagreeable odor. He slowed his pace, wondering if some animal had died along the trail since his last trip. The scent *(Continued on page 136)*

The climax of this remarkable novel is one of the most thrilling episodes ever described by the brilliant author of "A Daughter of Discontent," "The High-flyers" and "Conflict"—

CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

Contraband

Illustrated by William Meade Prince

The Story So Far:

CARMEL LEE inherited a little run-down New England newspaper, the Gibeon *Free Press,* shortly after her graduation from college, and undertook to publish it herself. She found that a "ring," of which wealthy Abner Fownes was leader, practically owned the town—though at the last election the people had rebelled and had put in office their own candidate for sheriff. Only a few days before Carmel's coming, however, Sheriff Churchill had mysteriously vanished; and Deputy Jenney and a hunchbacked tavern-keeper known as Pewee Bangs, creatures of Fownes', had warned the *Free Press'* printer, Tubal, not to print anything about Churchill's disappearance.

Carmel gave a job to Evan Pell, a quaint young pedant who had been unfairly dismissed from his position of school superintendent. And after receiving an anonymous warning she printed this notice:

"The editor has been warned that she will be sent to join Sheriff Churchill if she meddles with his disappearance. The *Free Press* desires to give notice now that it will meddle until the whole truth is discovered and the criminal brought to justice. If murder has been done, the murderers must be punished."

Shortly thereafter Abner Fownes called upon Carmel and offered to cancel the chattel mortgage which he held on the *Free Press* plant and which came due in two months, if she would submit all "copy" for the paper for his visé and print only material which had his sanction. He also suggested that she discharge Pell. Carmel refused.

One night Carmel saw some hundreds of bottles of whisky unloaded from an auto and hidden in the woods. And presently there appeared in the *Free Press* the story of her find, accompanied by a scathing editorial which concluded: "Find the men who hid this whisky in the woods, and you will have the murderers of Sheriff Churchill."

Just before this article appeared, Abner Fownes called upon Carmel, and to her horror, proposed marriage; she indignantly declined. That evening, after the publication of Carmel's thunderbolt, men with sledge-hammers came to wreck the *Free Press* office. But, aided by Pell and Tubal, Carmel met them with a shotgun—and used it.

Fownes plotted again: he needed money desperately and planned a wholesale importation of liquor; he schemed to protect himself by having Jenney appointed sheriff; and he proposed to see that Carmel should be "taken care of" so that she could not again interfere with his plans.

Pell and Carmel learned of the scheme to have Jenney appointed sheriff, and Carmel went to the governor with the name of Churchill's friend, Jared Whitefield. But Fownes was present at the interview, won the appointment for Jenney, and discredited Carmel. Defeated and humiliated, she drove back to Gibeon that night, and next day sought Whitefield, but found him away from home.

Pell also was away. And only that evening did Carmel learn the reason for his disappearance, when she found in her office a note from him to her, declaring his love, and explaining that he had intercepted a note to her purporting to come from a disgruntled member of a bootlegging gang and saying that she could get evidence against them at the Lakeside Hotel. Suspecting a trap, he had gone thither in her place; if his return was delayed, she

might assume he had fallen victim to this suspected treachery. Impulsively Carmel set out alone, through the dark woods, toward the roadhouse.

On the way thither, at the edge of the lake, she came upon the body of Sheriff Churchill where it had floated ashore. Shortly afterward she was captured by Fownes' hirelings, taken into the Lakeside and locked up in a room with Evan, who had likewise been captured and had been so injured in the fight that he could not walk. And presently Fownes' pleasant little plan was explained to the captives: After Pell and Carmel had been locked in for twenty-four hours, Sheriff Jenney would break in the door and arrest them—and neither would ever dare appear in Gibeon again. . . . . After they were left alone together, Pell unscrewed the doorknob from a closet door, removed one sock, dropped the doorknob therein, and swung the contrivance dubiously. A poor weapon, but better than none. (*The story continues in detail:*)

"I HAVE come to the conclusion," said Evan Pell, "that every man, no matter what his vocation, should be a man of action. That is to say, he should devote some attention and practice to those muscular and mental activities which will serve him should some unexpected emergency arise."

"Yes," said Carmel. "Yes."

"I find myself with little or no equipment for strenuous adventure. This, we must admit, proves itself to be a serious oversight."

"Do you know how long we have been shut in this room?" Carmel demanded.

"I do. You were—er—propelled into this place at approximately ten-thirty last night. It is now five o'clock today. Eighteen hours and a half."

"Nothing has happened—nothing! We've been fed like animals in a zoo. I dozed fitfully during the night. We've talked and talked, and waited—waited. This waiting! Evan, I—it's the waiting that is so terrible."

"There are," said Evan with self-accusation in his voice, "men who would escape from this place. They would do it with seeming ease. Undoubtedly there is a certain technique, but I do not possess it. I—er—on one occasion I attended a showing of motion pictures. There was an individual who—without the least apparent difficulty, accomplished things to which escape from this room would be mere child's play."

"Tonight," said Carmel, "the sheriff will come to this hotel, and find us here."

"What must you think of me?" Evan said desperately. He turned in his chair and stared through the window toward the woods which surrounded the hotel upon three sides, his shoulders drooping with humiliation. Carmel was at his side in an instant, her hands upon his shoulders.

"Evan! Evan! You must not accuse yourself. No man could do anything. You have done all—more than all—any man could do. We—whatever comes, we shall face it together. I—I shall always be proud of you."

"I—I want you to be proud of me. I—the man will be here with our food in half an hour. Would you mind standing at some distance?"

She withdrew, puzzled. Evan drew from his pocket the stocking with the doorknob in its toe and studied it severely. "This," said he, "is our sole reliance. It has a most unpromising look. I have never seen an implement less calculated to arouse hope."

He edged his chair closer to the bed, grasped the top of the sock and scowled at a spot on the coverlid. He shook his head, reached for his handkerchief, and folding it neatly, laid it upon the spot at which he had scowled.

"A—er—target," he explained.

Then, drawing back his arm, he brought down his improvised slung-shot with a thud upon the bed.

"Did I hit it?" he asked.

"I—I don't think so."

"I knew it. It is an art requiring practice."

Again and again he belabored the bed with his weapon, asking after each blow, if he had struck the mark. "I fancy," he said, "I am becoming more accomplished. I—er—am pretending it is a human head. I am endeavoring to visualize it as the head of an individual obnoxious to me."

"But why? What are you about?"

"I have heard it said that desperate situations demand desperate remedies. I am about to become desperate. Do I look desperate?" He turned to her hopefully.

"I—you look very determined."

"It is, perhaps, the same thing. I *am* very determined. I am inexorable. Please listen at the door. If he comes upon us before I have time to make essential preparations, my desperation will be of no avail."

Carmel went to the door and listened while Evan continued to belabor the bed. "Decidedly," he panted, "I am becoming proficient. I hit it ten times handrunning."

"But—"

"Please listen. You will see how impossible it is for me to escape. I am unable to walk, much less to make satisfactory speed. You, however, are intact. Also, if one of us is found to be absent, this unspeakable plan must fail. I am working upon a plan—a desperate plan—to make possible the absence of one of us—namely yourself."

"Silly! Do you think I would leave you here—for them to—to do what they wanted to?"

"If you escape, they will dare do nothing to me. That is clear. Undoubtedly they will be chagrined, and at least one of their number will be—in a position to require medical attention. I trust this will be so. I should like to feel I have injured somebody. A latent savagery is coming to the surface in me."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I think I had best assume the position

The Doctor shook his head. "I hope—in such cases one cannot be sure—but—it is in God's hands."

Carmel grasped the tray. As she did so, Evan swung his weapon. The man folded up into a limp heap. "Pull him inside and shut the door," Evan ordered.

necessary to my plan," he said. "Would you mind helping me to the door?"

He hitched his chair along until it stood close to the wall at the side of the door opposite from its hinges. Evan flattened himself against the wall where it would be impossible for one entering the door to see him until well within the room.

"There," he said. "You also have your part."

"What—what must I do?"

"He will be carrying a tray of dishes. If—events should so shape themselves that he should drop this, a tremendous and alarming crash would result. It would spell disaster. You, therefore, will be at the door when the man opens it, and will reach for the tray. Be sure you have it grasped firmly—and on no account—it matters not how startled you may be at what follows—are you to drop it. Everything depends upon that."

"And then—"

"A great deal depends upon yourself. The unexpectedness of our attempt will militate in our favor. Should matters eventuate as I expect, you will be able to leave this room. From that instant I cannot help you. But an attempt on our part not being expected, I rather imagine you will be able to make your way downstairs and out of doors. It is only a chance, of course. It may fail—in which event we will be no worse off than we are at present. You will then hasten to Gibeon and take such measures as you conceive to be adequate."

"I sha'n't leave you. I sha'n't, I sha'n't, I sha'n't."

His lips compressed, and an expression appeared upon his face which she had never seen there before. It was masterful, an expression of conscious force. It was the real man peering through its disguise. His hand clenched into a fist.

"By heavens," he said, "you'll do as you're told."

"Evan!"

"Precisely," he said. "Now make ready."

They waited, wordless. It was five minutes, perhaps, before heavy feet ascended the stairs, and they heard the rattle of dishes as the man set down his tray to unlock the door. He opened it with his foot, picked up the tray and stepped through the opening. Carmel stood before him. She stretched out her hands for the tray and grasped it. As she did so, Evan Pell, standing poised over his chair, swung forward his homely weapon. His practice had made for efficiency. The doorknob thudded sickeningly upon the man's head; he stood swaying an instant; then his knees declined further to sustain his weight, and he folded up into a limp heap on the floor.

"Pull him inside and shut the door," Evan ordered. "I—er—find in myself a certain adaptability. Put on your wrap and hat. Hurry! The front way. Keep out of sight. Can you drive a car?"

"Yes."

"If one is standing in front—steal it."

"Yes."

"Now—go."

"I—oh, Evan, I can't leave you—"

She was in his arms, and her lips to his. "I—if they kill you, I shall die too."

He opened the door and stared into the dimly lighted hall. "It is clear—go."

"Good-by."

"Go. You're wasting time." He pushed her through the door. "Our best hope is that they—to my surprise—have underestimated me. Good-by. . . . . I—er—seem to have underestimated myself. I seem to have been—exceptionally efficient in a field quite foreign to my previous activities. Hasten."

He shut the door, and Carmel stood alone, dependent upon herself, without other hope or reliance than in her own expedients. She moved softly down the hall, reached the top of the stairs which led downward to another hall and the front door. She listened. There was no alarming sound. She descended halfway and stopped again. The lower hall, apparently, was in the middle of the house. To the left was the room which had been the bar in the days when liquor might be sold openly; at the right was the

dining-room. The door to the dining-room was closed; that into the the bar stood open—and there was her danger. She must pass that door without being seen. Once outside, the danger decreased almost to a minimum. Could she reach the shelter of the woods, she felt she would be safe.

She crept downward, reached the ground floor and flattened herself against the wall. What if the front door should open and somebody should enter? She hesitated, then peered cautiously through the door and into the bar. As she did so, she heard an automobile drive up in front and stop. In the bar she saw Peewee Bangs sitting, his feet on a table, reading a newspaper.

Feet ascended the steps outside, and she cowered. A hand rattled the knob, and she heard Bangs drop his feet to the floor, and the scrape of his chair as he turned. The door opened. Something, not conscious volition, moved Carmel, as the door opened and a man stepped in: she sprang forward, brushed past him and ran down the steps. Behind her she heard a shout—the squeaky voice of Peewee Bangs. Before her stood a Ford, its engine throbbing; she made all possible haste toward it and threw herself into the seat. In an instant she had grasped the wheel and adjusted her foot to the clutch. Then she was conscious of a jar, and out of the corner of her eye she saw Bangs' face, distorted with rage, saw his hand reaching for her arm. She screamed. Then her hand, chance led, fell upon the seat, encountered a heavy wrench. She lifted it, dashed it with all her strength into that inhuman face. It vanished. The next thing of which she became clearly conscious was of speed, of a rocking, bounding car! She was free, had escaped her pursuer, and was rushing with every ounce of power the little car possessed toward Gibeon!

Was there a car to follow her? A larger, more powerful, faster car? She did not know. She glanced behind. There was nothing yet. Carmel gripped the wheel and threw down the gas lever to its final notch. Around corners, through puddles, over patches rutted by heavy wheels, she forced the little car. It rocked, skidded, threatened, but always righted itself and kept on its way. She looked behind again. Headlights! By this time she must be half a mile or more from the hotel. It would be a good car which could make up that lead in the short distance to Gibeon. Yet, as she looked back from time to time, the headlights drew closer and closer. She could see straggling lights now—the fringe of the village. Would they dare follow her into the town itself? She fancied not. The bridge lay before her—and the pursuing car roared not a hundred yards behind. She swept across the river and sped down Main Street at a rate never witnessed before by that drowsy thoroughfare. She was safe! Before her was the Town Hall—lighted brightly. She looked back. The pursuing car was not to be seen.

The town meeting! The citizens of Gibeon were there upon the town's business. She brought the car to a stop before the door, leaped out and ran up the stairs. The hall was crowded. On the platform stood the chairman of the town board. Carmel was conscious of no embarrassment, only of the need for haste, of the necessity for finding help. She entered the room and made her way up the aisle to the platform. Without hesitating she mounted the steps, unconscious of the craning of necks, the whisperings, the curiosity her arrival was causing.

The chairman halted in his remarks. Carmel, in her excitement, ignored him, almost shouldered him aside.

"Men—men of Gibeon," she said, "crime is being committed; perhaps murder is being done at this minute. What are you going to do?"

Chapter Twenty-five.

THE hall was still. It was as if, by some necromancy of words, Carmel had turned the town meeting of Gibeon to stone. She looked down into the faces which seemed to her white and strained. The faces waited.

She paused, staring down into those faces.

"Men of Gibeon," she said, and her little fist, clenched, with knuckles showing white, lifted from her side and extended itself toward them, "men of Gibeon, I have found the body of Sheriff Churchill. He was murdered!"

The faces seemed to move in unison as if they were painted upon a single canvas and the canvas had been suddenly jerked by an unseen hand. They became audible by an intake of the breath.

"I found him," Carmel said, "close by the Lakeside Hotel. Since yesterday I have been a prisoner in the Lakeside Hotel, I and Evan Pell. I went to find him. I found Sheriff Churchill; I saw five great trucks unload in the hotel yard, and those trucks were carrying whisky from the other side of the border. It was

whisky, men of Gibeon, which killed Sheriff Churchill. It was the men who are trafficking in liquor who murdered him. I know their names. I have seen them and been their prisoner. At this moment Evan Pell, locked in a room of that unspeakable place, is in danger of his life. He is injured, cannot escape nor defend himself. Yet he made it possible for me to escape and to come to you for help." Again she paused.

"I could not go to the law, because the law does not belong to the people of Gibeon. It has been bought and paid for. It is owned by criminals and by murderers. We have a new sheriff. That man's hands are red with the blood of the man whose place he fills. So I have come to you, for there is no other law in Gibeon tonight than yourselves."

There had been no movement, no sound, only that tense, fateful silence.

"Will you permit this thing? Will you continue to allow your town and your county to rest under this dreadful thing? You can stop it tonight. You can wipe it out forever. Let me tell you what I know."

She spoke rapidly and most eloquently. In that dramatic moment she became a leader, a prophet, one sent to deliver a message, and she delivered it fittingly. Her words descended upon those upturned faces compelling belief. At the recital the faces moved again, became audible again in a murmur which held kinship with a snarl. Gibeon was awakening.

Point by point, fact by fact, she drove home to them the conditions among which they had been living, but one name she withheld until the moment should come for its utterance She described the activities of the whisky-smugglers, the workings of their organization, its power—the intelligence which directed it.

"Will you endure this, men of Gibeon? No time may be lost. At this instant a man stands under the shadow of death! What are you going to do? Will you let him die?"

In the hall a man arose. "What is the name of this man—the man who is to blame for all this?" he demanded.

"His name," said Carmel, "is Abner Fownes!"

It was as if they had expected it; there was no demonstration, no confusion. The men of Gibeon were strangely impassive, strangely silent, strangely stern. It was as if they were moved by a common impulse, a common determination. They were not many individuals, but a single entity. They had been molded into a solidity—and that solidity was Gibeon.

Carmel shouldered the chairman aside. "Men of Gibeon," she said, "crime is being committed—murder is being done at this minute. What are you going to do?"

The faces were faces no longer, but human beings, men standing erect as if waiting for a signal. Among them Carmel saw Jared Whitefield. His eyes encountered hers, and he nodded.

"Will you come with me?" she cried. "Will you follow me? Those who will follow—come!"

She descended from the platform, and a lane opened before her; she reached the door and turned. The men of Gibeon were behind her, and as if they were a company marching behind its commander, they followed her down the stairs. There was no shouting, no confusion, no unsightly mob spirit. Along the street stood waiting cars, the cars of the farmers of the town; the men crowded into them beyond their capacity. It was a crusade, the crusade of Gibeon, and Carmel had preached it.

They started quietly, grimly, an orderly procession. It moved through the streets, across the bridge and out the road toward the Lakeside Hotel—a hundred men bent upon purging their community of a thing which had debauched it. On and on, urgent, inexorable, moved the line of cars. Then a sudden stop. The road was barricaded, and men with rifles stood behind to block the way.

"What's this here?" bellowed a voice out of the darkness. "What kind of goin's-on is this here?" It was Sheriff Jenney.

There was no answer. "I order ye to disperse and git to your homes quietly," he said. "We hain't goin' to have no mobbin' in Gibeon."

The cars emptied, and men crowded forward. "Out of the way, Jenney," a voice commanded. "We're in no humor to be meddled with tonight."

"Don't go resistin' an officer," Jenney roared. "Disperse like I told ye."

Then Jared Whitefield forced his way to the front, and on either side of him were strangers to Gibeon. They leaped the barricade before Jenney, taken by surprise, could move his hand. Whitefield dropped a heavy hand on Jenney's shoulder.

"Jenney," he said, "drop that gun. You're under arrest."

"Arrest! Me? Who kin arrest the sheriff of a county?" He laughed loudly.

"I can," said Whitefield. "Drop that gun."

Jenney twisted in Whitefield's grip, but the huge man held him securely.

"You've gone ag'in' somethin' bigger than a township or a county, Jenney—or even a State. It's the United States of America that's puttin' you under arrest. Jenney, through me, its duly appointed marshal. *Drop that gun!*"

The United States of America! The Federal authorities had taken a hand. That explained Whitefield's absence. The United States! Carmel sobbed. In this thing she had the might of America behind her! The authority of a nation!

"Put him in a car," Whitefield directed his companions, and it was done.

"Whitefield," called a voice, "you hain't goin' to interfere? You hain't goin' to stop us?"

"I got nothin' to do with you," Whitefield said. "I got what I come for."

The cars filled again; the obstruction was removed, and once again the men of Gibeon moved toward their objective. They reached it, surrounded it. Men burst in its doors and laid hands upon whomever they found. Carmel, well escorted, ran up the stairs.

"That's the door," she cried; and powerful shoulders thrust it from its hinges.

"Evan!" she cried. "Evan!"

He lay upon the floor motionless. Carmel knelt beside him, frantic at the sight of his motionlessness. She lifted his head to her lap, peered down into his white face and stared at his closed eyes.

"They've killed him," she said in a dull, dead voice. "We've come too late."

Mr. Hopper, of the Gibeon Bank, thrust his hand inside Evan's shirt to feel for the beating of his heart. It was distinguishable, faint but distinguishable.

"He's not dead," said Hopper. "But somebody's beat hell out of him."

They lifted him gently and carried him down the stairs. Carmel walked by his side, silent, stunned. He was not dead, but he was horribly injured. He would die. She knew she would never again see his eyes looking into hers. They placed him in a car, and she sat, supporting his weight, her arm about him, his head heavy upon her breast.

"Everybody out?" roared a voice.

"Everybody's out!"

Carmel saw a light appear inside the hotel, a light cast by no lamp or lantern. It increased, leaped, flamed. Room after room was touched by the illumination. It climbed the stairs, roared outward through windows, spreading, crackling, hissing, devouring. In a dozen minutes the Lakeside Hotel was wrapped in flame—a beaconlight in Gibeon's history. High and higher mounted the flames until the countryside for miles about was lighted by it, notified by it that a thing was happening, that Gibeon was being purified by fire.

"A doctor!" Carmel cried. "A doctor!" (*Continued on page 131*)

A delightful romance of Tin Pan Alley — which may perhaps be considered the most important place in the country, for it is there that most of this nation's songs are written.

By

WILLIAM C. LENGEL

Rita and the Jazz Bo

Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard

ALL in all, the third of April was an eventful day in the fairly eventful life of Norman Stuart, known to his fellow students at Casaba University as "The Jazz Bo."

At midnight on April second he became twenty-one years of age; that was a circumstance beyond his control. With him, to celebrate the occasion, was Miss Rita York, prima donna soprano in "How Time Flies." At three A. M. the same morning Norman Stuart was married—another circumstance over which he did not really exercise jurisdiction. For who, given half a chance, could help marrying Rita York? At four o'clock that afternoon Norman was expelled from Casaba; that was for having led the Glee Club into an unauthorized nocturnal performance as a part of Weinberg's cabaret entertainment a few days previously.

When he left the office of Dean Barclay, it was plain to read in his easy, nonchalant bearing that expulsion from college meant nothing in his young life. Rita's company was giving a matinée performance which he judged would now be about over. The piece, having completed its successful New York run, was playing in Brooklyn, the first stop on its road tour. Norman took a surface car across Brooklyn Bridge, and by the time he arrived at the theater Rita was standing expectantly at the stage door.

They sought a quiet restaurant, and while awaiting service, Norman gave a burlesque of his final interview with Dean Barclay.

"I'm sorry you couldn't have stayed on at school for another year," Rita commented. "Graduation with a degree would have meant a great deal for you, and I imagine even more to your father."

"Why, I'd have quit anyway, if I hadn't been thrown out," he answered. "Haven't I got you to take care of now? What would you be doing?"

"The same thing I'm doing now," she answered.

"Well, I hope not," he returned. "You can give your two weeks' notice tonight. I guess I can look after you from now on."

"What are you going to do, dear?" asked Rita.

"I wrote Father that I had been fired from college, had married and settled down, and after a while I'd come out and run his shoe-factory," was the blithe reply. "A thing like that has its advantages—comfort, no worries, position, and all those things that count for stability and respectability in our Midwestern communities. Father will welcome us with open arms."

Norman erred. Saturday night after the performance he escorted Rita to the Grand Central Station to see her off for Buffalo, where the piece was to appear the next week. When he got back to his apartment, he found this letter from Stuart, Sr.

"My dear Norman:

"I can't say that your letter telling of your marriage was much of a surprise to me. That was the logical next step in your schemeless scheme of life. In view of your present marital state, your getting kicked out of the University doesn't call for any extended remarks on my part.

"So my daughter-in-law is one of the merry-merries! Well! Well! Son, you think I'm a narrow-minded old fogy. Perhaps I am; but please believe me when I say I have no prejudice against actresses as a class. Try as I may, however, I can't bring myself to find a great deal of respect for the kind you can take out and marry at three o'clock in the morning.

"You might as well make up your mind to paddle your own canoe from now on. I was willing to see you through all of your kid and schoolboy foolishness, but it's up to you now, son. I don't think there is room in the Stuart Shoe Company for you.

"Father."

Norman lay awake until nearly dawn. It was not now altogether a matter of supporting a wife; Rita could do that for herself. The real problem was to support himself. He did not rise until noon. Then, craving companionship, he decided to breakfast at Weinberg's, a roadhouse on the outskirts of the city. When he sat down at a table, Mr. Weinberg himself hurried over.

"I'm awfully sorry you got fired from college, honest, now, I am, Mr. Stuart," declared Mr. Weinberg.

"Cheer up," laughed Norman. "It doesn't make any difference. Give me some breakfast; I'm hungry."

Weinberg directed a waiter to take Norman's order, and then sat down at the table.

"Felix," the young man proposed, "what do you say to giving me a job in your cabaret?"

Mr. Weinberg was dumfounded. "Why, Mr. Stuart, honest now, you can't mean it?"

"Yes, I do," Norman insisted. "I've got to have a job. I can sing and dance, play the piano, act the clown, lead the jazz band. Give me a try at it, Felix. If I don't make good, you can fire me."

"Well, of course, Mr. Stuart, if you're serious—I've got to get some new talent, anyhow. It's not much money; only twenty-five dollars a week." Judged by the Glee Club performance, he knew that Norman could sing and dance after a fashion, and he was shrewd enough to realize that he would be a drawing-card among the students at the university.

"Felix, you've saved my life," declared Norman.

He spent the rest of the morning planning his "act." But he did not awaken a great deal of enthusiasm among the guests at dinner-time; this crowd was too intent on getting a full value from Mr. Weinberg's Sunday dollar table d' hôte. But later, when the hour drew close to midnight, the very lights of the place seemed to take on an enchanted glow, and a delicate odor of perfume mingled with the cigarette-smoke.

Norman sang, "Bill, the Bingo, Bango Mango Man," and they called him back again and again. Then he danced, and as his long arms and legs flew in a fashion to make him seem all arms and legs, they pelted him with dimes, quarters and half-dollars. He was altogether too excited to be embarrassed, too excited to notice even that the coins were falling all around him, until he heard commands from all sides to "pick it up, son." So still whirling and keeping in time with the jazz band, he caught up from the floor the pieces of change, and finally managed to bow himself off.

When Norman again reached the table at which Mr. Weinberg was sitting, he found a short, paternal-looking old man with a bald head, awaiting his return.

"Mr. Hertz wants to meet you, Mr. Stuart," announced Mr. Weinberg.

"Gus Hertz, the King of Tin Pan Alley?" gasped Norman.

"That's him," grinned Mr. Weinberg.

"Son," said Gus Hertz, grasping Norman's hand, "Felix tells me this is your first professional appearance. There are few artists, even the great ones, who can do what I've just heard you do tonight. It's too bad Mr. Weinberg is going to lose such an entertainer just as he has discovered you."

"Lose me?" echoed Norman.

"Yes," said Mr. Hertz, "if you are willing to take a job from me."

GUS Hertz's "House of Song Hits" seemed to Norman, when he made his advent into Tin Pan Alley the next day, like a huge gingerbread music-box. The building in which were manufactured the popular melodies of the hour was a three-story, old-fashioned brownstone structure with a high stoop. All of the windows were open, and from them, blending in riotous disharmony, poured the collective striving of well-meaning vocalists, male and female, of all ranges and textures of voices, aided and abetted, even urged on or outdone, by iron-armed young men brutally mistreating a number of inoffensive pianos.

After a prolonged wait in an outer room, a boy finally directed Norman back to the butler's pantry which Gus Hertz had converted into a private office.

"Son," said the King of Tin Pan Alley, after closing the door to shut out the racket, "I've been looking for some one like you for a long time. The success of a popular song depends almost as much on how it is first put across to the public as it does on the song itself. It is not often that the composer can sing, and less often can he make a performer understand how to put a song over. You seem to have that knack. Your job will be song-plugging. After you know the ropes, I'd like to have you coach the other boys and the vaudeville people. I'll pay you fifty dollars a week to start; what do you say?"

"Fifty dollars!" gasped Norman.

"Until tonight," he said, "I never knew I was an old man." She shook her head. "You're not."

"Well," said Mr. Hertz, "I might make it fifty-five, with more a little later."

"Oh, that's all right," said Norman. He wondered if it would be well to tell the King of Tin Pan Alley of the music he had written, and after a moment's thinking, he decided it would be better to wait until he had written something new, and then show it. He wondered if his gift had deserted him, if it would come back again. He had not tried composition for nearly a year.

And now he had a job in a popular music-factory as a song-plugger. A song-plugger! Even the office-boy held an exalted position compared to his, in so far as dignity was concerned. He speculated on what Rita would think when she learned of it. He did not have quite the courage to tell her his exact status in his letter to her.

HER reply showed that she thought him a song-writing member of the staff. She would be back in New York in less than two weeks; they would rent a small apartment; she would again take up her vocal work with opera seriously in mind, while Norman would be gaining practice and experience for the Great American Opera he would inevitably write.

Her letter gave Norman pause, but events were moving too swiftly for him to worry. He did manage to take the time to hunt for a small apartment, however, and was lucky enough to find a family going for the summer at the seashore, and anxious to sublet.

It was just two weeks from the day of their marriage that he met Rita at the station, and surprised her by taking her directly to the apartment, where the cook, a heritage from the flitting family, had dinner awaiting them. There was a huge bunch of American beauty roses on the dining table, and the whole place breathed the spirit of home.

"Oh, Norman," cried Rita, "this is too lovely for anything! Now I feel like a really-truly bride."

He wondered how he was going to tell her the truth about his job in Gus Hertz's institute of jazz.

It came about sooner than expected. They were finishing their very leisurely dinner when Norman suddenly looked at his watch to discover it was past eight o'clock.

"Heavens!" he cried. "I had no idea it was so late. I've got to go downtown; there's a lot of night work connected with my job."

"You don't mean to say that you have to go away this evening?" said Rita.

"I'm awfully sorry, honey, but I do," confessed Norman.

"Well, can't you take me with you?" she asked.

It was the very thing he didn't want to do—just yet, anyway; so he said: "I should think it would be better for you to stay home and rest after your trip, dear."

"Oh, I'm not tired," she assured him. "I'm used to traveling and being comfortable doing it."

"Well, get your things on," he agreed. There was nothing else to do.

He was to sing at the Columbus Theater, a vaudeville-picture house that held "try-outs" of new acts on Thursday nights. He bought a ticket at the box-office for Rita, and told her to go in and sit down.

"I'm helping to put over one of the house's new songs," he explained. "I go on at nine o'clock and will be with you in fifteen or twenty minutes."

"You are going to sing in this place?" she asked, puzzled.

"Haven't time to explain just now," Norman said hurriedly. "Go on in now, like a good girl, and I'll tell you all about it later."

SHE sat through the unintelligible ending of a five-reel picture, and when that was ended, a drop-curtain showing a street-scene was lowered, and a boy hung up a sign, reading, "Norman and Rocket, the Jazz Boes." A piano banged, and Rita witnessed the edifying sight of her husband sliding out upon the stage accompanied by another of Hertz's song-pluggers, and entering into a rapid-fire patter of Tin Pan Alley masterpieces. They brought down the house, but the applause was far from pleasing to Rita's ear. She hurriedly left the stuffy auditorium, and when Norman met her, she was still tingling.

"How did it go?" he asked her in a spirit of feigned joviality.

"Splendidly," she said, but her manner belied her words.

"Let's go down to Hanley's and listen to a little cabaret," suggested Norman.

"Do you make an appearance there too?" she asked.

"No," he said. "I thought that might add a little cheer to the situation."

"I think I'd rather go home," she said.

She spoke hardly a word until they were in the apartment. Then she said: "Just why doesn't your father want you in his shoe-factory?"

"What difference does it make?" demanded Norman. "He just doesn't, and I'm going along on my own hook. I'm in the music game; that's what you wanted, isn't it?"

"No, Norman, it isn't—at least not in the way you've gone about it. Let me see your father's letter."

Norman gave it to her and stood gazing sullenly out of the window into the dark while she read the epistle.

Rita exhaled a long breath. "That sort of simplifies matters," she said. "What did you write him in answer?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, Norman, you did nothing; you let things slide? That's just your trouble. You always take the easiest course. If you had had the courage of your convictions when you were really inspired to become a great composer, you would have gone to your father, and you could have made him see that *you* were the one to determine upon your future. He would have admired you, and in the end, helped you. Instead, because he looked down upon a musical career for you, you felt afraid to oppose him. Then, when you commit what he believes to be the worst of your indiscretions, marriage, again instead of going to him and having it out, you drift into the rag-tag of music. Way back in your head, you think your father is going to repent his hasty letter and take you into his business. You are still looking for the easy thing. Oh, Norman!" Exhausted and trembling, Rita burst into tears.

Norman gazed at her stolidly. "You seem to feel that you made a bad bargain when you took me," he said. "Why in the world did you ever marry such a good-for-nothing as you think I am?"

Rita went to him, placed her hands on his shoulders and smiled through her tears into his eyes. "Because, dear, I love you and want you above anything else in the world. And," she added slowly, "I was afraid if I didn't, some other foolish girl would."

RITA spent a very disturbed morning after Norman left the next day. She first busied herself setting the place to rights; then she tried to play and sing herself into a more cheerful mood. But cheer would not come. She decided to go for a walk, and as she was putting on her hat, the thought came to her to call on Gus Hertz.

She had heard a lot about the genial old King of Tin Pan Alley, who was reputed to have straightened out more marital difficulties than any court of domestic relations, had inspired more love-ballads than Venus herself, and who had brought about more romances than Bertha M. Clay ever dreamed of. Gus Hertz was the friend and father confessor of every actress and every singer who trod the uncertain path of Broadway. Hearing the troubles of others made him forget his own, he often said.

Rita sent in her professional card, and Mr. Hertz came from his den to welcome her to the House of Song Hits. "Ah," he said, "I have heard you sing; your voice is so sweet and sure it makes a straight path to heaven. I didn't know whether to weep or be happy when I read of your marriage. When was it? Last week?" As he rattled on, he was leading the way to his private office.

"Mr. Hertz, I think you're Irish in spite of your name," laughed Rita. "And I've been married two weeks. My husband is working for Mr. Gus Hertz."

"What!" he demanded.

"Yes, as a song-plugger."

"Ah-ha," mused Hertz. "So Norman Stuart is the husband of the famous Rita York. I thought there was something familiar about his name."

"I'm going to leave him, Mr. Hertz," Rita said suddenly.

"So soon?" queried Hertz. "He seems to be a nice boy."

"Oh, he's wonderful, Mr. Hertz. He hasn't shown you the music he has written. He began composing when he was a little fellow, and he has written all the last three shows at Casaba."

"Sure, I remember now," beamed Hertz. "I'll get after him right away. I want to see what he's done. But what's this about leaving him?"

"For his own sake," said Rita. "He is all broken up because his father has turned on him."

"Well, hasn't he got you?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then he's got more than he deserves already." said Hertz. "I'll bet his father didn't want him to be a composer either, did he?"

"No," said Rita. "Norman had hoped to go to France to study while I went to Italy. Norman was full of grand hopes when we were in college together. That's when he wrote his best things. After I had to leave, he seemed to lose interest."

"It is the music I am counting on to interpret the story," Rita explained. She put her best skill into the performance.

"Yes, love will do that," said Hertz, "or lost hope. What good do you expect to do by leaving him?"

"Well, perhaps he can really find himself then, or patch things up with his father," said Rita.

"H'm!" said Hertz. "That might work, but why spoil your happiness and his too, when his father alone is the cause of all this trouble? I take it that he thinks you are no good because you are an actress."

"Yes," said Rita.

"Why not show him what sort of stuff you are made of?"

"How would you go about such a thing?" asked Rita.

"Get acquainted with him without letting him know who you are. That's easy enough. Where does he live?"

"Out in Westville."

"Simple," declared Hertz. "There's a stock company in that place—the Barrett Players. I'll give you a note to Mr. Paul Phillip Barrett, and you can join the company. You'll have to work out the rest of the problem yourself."

"Fine, fine," Rita agreed. "But what am I to tell Norman?"

"Leave Norman to me," said Hertz. "Before you know it, that boy will be writing some real music. I'll make him win you all over again, and his father at the same time."

Rita flung her arms around the good old King of Tin Pan Alley, and kissed him on one of his cheery cheeks.

Everything seemed so clear now, so simple, she thought as she left Mr. Hertz; but she had not proceeded far before her conscience began to trouble her. Was it anything more than caprice that prompted her to acquiesce in Mr. Hertz's plan? Was Norman's love strong enough to stand the test of such willful abandonment? Was his lack of aim in life due solely to his youth?

When Norman came in that evening his face was more serious than she had ever seen it. He took her gently in his arms and kissed her. He did not utter a word, but she knew that Gus Hertz had told him as much as he thought wise for him to know.

PLAYING one part, forgetting another, rehearsing a third, and reading over a fourth becomes second nature to the seasoned stock performer; but to Rita, established as "Mary Moffatt" with the Barrett Players, the task was trying.

Paul Phillip Barrett, the managing director, who played small parts, was an energetic, wide-awake, businesslike individual and raged at Rita for not permitting the use of her name, the advertising value of which would have been considerable. As it was, Mr. Barrett gave her appealing ingénue rôles; and in the time-worn but popular "Blue Jeans," she played the lead, as she did also in "The Professor's Love Story."

A means of approaching Stuart Senior presented itself quite unexpectedly. With Mr. Barrett and Mrs. Barrett, who played character parts, Rita motored out past the rather pretentious Stuart house on Grandview Boulevard. As Mr. Barrett pointed out the place to her, he said with mock grandiloquence: "Home of the Shoe Prince of the West, Mr. Franklyn Stuart, one of our most solid citizens—leader in all civic affairs. Nine months of the year he does not know me from Adam; the other three months he makes me believe I'm his pal."

Rita smiled.

"Every year this burg has a Fall Festival Week to draw visitors from the country towns around here, and book trade," Barrett ran on. "Fall festivals mean entertainment. Who's the Fall Guy in the Fall Festival? Paul Phillip Barrett. (*Continued on page 118*)

The surprising narrative of a bridegroom strangely deserted by his capricious lady as they were leaving the church. Dr. Rowland is a clever writer —but has he correctly interpreted the motives of the ladies in the case?

Illustrated by W. B. King

Golden Silence

By

Henry C. Rowland

TWO of the three important things in life had already happened to Jerome Kenyon. He had been born, and he had just been married. Aside from these vital episodes, nothing noteworthy had occurred until he was leaving the church with his bride. Not many minutes later his bride left *him* with the passionate declaration that she hoped never to look upon his face again!

This happened in front of the Grand Central Station. The quarrel, flaring up like the result of a lighted match tossed on a heap of unconfined explosive, left Jerome no choice but to withdraw hastily from the danger-zone. He was fully convinced that the conflagration would be short-lived and that on his return from checking the luggage he would find his bride amenable to argument. But in this he was mistaken, for he did not find her at all.

It was not the first of such quarrels. There had been others, less incandescent perhaps, but leaving their embers to smoulder awhile. The cause had always been the same. Some would have called it Alison's temperamental nature; others might have called it merely Alison's bad temper and readiness to leap at wrong conclusions and voice them with unreasoning reproach.

Like many optimistic lovers, Jerome felt great confidence in the power of the marital state to correct these passionate indulgences. He argued to himself that the conditions of engagement were in themselves most trying to a volatile temperament. They seemed to contain incomplete combustions which fell short of the reaction necessary to produce a new and stable compound. He and Alison had previously kissed and made up, but such kissings did not contain enough of the reagent to produce a satisfying affinity.

Now, in a singular state of daze, Jerome went back to the baggage-room, barely in time to save his luggage and Alison's from being put aboard the train. He muttered some explanation of a change of plans, then sent Alison's effects to her father's house in Gramercy Park and had his own put in a taxi.

Turning the ridiculous situation in his mind, Jerome was astonished to discover a curious sense of relief. There had been too many such quarrels, each abstracting its tribute of tenderness from an emotion which had been cooling through some weeks. Jerome did not know just what the solution might be for such a situation, but he had a vague idea that when a marriage slipped up between the cup and the lip, as one might say, there was a legal remedy known as an annulment which bore about the same relation to divorce as did a betrothal to a wedding. He stepped into the taxi and told the driver to go to the McAlpin.

As the vehicle became a part of the Fifth Avenue procession, Jerome leaned back and tried to compose his mind. But at this moment he caught sight of a young woman who less than an hour before had offered him subdued congratulations at the church.

It had been a quiet noon wedding, and this young lady was no doubt walking home for luncheon.

"Stop a moment," said Jerome to the driver, and as the taxi drew up to the curb, he stepped out.

"Don't faint, Sylvia," said he. "Get in and ride downtown with me."

"But—but—"

"Butt into the taxi," said Jerome. "There has been the most awful mess—"

Sylvia obeyed in a state of trance, then turned and looked at him in dismay

"Oh, dear!" said she. "I did hope you two could manage to get away without a fight."

"We haven't, though," said Jerome. "I suppose that at this moment Alison is on her way to apply for an annulment."

"What happened?"

"Listen and be my judge," said Jerome. "As we were about to start away from the church, a messenger-boy stepped up to the car and handed me a note. I excused myself to Alison and opened it. There were a few brief lines and a telegram. I glanced at both and shoved them into my pocket."

"Without showing them to Alison?"

"Yes."

"She asked to see it?"

"No. She demanded to see it. I told her that it was a business communication which I would rather not discuss at the moment."

"What a beautiful start!" murmured Sylvia. "Knowing Alison, I can reconstruct the rest. Did you end by showing her the note?"

"No. If I had, I would not be here at this moment. Moreover

I am not at all sure but what I would rather be here in this taxi with you."

"I think you had better let me out," said Sylvia. "An annulment is better than a divorce with alimony and a former sweetheart named as co-respondent. *You* could not afford the alimony and *I* could not afford the scandal. But first tell me what was in the note?"

"Not until you tell me your decision. What would *you* have done?"

Sylvia pondered for a moment. Jerome watched her anxiously. He had once got nearly as far with Sylvia as he had with Alison, but circumstances had interfered. Looking now at her pretty profile and thoughtful gray eyes with their long black lashes, he wondered that he had let them interfere. Poverty and a social position which each felt under obligation to maintain had been the principal factor. Then came the geographical separation of the Atlantic Ocean and then—Alison.

Sylvia's bosom rose as she took a deep breath. "Well," she answered slowly, "if I'd gone as far as Alison, I'd have seen it through. I'd have carried on if it had been bigamy."

"Why?"

The color flooded her face. "Oh—for a lot of reasons. But I *don't* think I'd have stopped to weigh them just at that particular moment. What Alison did is rather like playing a roulette bet, then snatching it away after the croupier has said *"Rien ne va plus."*

Jerome gave a sigh of relief. "Precisely my idea," said he, "the parson being the croupier in this case."

"Just what did you say?" Sylvia asked.

"I said that I would show her the note and telegram when the proper time came."

"Was that the end of it?"

"That was the end of everything. She implied that I was holding something back until it would be too late for her to retrieve her mistake. Her final words on reaching the station were that she wished she might never see my face again."

Sylvia moved uneasily. She was in every respect precisely the opposite to Alison, who was tall and slender and dark, with rather high aristocratic features. Sylvia was fair, with a rich coloring and a face which was usually smiling and provocative.

"Well, Jerry," she said, "now that I've given my decision, show me the note and let me out. Can't you realize what will happen to me if some mutual friend discovers us riding down Fifth Avenue together at this particular moment in a taxi heaped with luggage?"

"All right," said Jerome. "I'll show you the note as soon as you answer one more question! Will you marry me as soon as Alison gets the marriage annulled?"

Sylvia crowded back even farther in her corner.

"Yes," she murmured. "I never loved anybody but you, Jerry."

Jerome bent toward her. "What if this telegram warns me to leave the country, and quick? What if it tells you that I'm the bigamist you just suggested. Remember that I've been four years abroad."

Sylvia looked at him with dancing eyes and a smile on her red lips, which were rather full and wide and set slightly at a slant.

"Well, Jerry, if you've got two already, one more wife wont make the sentence any heavier. Besides, there's luck in odd numbers."

"There's luck in you!" said Jerome, and picked up the speaking-tube. "Go to Hoboken," he ordered. The driver nodded. Sylvia looked surprised.

"Why Hoboken?" she asked.

"Just to go across the ferry," said Jerome. "I want room to kiss you, and if I don't get room to kiss you, and if I don't get it pretty quick, I'll burst."

"You must have been awfully in love with Alison, Jerry."

"Well, I'm not now. Lord, what a close escape! What a time we would have had! And I've got a hunch it would inevitably have come to this in the end." He took Sylvia's hand and raised it to his lips. Then suddenly his face whitened. "What if she *shouldn't* annul the marriage!" he exclaimed.

Sylvia gave him a steady look. "Then you'll be the one that would have to carry on, Jerry, and all of this will have to be scrapped with the rest of the might-have-beens."

Jerome's face darkened. He picked up the tube again. "Draw up to the curb," he said.

"You're right, Sylvia. I'll set you down here. But remember, I've your promise."

"I'm not apt to forget it, Jerry; but it doesn't matter. You're not going to escape as easily as that. Alison has had a change of heart by this time, and her father will take a hand."

The taxi slowed and stopped on a side-street where the sidewalk was littered with bales and boxes. Jerome opened the door.

"How about the note?" he asked.

Sylvia stepped out, then turned and looked at him with a smile on her quivering lips, and eyes which sparkled through a sudden gush of tears.

"You can show me that the day after we're married—if that day ever comes," said she; whereupon she turned, stumbled over a crate, recovered herself and moved away.

JEROME hung up the receiver of the telephone and stood for a moment in thought. He was displeased at the nature of the message just received: "Mr. Arnold would like to see Mr. Kenyon at his office between ten and eleven."

Jerome had telephoned his father-in-law that he would be at the McAlpin for the next two days, and the message just received was the answer to this information.

An hour later Jerome presented himself at the law offices of

His bride left him with the passionate declaration that she hoped never to look upon his face again.

Arnold, Thoron & Maltby, where, to his further annoyance, he was requested to wait for nearly three-quarters of an hour in the reception-room. Then a rather supercilious young person with a knowing smile on her pert face ushered him into Mr. Arnold's private office. The lawyer, a big man with a rather pompous and at this moment aggressive manner, looked up with a frown as Jerome was ushered in. Jerome bowed slightly and stood at attention.

"Well, young man," said he in a heavy bass, "what is your version of this silly business?"

"I haven't any, sir."

"Then what is your excuse?"

"I have no excuse, sir."

Mr. Arnold's frown deepened. "Then I understand that I am to form my opinion entirely from what my daughter tells me?"

"Why not?" asked Jerome. "You surely don't suspect her of not having told the truth?"

"Oh, come, Jerome," said Mr. Arnold, abandoning his magisterial air. "I know of course that Alison is quick-tempered and impulsive, but you could scarcely expect any woman not to insist on learning the contents of a message handed to her husband as she was leaving the church just after the ceremony.

"I told her she might see it a little later," Jerome answered. "I said that it was a business matter which I would explain at the proper time. She was not satisfied with this and intimated that it might be something to interfere with our new relations, and she insisted on knowing what it was before it became, as she expressed it, 'too late.'"

"In which I think she was quite within her right," said Mr. Arnold.

"Very well, sir," Jerome answered. "In that case there seems nothing more to be said."

The blood surged into the lawyer's face. "There is a great deal more to be said, young man. You persuade my daughter to marry you, which she does—not, I may say, entirely with my approval. While your connections may be good, we know actually very little about you beyond the fact that you are said to be an architect of some promise and have a good record. Your earnings are small, while the expectations of my daughter are considerable. Believing the attachment between you to be sincere, I have been willing to waive other considerations. And then just as you are leaving the church, you receive a mysterious communication the nature of which you refuse to divulge until, to use my daughter's own expression, which I find explicit, 'it may be too late.'"

"Quite so, sir," Jerome answered. "But there is one point which you appear to overlook. Your daughter told me that she hoped never to see my face again."

Mr. Arnold made a gesture of impatience. "An exasperated woman is apt to say anything," he stated; and for the first time during the interview unconsciously scored. "I suppose that the average wife says that to her husband at least three times a year. If you had not taken her so literally, she would have returned to you, and you would have gone aboard the train and presently made up the quarrel, and all of the unpleasantness been avoided."

JEROME could not help but feel that there was a good deal of truth in this. He had promised to take Alison for better or for worse, then at the first disagreement had left her without the least attempt to smooth the difficulty.

Mr. Arnold saw his hesitation and was quick to take advantage of it. The lawyer was astute, or he would not have occupied his prominent position. His own will had clashed frequently with that of Alison, whose hasty and intemperate conclusions had up to this time interfered seriously with other desirable prospects of marriage. He believed her to have been in the wrong, and he felt not the slightest doubt but that if Jerome had received any news which might have proved detrimental to his newly wedded wife, he would have told her immediately of its character.

"Come, now, my boy," said he, with a sudden change of tone and manner, "don't you think yourself that you might have been a little more forbearing?"

Jerome felt his resolution giving way. He had counted on the lawyer's anger, but now suddenly he saw his own position in a different light. The thought of Sylvia struck him with a frightful pang, but it was a pang of renunciation.

He moistened his dry lips. "How does Alison feel about it now, sir?" he asked.

"She regrets it," answered Mr. Arnold. "She has authorized me to say that she is sorry for her hastiness, and would prefer that the whole incident be stricken out."

Jerome's heart sank. "Then am I to understand, sir," he asked in a strained voice, "that she wishes to go ahead as if nothing had occurred to interfere with our plans."

"Such is her desire," said Mr. Arnold.

"And she does not insist on knowing the contents of the message I received?"

"No. But I think unless there's some particular reason for your not doing so, it would be much better to clear up the cause of the misunderstanding."

"And you don't insist on knowing it yourself?" Jerome demanded, a good deal as one sinking into a quicksand might try to extricate himself by shifting his weight to the other foot.

Mr. Arnold observed the pallor which spread over the features of the younger man.

"If this message is purely of a business character," said he, "I really think that you owe it to me to be guided by my greater experience. But if it is a personal matter which may have to do with a previous love-affair, I am quite content to leave it to your own judgment and sense of honor."

"I told Alison, just as I told you a few moments ago, that it was a business matter," said Jerome wearily. "I find my future prospects to be much altered within the last forty-eight hours. I knew nothing about this until after the wedding ceremony."

MR. ARNOLD did some swift thinking. This statement surprised him considerably, because Jerome had told him frankly on asking Alison's hand in marriage that aside from a few thousand dollars which he had saved, and a small legacy which he might expect to inherit some day from an uncle, he had nothing to offer but his profession and his small but sufficient earnings as the junior partner in a firm of rising architects. It therefore appeared to Mr. Arnold that either some unfortunate investment must have swept away his savings, or that for some reason he might have forfeited his position with the firm.

But he was now given no time to weigh the problem, for Jerome turned to him and asked with a certain grimness:

"Then Alison wishes to consider the incident as closed, sir?"

"Yes," answered the lawyer. "She is waiting to learn the result of my interview with you; so if you feel justified, you have only to call for her with your luggage and carry out your original plans. I can send a clerk to secure the reservations and meet you at the station with the tickets."

"Very well, sir," said Jerome. "No doubt we have both been too hasty. If you will kindly telephone to Alison, I shall call for her within the hour."

Mr. Arnold, with an appearance of greater relief than he actually felt, offered his hand, which Jerome took in a perfunctory and slightly absent-minded way. "Let us hope," said Mr. Arnold, "that matrimony may permanently remove these temperamental infelicities."

Jerome went out with a heart like lead and returned immediately to the hotel, where his first act was to call up Sylvia.

"It's Jerry," said he unsteadily. "Forgive me, Sylvia. I have just had a talk with Mr. Arnold. Alison retracts her statement of yesterday, and there seems no way out of it."

There was a moment's silence; then a steady voice answered: "I said she would, Jerry. Carry on. God bless you! Good-by."

Jerry summoned the porter, sent down his luggage, paid his bill, and stepping into a hotel taxi, directed the driver to the Arnolds' old city home in Gramercy Park. On entering the house, he was met by Alison, whose face was slightly pale and showed the traces of tears. She offered him her lips.

"We've both been very silly, Jerry," said she. "I was nervous and upset."

"Let's forget it, dear," said Jerome in a strained voice. "You're all ready?"

"Yes." She touched the bell, and the butler came from the rear of the house. "Put my things in the taxi, Higgs," said Alison.

They got into the vehicle and were about to move away when a messenger-boy crossed the sidewalk to the door of the house.

"Wait a minute," said Alison, and called to the butler: "Is that for me, Higgs?"

"Yes, Miss—I mean, Mrs. Kenyon."

Alison took the dispatch, and leaning back in the cab, tore open the envelope with a word of apology to Jerome. Glancing at her face, he saw it whiten suddenly, while her large eyes darkened from the dilatation of her pupils. Then she looked at him with an indescribable expression, excitement being the predominant note, mingled with an accent of triumph which was almost cruel. Then, to Jerome's astonishment, she beckoned to the butler, who was

"I never had much confidence in young Crandall," said he, "but it's for you to decide."

standing on the steps waiting respectfully but with a bit of curiosity to see them drive away.

"Higgs!"

"Yes—Mrs. Kenyon."

"Take my things back into the house."

The astonished butler obeyed. Alison turned to Jerome, and her thin carmine lips were wreathed in a feline smile. She offered him her hand.

"Good-by, Jerry," said she. "We've had an awfully close shave from ruining our lives."

Jerome felt his head whirling. "I believe you're right, Alison."

"You don't ask to see *my* dispatch?"

"Why should I, when I refused to show you mine?"

"Well, you might as well know what it says. I'm apt to need your help. An annulment is not like a divorce. Collusion doesn't matter. It's like the canceling of any civil contract by mutual agreement of the parties of the first and second parts. It can be done immediately, and at no great cost."

She handed him the slip of yellow paper. It was dated the morning of the previous day from *(Continued on page 110)*

Illustrated by Philip Lyford

A young man found a black face gazing placidly at him, and departed with a yell of fright.

The distinguished author of "The Proof of the Pudding" and many other noted stories here writes in his best vein the blithe tale of a wild night in the career of a plump, versatile and amiable gentleman.

Mc Gillicuddy

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

WHEN Roger G. McGillicuddy, having reached the age of forty-eight, sold his interest in the well-known drygoods house of McGillicuddy, Parkin & Company, he was merely checking off the first item on a list of things he had long intended to do. No threatened physical collapse, no warning from nerve-specialists, precipitated his retirement. A tendency to obesity was to be watched, but otherwise his doctor assured him of at least twenty years of comfortable life.

McGillicuddy was short, stout and bald, but though he was not blessed with an heroic figure he was nevertheless a person who inspired respect. No one ever thought of calling him "Fatty;" no one slapped him on the back. A forthright manly fellow was McGillicuddy, a gentleman of ideals, but broadly tolerant of human frailty. He had been a generous contributor to the visible supply of hope and cheer in a world that treated him well. Now that he was free, his bachelor state made it possible for him to elect where he should live, and his soul yearned for a community where the bright guidons of youth fluttered in clean stimulating air. It was not for Roger G. McGillicuddy to sit in club corners with the aged and infirm and listen to discussions of dyspepsia and rheumatism cures. If a man is as young as he feels, McGillicuddy was only twenty-five.

As the adopted uncle of the children of half a dozen old friends scattered over the country, he had kept in touch with youth, and running up to Cornford to see the young Watsons, who had just married and settled there, he at once decided that that charming Connecticut town was just the place for him. Barring a few large estates which had been held by the same families for so many years that the owners could afford not to be snobbish, Cornford consisted largely of a type of the young and ambitious that appealed very strongly to McGillicuddy.

A week-end with the Watsons in their red-roofed bungalow, which was linked to Phil's studio by a path Jean had adorned with hollyhocks, awakened in McGillicuddy a longing to possess a duplicate of their compact establishment in which to woo contentment and keep in touch with the sons and daughters of the fine arts, and the agreeable young business men of the Cornford colony.

"How jolly to have you settle here, Uncle Roger!" cried Jean when McGillicuddy broached the subject. "It's the cheeriest place in the world. Even last winter when we'd just come and everything was new and strange, we had plenty to do—such marvelous hospitality! We use the country club house in winter as much as in summer; plenty of dances—and you know you adore dancing! The amateur theatricals are really wonderful. Nearly everybody in the colony is interested in something, and you hear a lot of wonderful talk here."

"If I come," said McGillicuddy, smiling benevolently, "it will be because you're here. And I know you will vouch for me and put me in the way of knowing your friends. But I shouldn't want to be a nuisance—"

"Why, Cornford was created for you! You'd fit right in to everything," Jean declared. "Our friends would simply adore you, and you could be an uncle to all of us, that is if you wouldn't make me jealous."

"Come to think of it, Jean, that Tom Gordon house on the hill road might do for Roger," suggested Watson. "Tom built it with the money he made out of 'The Quitter,' the play that had the long run and is still going. But he's fallen for the movies now, and I just heard today that he's going to stay in California. The house is only two years old, somewhat bigger than this, on a quiet side road and with five acres of land—trees, garden and every little thing."

The thought of McGillicuddy in the Gordon place, which had the most bewitching brook tumbling down right in front of the house, brought Jean to a state of ecstasy. She hadn't heard before that the Gordons weren't coming back.

"Maybe—" She turned to Phil, who like a well-educated husband anticipated her questions.

"Right you are, Jean! They want to sell it furnished as it stands—everything included from the door-mat to the ice-cream freezer."

"Their things are lovely and just as good as new. The Gordons turned the whole business of furnishing and decorating over to Fanny Maury—she's the latest fad in that kind of work—and there isn't an ugly or uncomfortable thing in the house."

Phil busied himself with the telephone to find out just how negotiations might be opened, and got the name of an agent in Stamford who was the authorized representative of the Gordons. The next day Jean drove McGillicuddy over in her runabout to inspect the place. The house was tucked away on a wooded hillside and the brook came singing down the hills just as Jean had said it did. Even with the jacketed furniture contributing its note of forsakenness, it was possible to see that here was a place that invited the presence of all those amiable deities that preside at firesides and create the atmosphere of home.

When McGillicuddy suggested that the house was bigger than he needed, Jean convinced him that it wasn't at all too large, for he would probably want to have friends out for week-ends. And the dining room with its French windows looking off across the hills was perfectly heavenly; and then too was the study, where Gordon had written his plays, which had the cutest fireplace ever fashioned, and—

"You've missed your calling, Jean," said McGillicuddy. "You'd make a wonderful real estate agent. I'll get you to drive me to Stamford to-morrow and close the deal."

EVERY man who climbs into the forties with any sort of spirit or curiosity left in him feels a call to tackle something or other that is wholly out of the orderly course of his life. With some it is an ambition to make a graceful, witty speech before an admiring audience; others, wholly without experience in politics, would fain hold a public office of dignity and trust; still others are secretly beset with a desire to manage an inn—something small and exclusive that would offer all the comforts of home. McGillicuddy had, like most men, dreamed that he would one day figure in a stirring adventure, perhaps rescue a lovely woman in distress. But his own really individual secret aspiration was to appear once—once would satisfy him—as an actor; it was not, however, in the field of the legitimate drama that he pined to disport himself, but as a blackface comedian. All his life he had firmly believed that if he had the chance, he could duplicate the success of the blackface stars in the glorious period when negro minstrelsy touched perihelion.

By the first of October, McGillicuddy was so comfortable and contented that he began to feel that he had been born in Cornford and had lived there all his life. Everyone liked him—he was so agreeable; and his assumption of responsibility for the education of a caddy whose widowed mother down in the village couldn't take in washing any more by reason of chronic rheumatism, had already won him the affection of all Cornfordites.

It was about this time that the Jim Hendersons and Fred Shipleys dropped in on McGillicuddy one evening with a well-feigned air of making the most casual neighborly visit.

"By the way, Mr. McGillicuddy," ventured Henderson when he had screwed his courage to the sticking-point, "we four are the committee for the dramatic club. It doesn't seem fair to pounce on you right at the jump, but we're in a sad mess."

"We certainly are!" laughed Shipley. "Our committee's tackled something much harder than pulling off a play—we're going to open the season with a vaudeville bill, and we want you to help."

"It really wont be hard at all!" Mrs. Henderson threw in. "And we wouldn't ask you if we weren't sure you could do it."

The guileless McGillicuddy didn't know that it's the time-honored custom of a dramatic club committee to bait the trap in just this fashion when they're desperate and have a part to bestow which has been rejected by all the other available talent. But Henderson, being wise in his generation, now realized that here was a prospective victim with whom it was better to deal in a spirit of frankness.

"Now, Mr. McGillicuddy, to put all our cards on the table, we thought we had the bill all arranged with everything we needed, from the acrobatic stunt Bob Newton's going to do, through a typical program in the best style of the twice-daily, winding up with Ned Rangeley—son of the banker, you know—who has a fox-terrier kennel and has been training a bunch of dogs all summer for this show."

"Oh, we don't mean to put you in an act with the trained dogs!" exclaimed Mrs. Shipley, watching McGillicuddy anxiously and not understanding that his face had paled not from resentment at what might prove to be an assault upon his dignity, but from deep concern lest these advances might not after all lead to one of the great desires of his heart.

"But," he ventured with a deprecating wave of the hand, "I'm not even an amateur! To be sure, when I was a young fellow I found it amusing to sing a little—barber-shop chords with a quartet—in my native town, Council Bluffs, Iowa, but—"

"There you are!" cried Henderson with a glance of triumph at his co-conspirators. "You were one of those boys who hang around Main Street on summer nights and get harmony! I might have known it from your speaking voice."

"You do speak beautifully," murmured Mrs. Henderson.

Simms would clap for his pupil till McGillicuddy was able to execute the steps. "I could get you twenty weeks on that act," said Simms.

"Of course, we wouldn't be bothering you if we thought you couldn't score big," said Henderson, warming to his work. "And the act we're here to offer you is something you can work up by yourself, and do in your own way—the more so the better. That's one of the best things about getting up a vaudeville show—you don't have a big cast to fight and keep in order. There'll be a dress rehearsal the night before the show just to be sure everything works smoothly, but for the rest of it, you're your own master."

McGillicuddy's heart fluttered with the agitation of a girl who has just heard her first proposal.

"Do you honestly think I could? And"—he wondered whether they detected the tremor in his voice—"just what—what would you have me do?"

"Oh, don't be angry," cried Dolly Henderson when she saw her spouse hesitate. "But it's a blackface act we thought you could do beautifully, particularly now that we know you can *sing!*"

"Blackface!" repeated McGillicuddy, wondering whether they were mind readers taunting him with the realization of a life's ambition. "Such parts are—difficult—"

"Oh, not for you, Mr. McGillicuddy!" chorused the committee hopefully.

"You're paying me a great compliment," he replied gently, half-fearing that now they had placed the boon within his reach they might snatch it away. "Surely there's some one better qualified—some younger man—"

"There's no younger man than you in the club or in the whole world for that matter!"

This from Mrs. Shipley, who was twenty-three, was enormously satisfying. He was trying to think of a reply when Dolly, who knew exactly when to close an interview, rose.

"It's so nice of you to consent! But I said I knew you wouldn't turn us down when we counted on you *so* much!"

They were all shaking hands with him and telling him he had saved their lives and that the bill was now complete and they hoped he'd call on them for any assistance they might render. And then—they were gone, whizzing down the drive as though fearing he might repent.

The show was only a fortnight distant and McGillicuddy at once became a man of action. A day in New York sufficed to bring him in touch with Tom Simms, an old hand at blackface whose performances McGillicuddy had often watched with the keenest relish and envy. Simms being broke and without bookings, readily accepted McGillicuddy's generous offer. The idea of coaching a retired business man of McGillicuddy's figure for a blackface part tickled him, and he manifested an intelligent and sympathetic interest in McGillicuddy's ambition as they faced each other at luncheon in the White Goods Club.

"Better stick to old stuff," the professional advised. "You can't educate an audience in fifteen minutes, and you don't want to risk a minute more than that. Do the patter first and then edge into the song. Might be better," he added, appraising McGillicuddy's girth with a critical eye, "to spout the patter with a slow hitch-walk—to keep it from getting monotonous. Hold yourself calm-like till you've pulled the song so you wont pant like a winded hound when you sing. Then you come back sort o' absented-minded-like and do your dance as though you'd just happened to think of it."

McGillicuddy had always supposed that the dusky comedians of his adoration wrote their own patter, and he was deeply interested when Simms bore him to an upper room on Broadway where he bought from a specialist in that form of literature six yards of manuscript monologue as carelessly as though it were only so much calico.

Simms and three battered trunks were established at Cornford the following evening. Simms proved to be a thoroughly companionable fellow, and McGillicuddy rejoiced to be playing host to a man so amusing and so rich in reminiscences. When Simms would light a fresh cigar after recounting some disastrous experience on the road and exclaim, "But it's the only life!" McGillicuddy felt that he had spent far too many years studying credits and watching the woolen market.

At the end of a week Simms expressed his entire satisfaction with his pupil's progress. McGillicuddy was to go on the bill as Hezekiah Mazooma, a professor of astronomy out of work. A mustard-colored waistcoat with glass buttons as big as walnuts was the most prominent feature of his costume. A silk hat of an ancient block, a tall white collar and flowing red scarf, a patched and frayed frock coat, trousers in huge black and white checks, scarlet socks showing above a pair of elongated shoes—thus arrayed and with his face blacked and his head covered with a kinky wig, by his finger-prints only could Roger G. McGillicuddy have been identified as a former member of the firm of McGillicuddy, Parkin & Company.

"Say," exclaimed Simms with a grin of approval, "I'm sorry for the act that follows you!"

SIMMS taught McGillicuddy the patter line by line, giving him the proper intonations and gestures. The song was not difficult, as McGillicuddy really had something of a voice, and Simms sang with him till he could carry the tune alone. As McGillicuddy had never given up dancing and had the light step of most stout men who dance at all, Simms concentrated on this feature of the act. He would stop hammering the piano and clap for his pupil until finally McGillicuddy was able to execute the steps without accompaniment of any kind.

"Guess you've got that about right," Simms remarked finally. "Just hold 'er right there. I'll bet money I could get you twenty weeks on that act. And if you wasn't so well fixed, I'd tease you to go out with me. You certainly put it all over the last partner I had."

Simms had agreed to remain at Cornford till after the show, but near the end of the second week he was called away by an imperative summons to Kansas City to take the time of one of the fraternity whose act had failed to make good. However, McGillicuddy clung to him to the last minute in order that the Watsons might view his act while his preceptor was still within reach.

"I'm going to telegraph Papa to come on for the show!" cried Jean after witnessing McGillicuddy's performance. "He'd never forgive me if I let him miss seeing you! That dance is perfectly marvelous, Mr. Simms! And when he pulls his hat over his eyes just before his exit and sticks that big cigar in his mouth—well, I'll simply pass away."

"I guess they'll set up, all right!" said Simms grimly. "It's a thirteen-minute turn, and there aint a dead second in it."

And so Simms departed into the West, much richer than he came, followed by McGillicuddy's gratitude and fervent good wishes.

AT the dress rehearsal McGillicuddy was a pattern of ease and confidence. He had made up at home, down to the minutest detail, and drove himself to the club in his smart new runabout. He had carefully measured the stage in the big ballroom and was satisfied of its solidity and knew by experiment on several quiet mornings just how many steps would get him off with his dance. When his turn was called, he merely went out and did his act exactly as he had been doing it under Simms' direction at home.

The committee was exultant. Even though the one-act play hadn't turned out well, and Sam Trenton's sleight-of-hand tricks were a little old, and Tommy Stedman and Ethel Marston weren't as smooth as they might have been in their musical number, McGillicuddy was a tower of strength against which nothing could prevail. He was a grand old sport to go to so much trouble just to please them; several very pretty girls told him that he was just too sweet. And the young men chaffed him and told him he was a great fraud for pretending to be a novice, for surely at some period in his life he must have been an actor.

"I like your nerve in driving over with your warpaint on!" said Henderson. "If your machine broke down and you had to get some honest Connecticut farmer out of bed, you'd just about scare him to death!"

"It would be a pity to do that," replied McGillicuddy, with a smile which his blackened face made so grotesque that the admiring group of which he was the center laughed uproariously. "It's more comfortable to make up and clean up at home. And as for my face, I'm protected by the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution."

"If I'd got my make-up down as fine as you have, I'd stick to it till after the show," remarked Ned Rangely, who was feeling good because his terriers had acquitted themselves splendidly.

"Would you have me sleep with this stuff on my face?" demanded McGillicuddy good-naturedly. "At the present price of linen, it would be expensive."

"I'll pay you for all damage to your pillows and bet you a hundred dollars—the winner to turn the pot over to the French orphans—that you wont stay dressed up till tomorrow night's show!"

"Don't do it, Roger!" Watson intervened. "You need to rest, and that stove-polish effect must be uncomfortable."

"Not at all," McGillicuddy replied. "It would please me to see Rangeley contributing to so worthy a cause as the French orphans, and I accept the bet."

"Does that mean that you're going to sleep in that costume? Don't let Ned tease you into making so foolish a bet," pleaded Jean Watson, who had just joined the group. "Ned, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"It's a perfectly good offer," said McGillicuddy. "You may always trust me to keep myself comfortable. I will appear here at seven-thirty tomorrow night just as I am, without having washed my face or taken off my shoes."

"The most I can hope for," Rangeley laughed, "is that some old friends will knock at your door suddenly tomorrow morning and find you transformed into the king of the Congo."

"I suppose it will not be breaking my contract with Rangeley if I leave my stage hat here," McGillicuddy remarked as Jean turned up the collar of his ulster. "It's so high I can't drive in it."

"Of course, Roger; and do take care of yourself! If you should be sick tomorrow, the show would be a dismal failure."

"I've told Ned everything!" she said. "But how can I ever thank you!"

WITH his usual thoroughness McGillicuddy had pondered the maps of southeastern Connecticut till he could find his way about in the dark. His roadster was a car of power, and having mastered its intricacies, he was not in the least disturbed by the thought of becoming marooned. There was a shortcut from the club-house to his home, and though the road was rough, he usually chose it for the wilder fling of the landscape by day and the joy of a certain hill which at night touched the sentiment in him with an unobstructed view of the stars. He had never in his forty-eight years felt better. He threw down the windshield to enjoy the bite of the keen frosty air, and bent to the wheel with a grin on his face. An old moon gazed at him benignantly, and the great phalanx of stars seemed to draw him under their special protection.

In his noctural flights over these roads he had rarely encountered anyone. As he shifted gears for a steep descent, he was surprised to find the lights of a machine glaring at him from the foot of the hill. The violent whirr of the engine indicated that the unknown traveler was in trouble; and McGillicuddy, cautiously directing his own car, speculated as to just what he could do to assist him. The driver of the stranded car, seeing the machine descending, dimmed his lights and planted himself in the middle of the road.

The plight of the machine he was approaching so filled McGillicuddy's thoughts that he forgot his disguise, a fact of which he was forcibly reminded when he brought his car to a standstill and the driver of the other machine peered in at him and bellowed to a companion as yet unseen:

"It's a darky! Keep quiet and let me manage him!"

The voice betrayed irritation. And McGillicuddy, who never permitted himself to be irritated about anything, was grieved that anyone should be annoyed even under the provocation of a breakdown at midnight in a lonely road.

To the superficial observer, at least, he looked undeniably like a negro. The man in the road was a stranger—McGillicuddy was satisfied of this, and McGillicuddy decided that it would be inex-

pedient to attempt to explain that his affiliation with the dark races was only temporary. But he was immediately made aware that it was not the purpose of the gentleman in the road to enter into conversation. For with a quick gesture the fellow flourished a revolver before the handsome brown eyes of the astonished McGillicuddy.

Pistols had never figured in McGillicuddy's life. He was not afraid of them; he was merely mistrustful of all such symbols of violence, and he had made it a life-rule to avoid them as he avoided fried meats and bad investments. Simms had taught him a negro stage-dialect, which though it would never pass muster with the laborious students of negro speech, might assist him in establishing himself as a consistent character with this fellow.

"Doan shoot, boss! Please doan shoot!" he cried, holding up his hands in their big driving gloves.

"Shoot, you miserable fool! I have no intention of shooting you! But I've got to have your car; do you understand?"

"I gets you, boss!" admitted McGillicuddy meekly.

"Whose car is this, and what are you doing up here at this time of night?"

"I's just been taking a guest home from my boss' house. They was havin' a li'l poker-party, suh!"

"Well, I got lost coming through the hills, and my engine's gone bad, and I've got to get to Stamford in a hurry."

"Yes suh," McGillicuddy assented.

"I'll pay you well for taking me over there. I guess you can carry three?"

"Guess I kin do that all right, boss!"

"Turn round and be mighty quick about it! I've got a lady with me. Do you understand?"

McGillicuddy agreed to everything, though he understood nothing except that he was pressed into a service that might or might not be to his taste.

"If you try to bolt, I'll pump six nice little bullets into you! Do you get me?"

"I suttingly do!" said McGillicuddy, blinking as the pistol was again brought to his attention.

The gentleman who had commandeered his car in this high-handed manner was young—not more than twenty-five, McGillicuddy surmised. In spite of his bold front, he betrayed a nervousness a casual mishap on the road hardly explained. It occurred to McGillicuddy that with a little patience the refractory engine might be brought to its senses, but a hint to this effect only evoked a sharp rejoinder from the young gentleman that he had no time to waste in tinkering the machine.

Again bidden to turn his car, McGillicuddy did so, not without difficulty, as the road was narrow. The evolution executed, he found his captor waiting for him with the companion to whom he had referred. The headlights gave McGillicuddy a fleeting glimpse of a young woman heavily veiled, with a polo-coat buttoned tightly about her slender figure.

"All right now," said the young man briskly, when he had helped the girl to a seat beside McGillicuddy. "Just a minute till I get our suitcases."

A suggestion from McGillicuddy that he would stow the suitcases in the locker was promptly rejected.

"Don't move or I'll blow your head off. It'll only take a minute, Grace."

WHILE the excited young man was at work at the rear of the car, McGillicuddy turned on the dash-light to inspect his speedometer and measure the day's mileage against his supply of gas. Thus occupied, he was astonished to hear a sob from the passenger beside him—a sob tremulous and pitiful that instantly challenged his sympathy. He made bold to turn toward her, and through the veil met the gaze of her dark eyes luminous with tears searching his own pleadingly. In his haste the young man was making awkward work of storing the bags.

"Want me to help yuh, boss?" called McGillicuddy, sticking his head out of the car.

"No; stay where you are!"

Thus admonished, McGillicuddy drew in his head. Immediately he became conscious that a hand had touched his arm, a singular thing, indeed. She was overwrought, tired, unhappy, perhaps in need of aid. He was vastly pleased by that light touch on his sleeve. Adventure stirred in McGillicuddy's blood. Here might be an opportunity of which he had dreamed, a chance to test his mettle in a romantic situation.

There was a moment's silence, save for the grumbling of the young gentleman behind, and the purring of the engine; then the veiled face bent toward him and she whispered brokenly:

"I can't go on! It's all a terrible mistake. I want to go—home!"

"Suttinly, miss; yo' doan need to go no place you doan wan' to!"

This, also, in a whisper, with all the kindness and assurance McGillicuddy could give the words. She was appealing to him with the confidence of a child, as though knowing instinctively that in spite of his dusky countenance, he possessed a kind and generous heart. And this was pleasing, enormously pleasing and stimulating to the soul of McGillicuddy.

The lid of the luggage-compartment banged warningly.

"We're eloping—we are going to be married—but I want to go back! Please—please help me!"

"You jes' trust me, li'l girl; I goan to help you!" McGillicuddy replied hurriedly.

The young man sprang into the car, forcing the girl a little closer to McGillicuddy.

"Burn 'er up now! We've lost a lot of time!"

"All right, boss; I'll sure do the best I can!" McGillicuddy answered amiably.

AN order for speed at the foot of a hill from a gentleman who had just failed to negotiate that identical ascent was ridiculous, but McGillicuddy ignored it. With a sure hand he gained the top, circled round the country club to avoid the possibility of an encounter with any belated members, and found a road which if followed would connect with a thoroughfare that led directly into Stamford.

"No foolishness! I don't know these back roads, but if you play any trick on me, it's going to be the worse for you!"

"I was jes' thinkin' maybe you'd rather keep off the main roads," McGillicuddy replied with a chuckle Simms had taught him.

"That's all right, but be sure you know what you're doing!"

McGillicuddy knew exactly what he was doing, or more strictly, he knew what he hoped to do. He did not like being ordered about in this cavalier fashion; and even more, he did not like the idea of a girl being carried away and married after the enterprise had ceased to interest her.

Now that they were on their way, the young man addressed himself to the girl.

"It's all coming out right, Grace. That infernal car never acted up before. Everything's ready for us at Stamford. I telephoned Bill Wakely at the Pilgrim Garage to be right there with everything set. As soon as we're married, we'll skip right on to New York."

To these assurances Grace made no reply. Whatever had prompted her flight, it was enough for McGillicuddy that she had repented. The manner in which she had whispered the word *home,* with the quaver of a homesick child, had touched him.

Connecticut slept the sleep of the righteous. They met no one, and when they struck a smooth strip of road, McGillicuddy exacted the highest speed from his machine. But he was thinking intently, covering every possibility of failure in effecting the safe return of Grace to the home from which her lover had beguiled her.

He must appear to be confident of the way, and yet as his plan took definite form, he decided that it would better suit his purpose not to appear too sure. He slowed up once to flash his spot on a sign and hesitated, muttering to himself. The few minutes' delay again aroused the lover's wrath, and he abused McGillicuddy roundly for his stupidity.

A quarter of an hour passed with easy going. McGillicuddy studying the landscape carefully to keep his bearings. Then a red light glimmered ahead, and a moment later it caught the eye of his male passenger.

"Here's a nice mess! I thought you said you knew these roads!"

"This road was all right yestiddy, boss! It suttingly am strange about that light."

He stopped the car well away from the light, and raised his spot-light to survey the road beyond. To the right of the crossways there was a strip of excellent road that would lend itself well to his purpose.

"Guess I better have a look out yonder, boss. Maybe we can get through."

"You black fool, you wouldn't know a road if you saw it! I'll take a look at it."

"Jes' as you say, boss!" replied McGillicuddy humbly.

"Detour four miles right," the young man read from a sign beside the light, and in his rage he seized the unoffending lantern and dashed it violently to the ground. (*Continued on page 126*)

The Screws

WILBUR HALL

A well-liked Red Book writer here contributes a powerful story of big business, and little; of high politics, and low; of strong men, and weak.

Illustrated by C. R. Weed

The new arrival was an ex-convict, Malcolm Gaffey.

ROOM NINETEEN of Sailor Hammack's unsavory lodging-house was dirty, cold and comfortless. It was furnished only with a round-topped table, half a dozen battered wooden chairs, a rusty sheet-iron stove that was never lighted, a mildewed old sofa, and a plentitude of spittoons. The floor was partly covered with linoleum, so greasy and faded no one ever knew it was there except when he caught a heel or a chair-leg in one of its many holes. There was one window,—a long, narrow casement, heavily barred without,—but it was useless: it furnished no ventilation, for it was always closed and locked; it furnished no light, for it was opaque with accumulated dust and cobwebs. The only light in the place came from three gas-jets that hung on one pipe in the center and that were so shaded by a metal reflector as to throw all illumination downward in a circle closely coinciding with the circular table-top. That table-top had once been of green felt; now, like the linoleum, it was only noticeable because of its deficiencies.

There was also in Room Nineteen a perpetual odor compounded of gas, tobacco-smoke, liquors and the smell of men, not all of whom were ever entirely clean. There were two doors to the room, one shutting off the corridor of the lodging-house and never unbolted, the other opening directly on a steep and dark pair of stairs that led downward to a storeroom at the rear of Hammack's saloon. This second entrance was the one always used. Finally, Room Nineteen had a sliding panel in one corner which, when opened, disclosed a well leading to the saloon and fitted with a makeshift dumb-waiter. It was, in brief, not a room to feed the imagination, but rather to stir it. In it fortunes had been made and lost, a great city's political destinies determined, and conspiracies planned (and several times consummated) that affected the welfare of many and that terminated the political or physical life of not a few. It had the appearance of being a secret and mysterious rendezvous—and it was.

Into Room Nineteen, dimly lighted by but one of the three gas-jets, there came one night shortly before nine o'clock, a large, carefully dressed man who had felt his way up those dark stairs many times in years gone by, but who had not seen the place now for half a decade. He closed the door behind him and stood a moment quietly looking about. His face, almost hidden by a soft hat pulled low and by the collar of his heavy overcoat turned high, revealed nothing of his thoughts. When he took off the hat, as he did presently, the countenance disclosed was that of a prosperous and important personage of fifty—full, well-colored, smooth—in which smoldered dark, inscrutable eyes whose lids were slightly pouched, the whole crowned by dark hair touched with streaks of gray. It would have been difficult to find any other characteristics in the face; yet the most careless observer would have guessed that the man himself was suffering from some depression that he could neither shake off nor hide. When he took out his watch, the timepiece proved a trivial but startling confirmation of the vague idea one formed of him: it was attached to an expensive and beautiful chain, but was itself a common nickel-plated affair, ticking offensively in its bulky case.

As he returned it to its pocket, there were steps on the stairs, and the stairway door opened to admit another man.

The newcomer stood on the threshold, giving the room and its occupant a quick survey.

"Well, Babbin?" he said.

"Come in, Mr. Elder. I was afraid you might fail me."

"I'm always willing to take a chance."

"I suppose that's how you contrive to pull off your biggest news stories."

"That's one way, Mr. Babbin."

He took off his overcoat and threw it over the back of a chair, then sat down. Babbin noticed, with instant appreciation, that the editor chose the chair that faced the stairway door.

"We might as well be comfortable," he said, seating himself against one wall.

Elder watched him, not so much curiously as expectantly. There followed a pause. At length the newspaper man remarked again:

"Well, Babbin?"

"Well, Mr. Elder, I'm waiting for—another man."

"Judge Hanchett?"

"Lord, no! No. No use springing the trap on Hanchett until the case is complete, is there?"

"I don't know, Mr. Babbin." Elder smiled. "I'm not in on anything yet, you know."

Babbin stared. "I thought the Weasel—"

"Saul, you mean? Saul only telephoned me that you and he had Hanchett dead to rights, and that I could sit into the game if I cared to."

"Oh!" Babbin studied. Rather abruptly he demanded: "You'd give a lot to get Judge Hanchett, wouldn't you, Mr. Elder?"

"A good deal—yes. But it must be done quickly."

"Before Tuesday's elections?"

"That's it."

"Is it—personal? Your grudge against the Judge?"

"No. I've never used the *Journal* to carry out my personal revenges." The editor paused, wrinkled his forehead. "In the last few years I don't think I have had any personal grudges. Against Hanchett I have one complaint—he controls a reactionary majority on the supreme bench of the State. He betrays the people in every decision he writes, or dictates to his fellows."

"But your haste to get him now—before Tuesday?" Babbin persisted.

"I can explain that. The supreme court of the State has announced that it will hand down the decision in the 'direct legislation' cases Saturday morning. If the court decides against the constitutional amendments of 'seventeen, it will mean that all our popular reforms—the things I have been fighting for in this State for twelve years—are scrapped, just so much waste paper!"

"And you think that would defeat Governor Millender?"

"Don't you, Babbin? You haven't been out of politics so long that you can't see the effect such a decision would have."

"I see that it would be a body-blow to the reform element."

"Which elected Millender two years ago by a margin of a few hundred votes only," the editor added.

Babbin considered the situation.

"The Weasel had some such idea," he said. "But since the Delta Land scheme went under, Mr. Elder, I've had too many troubles of my own, to watch politics." He paused a moment, then added: "Your idea is that Hanchett will decide with the three old-guard judges—"

"No question about it. Against the amendments! Yet they are as sound as the Constitution of the United States, if the supreme court pleases to say so."

"Then if you could put pressure on Hanchett—"

"If I can put the screws on him, I am going to save the State for decent government. It is that close!" The editor extended his big right hand, and with his thumbnail, measured off on the nail of his little finger the width of a hair. "Do you see my motive, now?"

"Of course, Mr. Elder. I can see your side. I fought you long enough to understand you. But you must remember that I've had a tough year. A man can't lose a fortune and his wife,—he can't see his daughters snubbed and ostracized and put to office-work,—he can't see everything he has go to smash, and still keep his mind on current events! Damn it all, Mr. Elder, you mustn't forget that I am Eric Babbin, president of the Delta Lands Corporation, with the penitentiary doors gaping for me!"

The man wiped his forehead, relaxed in his chair, and took out a cigar—a stogie. His hands trembled as he lighted it.

"I'm sorry I blew up that way, Elder," he said in a different voice.

"Don't mind me," the editor said, smiling. "And don't ask sympathy, either. You remember that the *Journal* exposed the Delta company three times before the smash. And perhaps you read some of the letters we printed from stockholders and land-buyers in your enterprise."

"I did. I'm not asking for sympathy. But you have the wrong pig by the ear."

"Is this your alibi?"

"I have none. I'm willing to take my share of the responsibility standing up. What makes me see red—what brought me here tonight to meet you and the Weasel and his man—is that the real crook is getting out from under."

The editor frowned.

"Do you mean your auditor? But he only stole a few hundred from your safe!"

"Oh, I'm not talking about Bain. Bain is small-fry. I mean the man who planned the smash of the Delta and who wrecked it and who got away with the loot!"

Elder leaned forward, arms on the table. It was plain that he was completely nonplused.

"Wait a minute, Babbin," he demanded. "Let me get this straight. I thought the Delta Corporation went into a receiver's hands. Loot? There wasn't any!"

"Wasn't there?" Babbin laughed bitterly. "There was something over a quarter of a million in securities and cash. Did you ever hear of a court's receiver finding everything?"

"Snell hasn't found much—that's a fact. But if there is so much behind your smash-up, why haven't you talked before, Babbin?"

Babbin shrugged.

"Because, of all the suckers who went into Delta Lands, I was the first and the biggest. The man who got away with the assets caught me with pretty bait, right at the beginning. There wasn't the scratch of a pen to show that he was in the organization at all. I was president. I was general manager. I was the Delta Lands Corporation. And now I am going to weave jute-sacks in the penitentiary!"

"Oh!" The editor leaned back, the frown still on his face. "I see. You couldn't prove a word of this?"

"Not a syllable."

"Do you want to tell me who your man was? Do I know him?"

"I think so."

"Local man?"

"Yes."

"You're not going to name him, though?"

Two furtive, unlovely men entered, bearing a suitcase.

Suddenly Babbin was transformed. His face was tortured into a mask of hatred; his hands clenched, and he rose to his feet and came, in one stride, to the round-topped table.

"Am I going to name him?" he cried, raising a fist. "By God, Mr. Elder, that's what I brought you here to do! The man who made me a homeless outcast, broke up my family, and set my two girls to work for their bread is the Honorable Maxwell Hanchett, justice of the supreme court of this State!"

He brought his fist down on the table with such force that it jumped from the floor.

The editor was a large man himself, with a rather heavy face relieved by kindly human lines and lights. He was the worst hated, the most feared, and one of the best loved men in the State. From his days as a cub reporter he had been a crusader. He fought with both fists and a trenchant pen. He had turned up more crookedness, exposed more sham, spot-lighted more obscure and vicious corners in politics and society than any other man in the West. And for a

pastime he took convicts from the State prisons and turned them loose on his home ranch to give them a chance! He had heard revelations, life-stories, confessions from all sorts and conditions. He had been approached by every known variety of scalawag, blackmailer, stool-pigeon, detective and man-trapper, but he had never been fooled. Quack confessions he nailed instantly.

He knew now that Eric Babbin was telling the truth.

"Sit down, Babbin," he said, in a moment. "I don't need to tell you that I am surprised at your story. You must have guessed I would be, even though I knew that Max Hanchett was interested in many enterprises. For the last twelve years he has been making money. But no one guessed that he was in the Delta Corporation."

Babbin sat down, swallowed, and became again the quiet, sure, calm man of affairs the world knew. He relighted his stogie, nodded to the editor.

"No one will ever guess it," he said calmly. "I'm the goat."

"I'm afraid you are, Babbin. There is one thing more I would like to understand."

"Well?"

"Where does the Weasel come in on this?"

"I'm paying him."

"Oh! Yes, I've heard the Weasel would do anything for money—even to double-crossing his friends and his political bosses. But unless you are able to pay him well—"

"I'm not able to, Mr. Elder—but I'm doing it."

"How much?"

Babbin took a pocketbook from his overcoat and threw it to the table. Under an elastic running through the book were two bank-notes, each for five thousand dollars.

Elder whistled. "That's quite a sum of money for a bankrupt," he observed impersonally.

Babbin smiled and nodded again.

"I saved a little from the wreckage. In the last week or so I have managed to dispose of a few things we got out of the house before it went. My boy sold his ponies. Look here, Elder!"

With a gesture that would have been melodramatic if it had not been so spontaneous, Babbin threw back his overcoat. Under it was a worn and almost shabby smoking-jacket. He pulled from a fob pocket in his trousers his great nickeled watch. Then he held out his left hand, palm down.

"Maybe you remember the big diamond I had? Your reporters wrote it up once, I remember, in one of your stories about the Delta. Well, it's gone with the rest—into those bills!"

"Do you mean that you are putting everything you have into this plant to get Hanchett?"

"That's exactly what I mean. I wasn't going to tell you, or anyone. But you've dragged it out of me."

Gaffey started back, for the face that was thrust forward at his shoulder was that of Mr. Justice Maxwell Hanchett.

The dramatic elements of the situation caught the editor up, and for a moment he contemplated them. Then he returned to the business in hand.

"It looks as though you are in earnest, Babbin. But how are you going to get Hanchett?"

"His foot slipped—just once. The Weasel found the slip."

"And brought it to you for sale?"

"Yes. He had suspected, from things he knew, that I would be a good market. He told me he would have gone to you except that you don't usually pay for your information."

"That's correct. I might have paid something for this. What did he ask?"

"Twenty-five thousand. I didn't have that much, of course. We compromised on all I could get my hands on."

"Was that slip of Hanchett's a real slip? I mean, can I use it?"

Babbin chuckled. "You don't suppose I'd put a last ten thousand on a dark horse, do you, Mr. Elder?"

"Let me have an outline of it."

"I'm sorry, but you will have to wait. You don't take my

word for anything in the whole case, you understand. I have been studying the matter over for a week—ever since the Weasel first brought it to me. At first I thought I would go to the district attorney with it. But I saw that wouldn't do."

"No, you were right. Sanders would cover it up."

"And tip off Hanchett. Exactly! Then I thought of Governor Millender. But you know how the old gentleman is—slow and careful and suspicious. He's been sold so often. And besides, he might give Hanchett a chance to slip out quietly and disappear."

"You expect Hanchett to resign, I take it?"

The bankrupt sat back for a moment, and his face colored until it was aflame.

"Expect him to?" he echoed. "Mr. Elder, if Max Hanchett doesn't settle down in his chair and go out—pff!—like that, from his weak heart, when we confront him with what we have, he will sign a resignation as fast as he can write his name on it. Expect? Here!"

Babbin reached forward, picked up his pocket case, took from it three slips of paper, replaced the book in his overcoat pocket, and handed the slips to Elder. The editor took them. They were triplicates of a typed letter, running:

The Honorable Silas Millender,
Governor's Mansion.
My dear Governor:
For personal reasons, having nothing to do with my relations either with you or my associates, I am compelled to offer you my resignation, with the request that it be accepted by you to take effect at once. Yours very truly,

Associate Justice, Supreme Court of————

BABBIN waited until the editor had read the lines.

"One copy for the Governor, one for you, and one for me," he explained. "Lay them on the table, Mr. Elder. And here!" He leaned forward and put beside them on the table a cheap fountain pen, uncapped, and with the bluish tinge of ink staining the nib.

"That's how sure I am!" he cried.

The editor looked at his watch.

"It's nine-thirty now," he said, half to himself. "North could have the inside made up in an hour; Parmenter could make a layout; and Morphy and Armstrong could do three columns by eleven. That would put us on the street in time to catch the late theater crowds—and to meet all the newspaper trains outside. Um-m-m!" He turned to Babbin, who was watching him keenly and who seemed to understand clearly enough for his purposes the vernacular in which the editor spoke.

"Just tell me in a few words what you charge Hanchett with," he demanded. "If it is as big as you think, I can get out extras tonight, but there is no time to waste."

"It is another man's story," Babbin answered promptly. "He will be here any minute. And when he is through, you can close in on Hanchett—"

"Hold on. though. What if Hanchett should be out of town?"

"He isn't." Babbin smiled. "He is at the Alcazar Theater now; after that, he is going to the Belmont for supper with Morgan Faber and a party."

"You seem to have checked up on him pretty closely."

"Not I. It was the Weasel." And Babbin added: "He knows how to earn his money when he starts in."

"All right. Let's not waste time. In ten words—what is your indictment?"

"Why, it can't be done in ten words. A little while ago you said you knew that Hanchett had been making money for twelve years."

"Yes—about that time."

"You remember the Slade will case, in 1910?"

"Yes."

"After years of litigation it went to the supreme court—had two hearings."

"Yes. The first time the court refused to order a new trial. Then, as I remember it, some new point came up and was argued at length."

"That's almost correct. Only the new point wasn't argued at length. The court refused to listen to it—said it was sheer impertinence, or words to that effect."

"I'd forgotten. Well?"

"As the case stood then, the wife and her family were to get something like eight or ten millions, while Charley Slade, the son, was to have the interest on a few hundred thousand. He was a rank outsider."

"But he won!" the editor said, starting. "Of course! I'd forgotten."

"He won!" Babbin echoed, rubbing his hands. "In the first hearing the court stood four to three in favor of the widow's claim: Arbuthnot, Jones, Daly and Hanchett."

"But on the second hearing—"

"Max Hanchett changed his vote."

The editor's face set—he stared at the table-top for a moment, thinking deeply. Then he said slowly:

"What did he get for it?"

"Harbor City Water Company bonds."

"How much?"

"Plenty—enough to start him on the way to wealth."

"Were the bonds transferred to him direct?"

"That's the other man's story, Mr. Elder. But they were transferred."

"You have the record of transfer?"

Babbin's mouth dropped; his hands fell slack on his knees.

"I—I don't know."

"We would have to have something as tangible as that, you know."

"Couldn't you—wouldn't you be willing to risk— Wait!"

He jumped up, ran to the sliding panel in the corner and took out a telephone hidden there. He gave a number the editor did not catch; presently he obtained his connection and spoke:

"Is Saul there? . . . . No? Take a message for him. Have him call Babbin. . . . . All right. . . . . Good! Put him on the wire. . . . . Saul? . . . . This is Babbin. Our case isn't complete without the records showing that transfer of. . . . . What? . . . . Oh, thank God! . . . . Why, about half an hour, I should say. Yes, make it half an hour, if the other man is ready. . . . . All right. We're waiting for him. Good-by!"

He wiped his face with a frayed handkerchief. When he laughed, there was a hysterical catch in his voice.

"The Weasel thinks of everything!" he exclaimed. "He has located those books; and two of his—friends are—borrowing them tonight. They will be here."

"Friends?" Elder echoed, mildly surprised. "A burglary, eh?"

"I suppose so. But what do you care?"

"I don't care," the editor returned, rising swiftly, as one who reaches a decision and acts upon it impulsively. "Is that a telephone I can use?"

"Sure. We had it connected up for you this afternoon. Go ahead!"

In a moment Elder had his connection.

"Hello, North," he said, biting off his words. "This is Mr. Elder. . . . . Never mind that. I want you to rout out the composing room and press gang for a midnight extra. Make up the inside with the livest stuff in the seven o'clock. Call Morphy and Armstrong, or if you can't locate them, get Field and Miss Bartlett! . . . . Right! . . . . Wait, and I'll tell you. Send one reporter to Hammack's saloon—you know where it is? . . . . Well, they'll know. On Front Street, near Dupont—upstairs. Hammack will tell him. Have a layout made by the art department for three columns; I'll come back in time to find the cuts. . . . . No, it's a graft case with a bearing on Tuesday's elections. Better use a two-column of Governor Millender on the inside, and run it with a rewrite of that campaign stuff we used Wednesday—that will have to do. . . . . No, nothing sure yet. And North! Call Barbour at the capitol and tell him to get the Governor's secretary out of bed to have Millender ready for an interview any time before midnight. . . . . It's Hanchett, if we land him—and you'd better put somebody at a column of review of the 'direct legislation' cases—Morphy knows them best. . . . . Don't call me unless you have to, but I'm in Room Nineteen at Sailor Hammack's. . . . . Yes. . . . . Yes. . . . . That's right. 'By!"

As he turned from the instrument, the editor found Babbin at his elbow.

"The Weasel's man is outside," he said in a lowered tone. "Are you ready for him?"

"Yes," Elder answered. And he sat down expectantly, facing the door.

AARON SAUL, better known as the Weasel, was a man the editor of the *Journal* was anxious to know. Of him and his activities he knew a great deal—a great deal of generalization, report, rumor and reputation that it would have been impossible to use in print in any fashion. A jury-briber, a procurer of perjurers and thugs, a confidant of the denizens of the underworld, a power because of his acquaintance with, or possession of, an

infinite number of dangerous secrets, and indirectly involved in most, if not all, of the *sub rosa* political deals, conspiracies, arrangements and pacts of a State enormously interested and concerned in politics, the Weasel was, nevertheless, very little more than a legend to most men, including Editor Elder. It was doubtful whether more than a dozen persons in the city knew him to speak to, improbable that anyone knew him well. All sorts of tales were told of him, all manner of horrible crimes ascribed to him, all kinds of powers and capabilities accredited to him. And this was the more surprising because he was fairly definitely described as a small, mild, quiet person, petty and mean in his habits and aspirations, a victim of some consuming drug addiction, and finally and wholly untrustworthy. For money Saul would do anything—literally anything!

Living the sort of life he did, and having the sort of associates he must,—if, indeed, he had any at all!—it was a source of continual wonder to those who knew of him that he was not poisoned in some dive, knifed in some dark back-room, or shot down in some tortuous alleyway. There could be only two explanations: one that he held too many secrets of others and was, therefore, too valuable; one that none could more than suspect his connection with any of the sinister happenings to which he was probably privy. Editor Elder had seen the Weasel twice, but he had been baffled to recall, after those chance and casual meetings, anything about the man at all. His appearance, his dress, his manner—even the few words he had uttered—seemed to have left an impression so slight, or so vague, as to be impossible of re-creation in memory. He smiled slightly now, waiting opposite the stairway door, to think that at last he was to see the Weasel face to face, with leisure, in spite of the pressing importance and the dramatic nature of what he might expect in the next few minutes, to obtain and fix in his mind a clean-cut likeness of the mysterious and elusive character.

BUT the individual whom Babbin admitted came alone, moving with a peculiar, shuffling tread, and blinking in the light. He was a lean, stooped man, who seemed very old and weary, yet who, from his face and manner, could not have been much over forty. He took off his cloth cap with a humility that was almost repulsive, and revealed iron-gray hair, thin and stringy. His eyes had a haunted look, his face a peculiar, indescribable pallor, in spite of the points of color on either cheek-bone; and he held his cloth cap in his hands against his breast with an air shockingly timorous and deferential. Benton Elder had seen the marks too often to be in doubt: the new arrival was an ex-convict.

"Who is this?" he asked sharply, turning to Babbin.

"This is Malcolm Gaffey, Mr. Elder. Don't you remember helping to get his petition for parole acted on last month?"

"Gaffey? Oh, yes." He rose on his long, powerful legs, and stretched out a hand to the man. "I'm glad to know you, Gaffey," he said in his big, warm tones. "Sit down."

"Thank you, Mr. Elder." The man shuffled into a chair near the table, putting his hands on the edge and fumbling nervously with the cloth cap. "They told me you helped to get me out. I'm —I'm much obliged."

"Not at all, Gaffey. One of our boys looked you up—Eddy, wasn't it? A reporter."

The ex-convict's face brightened momentarily. "Oh, Mr. Eddy? He works for you? He's a fine boy, Mr. Elder."

"Eddy told me you had been railroaded to 'the big house.' In nineteen-ten, wasn't it?"

"Sentenced on a frame-up, October eighth, nineteen hundred and ten, at three-eight in the afternoon—yes sir. Fifteen years!"

Babbin, the ruined capitalist, threw aside his stogie, long since burned out. "Mr. Elder," he began, "Gaffey was railroaded to the penitentiary because he knew too much. If you want to confirm that part of the story, I can put you in touch with the man who arranged the whole plot against Gaffey, furnished the perjured witnesses and the false evidence, and managed the whole enterprise until this poor man was safely locked away. The man who did the thing will not talk himself, but he will turn up the tools he used—they will confess. Do you want them?"

"Eddy, my reporter, satisfied himself in a general way on this point," Elder replied. "But a confession in this Gaffey matter might strengthen our hands. Who is this man you spoke of?"

"Confidentially, of course?"

"Yes."

"It was the Weasel."

"Saul?"

"Yes." Babbin smiled. "It's the double-cross, Mr. Elder. You were right in saying that Saul would do anything for money."

Elder frowned.

"Even to selling me out with a framed-up story," he said suspiciously.

"Yes, even to that," Babbin retorted boldly. "But you don't have to take his word for anything here. Shall we go on?"

"Yes, go on." He turned to the ex-convict. "You understand what we want, do you, Gaffey?"

"Yes sir. The messenger-boy told me."

"What messenger-boy?"

"The one that brought me here just now. He had a piece of paper—he read it to me and then made me sign the back of it to show that I understood. He wouldn't let me see the face of the paper."

"Was that message written by anyone you know?"

"I suppose it was written by the Weasel."

"Do you know him—the Weasel?"

"Never saw him in my life, that I know of."

"All right; go on."

"I was to come here and meet you gentlemen and tell you of an entry of a transfer of bonds on the books of the Harbor City Water and Power Company."

"When was that entry made?"

"In June, nineteen-nine."

"How did you know about it?"

"I was the accountant in charge of those particular books of the company."

"I see. Go ahead, Gaffey—tell your story in your own way."

"All right, Mr. Elder." The man looked at the cap, which he turned and turned in his nervous, thin hands. He spoke hesitatingly, not as though doubtful of his tale, but as though doubtful of his own ability to put it to them clearly. "I went to work for the company—the Harbor City Water and Power Company—when I was eighteen, as a messenger. That was in 1908. I studied bookkeeping nights, and was promoted. In 1909 they gave me the stock-and-bond records to keep in the accounting department.

"In June of the next year, as I've said, the secretary's memorandum of a registered bond transfer came to my desk for entry. It—it noted the transfer of four hundred thousand dollars' worth of the company's 'Convertible Five's' from Charles Slade to a man named Mark Rosen. But there was a peculiar thing about the memorandum."

Gaffey paused, put a hand in his pocket, and drew out a worn and shabby bill-book. Babbin interrupted him sharply.

"You are getting ahead of your story, Gaffey," he said. "Do you remember anything about—"

"Yes, I forgot," the man said, turning his eyes humbly toward his interrogator. "Yes, that's correct, sir. Mr. Elder, do you remember the Slade will case? Yes. Well, there was lots of talk about it in our offices, because Mr. Charley Slade was one of the heirs—involved, you see. And he was well known and liked among us; we all felt as though we knew him, because he was one of the largest owners of our company and was in and out of the offices time and again.

"We had watched the Slade will case, because most of the money was left to Mrs. Slade, the second wife of the old man, Charley's father. Charley was contesting the will, but the case was decided against him. He fought bitterly—the matter was argued and carried up and tried over and over again, but finally the supreme court decided in favor of the widow. We all thought that ended the matter. But it didn't. Early in June the supreme court reversed itself, and Charley Slade won everything but a few hundred thousand dollars. The day after that decision was handed down, I got this memorandum."

WITHOUT any effort at dramatic effect, Gaffey turned over, with his trembling fingers, a faded slip of paper he drew from his wallet. The editor leaned down to examine it, drew a sharp breath, raised the fragment into stronger light.

"Well, I'm damned!" he cried explosively.

The slip bore a hastily written notation, in ink long faded to gray, directing that four hundred one-thousand-dollar bonds of the issue of 1906 be transferred from the account of Charles F. Slade to the credit of Mark Rosen.

But the damning detail of the note lay in this: that the name originally written as that of the transferee of the bonds

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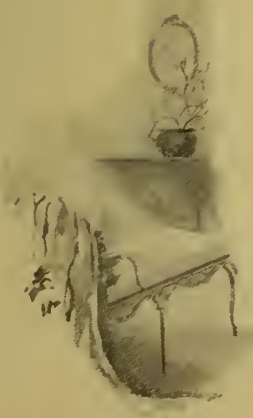

WOODBURY'S FACIAL SOAP

had been carelessly scratched through with a pen-stroke, and the name of Rosen substituted, in a different ink and hand.

The name lined through was "*Maxwell A. Hanchett.*"

"I'd like to keep this, Gaffey," the editor said casually.

"I'm sorry I can't let you, Mr. Elder," the convict replied, with a surprising abruptness and force. "I was told not to give it up to anyone until—why, I understood there was a—some money to be paid—"

Babbin, who had been sitting in the shadow, leaned forward here.

"That's right, Mr. Elder," he said. "I am to pay Saul as soon as we have established the case in your mind, before we can get this evidence or can put Gaffey away in safety to prevent anyone's tampering with him. As soon as I pay up, Gaffey will go with us. Isn't that correct, Gaffey?"

"That was what I was told, sir."

The editor frowned—hesitated. He saw the facile hand of the Weasel—perceived how perfectly that little criminal's mind apprehended every contingency and protected himself in every possible way. Of course, if Hanchett were delivered over that evening—

"Very well, Gaffey. Put your memo away. Now go on."

"There isn't much more that is important to you, I guess, Mr. Elder," the ex-convict said with a sigh. "I—this looked strange to me, and I spoke to the head bookkeeper in my department, Paul Sherindon. Sherindon was surprised—he asked me for the slip. I lied to him, on the spur of the moment. I told him I'd thrown it away. A few minutes later the president and treasurer came in to my desk and asked me about the matter. I was afraid to confess, by that time—I lied again. They searched my waste-basket—all those in the department. It was plain that they were very anxious. But they did not bother me; they went into the secretary's office and were in conference there a long time. I hoped the thing would blow over; I took the slip home and gave it to my mother in an envelope, to keep for me. I thought then that I would return the memorandum to the secretary in a few days or destroy it—something. I had no intention of using it. I give you my word of honor I hadn't!"

THE man's voice had been rising—he extended his hands now to the editor and Babbin almost tearfully. He had forgotten, for the moment, that his penitentiary term was behind him; he was living through the terror of that afternoon many years before. Benton Elder reached out a big, warm hand and laid it on the trembling fingers extended to him.

"Take it easy," he said in a voice that rumbled but soothed. "It's all over now."

Gaffey shook himself, leaned back.

"Yes, that's so. Well, the next day I was invited to go to dinner in an Italian restaurant up on Forrest Avenue—I don't know which one. Two or three of the men had been asked, they said—it was somebody's birthday, I think. When I got there, there was no one in the place I knew. They showed me an upstairs room; in it was a man I had never seen before, nor since. When the waiter had closed the door, this man knocked me out—with a sandbag, I always supposed, because there were no marks on my head afterward. When I woke up, I was in the county jail, and they told me I had been charged with embezzlement."

Gaffey stopped again, his eyes burning; then he relaxed wearily in his chair and began fidgeting once more with his tawdry cap. "The case was all framed up fine. The lawyer I had was a young fellow; I've heard lately that he and Paul Sherindon, the head bookkeeper I spoke of, are both high up in the water company now. I didn't have a chance. I got fifteen years."

His head sank on his breast; Elder saw two tears drop heavily. He turned to Babbin.

"Who was this Mark Rosen?" he inquired abruptly. "The dummy who was used in the transfer of those bonds? A real man?"

"Yes," Babbin answered. "We'll come to him when you're through with Gaffey."

"Do you mean that he will tell his part of the story?"

"He has told it." Babbin smiled—a hateful smile. "A man—our clever friend—has put the screws on him. There is a confession, sworn to in black and white. It tells only that Rosen loaned his name for this transfer, without inquiry as to why or as to the identity of the parties. Rosen is a Government attorney in the southern part of the State now—he has been taken care of, and the gang can't touch him. So he came clean."

"Did he turn those bonds over to Hanchett?"

"No; he signed his endorsement in blank. But his deposition confirms Gaffey, you see."

"I see. Well, that seems to complete the case—nearly enough for my purposes, at any rate."

"I thought you would say so, Mr. Elder." Babbin rose, leaning forward with a trace of excitement on him. "Are you ready for Hanchett?"

Hastily the editor ran over his notes, checking up. The net seemed tight; certainly publication of these facts would be sufficient to wreck Mr. Justice Hanchett's career. He nodded to Babbin, looked at his watch.

"Can you get him here?" he asked.

Babbin crossed to the telephone hastily. He gave some number, waited a moment, then asked sharply:

"Is Stiver there? . . . . Let me speak to him, please. This is Babbin." After another delay: "Hello. This is Mr. Babbin. A friend of yours said you would be waiting for a message about the judge that slipped. . . . . Yes—yes. . . . . Why, the sooner the better. We're ready. . . . . How long? . . . . Thanks. Good-by."

He turned from the instrument.

"Hanchett will be here in twenty minutes, they think." He looked, with a slight rise of color, at his cheap watch. "That will be about ten o'clock," he added.

The editor spoke to Gaffey.

"You don't mind waiting, do you, Gaffey?"

The convict laughed harshly.

"Me? I've waited almost twelve years for this," he said simply.

ELDER put on the table before him a small note-pad on which, under cover of the table, he had been jotting names, dates and significant phrases. From a side pocket he took a large sheaf of "copy paper;" with a heavy, soft-leaded pencil he began calmly to write. Babbin and Gaffey watched his hand; the first smiling a little, the convict with admiration. Save for the steady, sibilant drag of the lead on the paper and the ticking of dotted *i*'s or periods, there was no sound in the room. Five minutes passed; then a voice came up the well of that stairway:

"Is Mr. Elder up there? Open the door, will you—somebody? It's darker than a tomb!"

"Armstrong," Elder said, looking up. "One of the reporters. Open the door for him, will you, Babbin?"

A healthy, smiling, easy youth lounged into the room, his hat in his hand and a handkerchief at his forehead. "Whew! Couldn't get a taxi, Mr. Elder," he explained. "Had to walk. So I walked. Mr. North sent me."

"All right, Armstrong. Sit down. Is North ready for an extra?"

"All set, Mr. Elder." He grinned. "You're lucky, too!"

"What do you mean?"

"North got Havermale out of bed, and Havie opened up the leased wire and happened to pick out a big strike story from England, and an obit. of some scientist—forget his name. Died tonight in Philadelphia. So that fattens the inside pages."

"It does, for a fact." The editor smiled.

"But that isn't the real peacherino! There's a big double murder and suicide attempt—in the fast set. That's all I had time to hear. Miss Bartlett is covering it—Field is after pictures. Whale of a yarn, I guess."

"All right. With my story, then, we ought to be able to get out a fairly decent sheet. Now, here we go."

"Yes sir."

To Babbin's surprise, the editor made no reference to the case against Justice Hanchett in the facts he began to dictate. He opened by reciting that the Associate Justice had resigned, for private reasons. He told of Hanchett's long career on the bench. With easy familiarity he recounted incidents in the Judge's official biography going to show that, from the very first, Hanchett had been the unswerving and unwavering friend and savior of the big corporations and their friends and interests. He referred to case after case, particularly of more recent years, in which the plainly expressed will of the people that the government should be returned to their own hands had been flaunted and nullified by the supreme bench of the commonwealth, with Hanchett as bellwether of the flock. Even when a reform governor had appointed three new members, Hanchett had been able to hold the older man with him against democracy. He sketched briefly some facts about Hanchett's private life, his membership in

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leading clubs and orders, his reputed wealth, his wide friendship among wealthy men and bankers. The reporter asked an occasional question—tersely, intelligently. In ten minutes the material for a considerable newspaper "story" was in notes.

THE reporter, sending the end of his interview, shuffled his loose sheets into a neat pile.

"I suppose we get the resignation itself from the capitol," he suggested.

"Don't bother about that. Have North save a double-column space for a box to put that in. Catch a taxi—I'll be up not later than ten-thirty, unless you hear from me."

"Yes sir." He hesitated. "North said this had something to do with the elections Tuesday. But it doesn't seem to —to hook up."

The editor chuckled.

"I'll hook it up—editorially," he said shortly. "And by the way, Armstrong; I know you've written about Room Nineteen often. Have you ever been here before?"

The reporter colored and grinned again.

"Several times," he said. "I lost three weeks' salary here one night. But I broke even with a story that beat the town—the Calendar fraud case. You remember that?"

"There's no place you boys don't go, is there?" the editor exclaimed. "Lucky devils! Run for it, now!"

As the door closed:

"See here, Elder!" Babbin broke out abruptly. "You aren't going to let Hanchett out with a resignation, are you?"

The editor looked up from the copy to which he was returning.

"Why, I guess I am, if we get him."

"That doesn't suit me! It isn't enough."

"No?"

"No! Look at Gaffey, here: see what they did to him! Look at me: broke, published all over the country, on my way to the penitentiary! I want Hanchett shown up!"

"Oh, that's it, then?" The editor's voice was smooth and quiet. "Well, now, Babbin, you'll have to leave that part of it to me. I'm stooping to blackmail—I don't say it's the first time, in a good cause—but it's blackmail just the same. And what I want—what the reform party of this State wants—is to get Hanchett off the bench. If it's persecution you demand—revenge—you'll have to see to that yourself."

Babbin reflected.

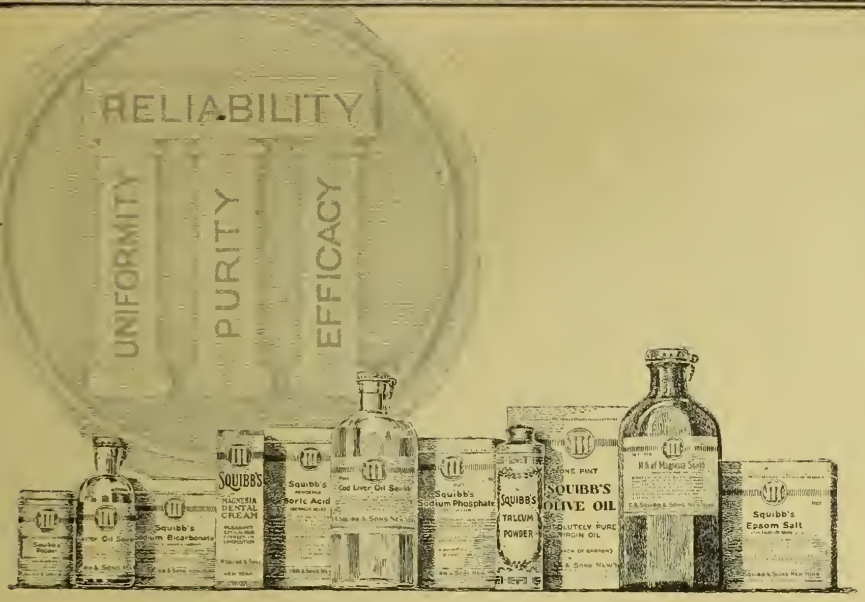
"I don't understand why you don't publish the story," he remonstrated. "If you suppress the facts, you are practically siding with Hanchett. You are legally an accessory to the crime."

The editor smiled.

"You have gotten to be a pretty fair lawyer lately, Babbin," he said, not unkindly. "But you are weak on details. I'm a newspaper editor, not the county attorney. You can lay your facts before him, or before the Bar Association."

Babbin snorted.

"A lot of good that would do me! You said yourself awhile ago that Sanders wouldn't prosecute. And the Bar Association—"



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"Well? Don't you see that if the proper authorities refuse to act, it would be rank persecution for me to publish this yarn? But there's another reason, Babbin. I have a heart."

"You don't mean that you are sorry for that high-grade scoundrel?"

"No. But he has a family. I know his wife and daughters. I have a wife of my own, and a couple of youngsters. I'm not perfect myself, Babbin, and I know how my family would feel. I'm gentler than I once was—"

They were so intent that neither of them heard. The ex-convict, Gaffey, leaned forward suddenly and touched the editor's arm.

"Somebody coming!" he whispered.

AS all three men straightened, the door was flung open and Mr. Justice Hanchett stood on the threshold.

He was a large, handsome, well-groomed man of almost sixty, but erect, debonair, in his prime. He wore evening clothes and a loose coat, unbuttoned, with a top hat. In his hand he carried a stick, graceful and light, but turned from some springy, tough wood that would make it, with its heavy onyx head, a formidable weapon. That the Judge was fearless for himself was apparent: he looked about the room with swift appraisal before he entered, but when he did, it was with a careless air that commanded respect.

There was the least contraction of his brows when he saw Babbin, but he ignored both him and the ex-convict thereafter, turning sharply on the editor.

"Strange place for an appointment, Elder," he said. "Be good enough to explain what your message meant."

"Good evening, Judge," Elder replied, unabashed and calm. "I sent you no message."

"What is this, then?"

He threw down a typewritten note, on Elder's own *Journal* office editorial letterhead. It was neatly typed:

> My dear Judge: I am in possession of facts regarding a matter of bonds of the Harbor City Water and Power Company, which have been known heretofore to a very few persons, including one Malcolm Gaffey, a convict; Mark Rosen; and Mr. Charles Slade. If you care to discuss my possible use of those facts with me, I will meet you immediately in Room Nineteen of 412 Front Street.
>
> Benton Elder.

The editor smiled.

"I didn't write that, Judge, or know of it's being written. However, that doesn't matter. I might have written it. Will you sit down?"

"No." The answer was crisp, final. "I have only a moment, Mr. Elder—for foolishness. The note was handed to me in the theater; my party is expecting me at the Belmont about eleven. What is all this folderol about?"

THE editor leaned back, studying the jurist. The imperturbable calm of Hanchett's face was perfect. Yet Hanchett had come.

"Judge," Elder began with thoughtful care for his words, "in nineteen-ten you changed your opinion in the then cele-

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The same qualities which recommend the car to business men recommend it with equal force to everyone.

Business requires a car of exceptional hardihood; one that offers weather protection and comfort the year round; a car dignified in appearance and economical to run.

Business absolutely *demands* such a car, but practically everyone *needs* such a car. The Business Sedan meets this universal requirement in a unique and specific way.

Its construction has made closed car history.

The steel body was known before on Dodge Brothers open cars, but its recognized advantages have never before been applied to the construction of a closed car.

The same thing is true of the baked enamel finish, which cannot be applied except where the body is built of steel.

In one new feature, the Business Sedan goes even further than open cars have ever gone in the breadth and scope of its usefulness.

The rear seat furnishings are removable, converting the entire section back of the front seat into a steel-walled compartment, with 64 cubic feet of loading space.

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Patents Pending

brated Slade will case, involving something like four million dollars' worth of property. As you may remember."

"Proceed."

"A bookkeeper in the offices of the Harbor City Water and Power Company discovered by accident, on the following day, that four hundred thousand dollars' worth of bonds had been paid you by Charles Slade through a dummy named Rosen. The bookkeeper was spirited away—sent to the penitentiary. Last week he was released. He has told me his story. I have an affidavit from Rosen confirming it. My boys are in the *Journal* office now with an extra practically made up, to go on the street before midnight announcing your resignation from the bench. The resignation is written; all I ask of you is a signature. That, in substance, is the situation."

The Judge nodded.

"Very succinctly put, Mr. Elder." A slight sneer crept into his tones as he added: "Your editorials are more verbose—therefore less forceful. I hope they are built on a firmer foundation in fact. And I bid you good night!"

He turned, raising his hand to his hat-brim ceremoniously, and would have gone through the door had there not leaped into his path Babbin—pale, and almost chattering with hysteria.

"For God's sake, man!" he shouted. "You don't think we're bluffing, do you? That's Gaffey there—the man you—"

The Judge raised his cane.

"Stand aside, you incoherent fool!" he snapped.

Babbin reached up and seized the strong arm.

"I wont! This thing comes off tonight! Pay attention—or you'll be in the penitentiary yourself in a month—where you're letting them send me—where you sent Gaffey." And he pointed to the shrinking and frightened ex-convict.

It was that face, pale with the pallor of prison upon it, that checked Hanchett. He lowered his cane, wet his lips, turned once more to Benton Elder. The editor had sat impassive through this dialogue—waiting, puzzled, half-doubtful.

"You always did fancy audiences for your little comedies, Elder," the Judge said, with a strong effort to regain his wonted manner. "Put away your babbling friend Babbin, or he may come to harm." He approached the table once again. "Do you really expect to gain anything by this sort of stupid child's play, Elder?"

As he was often known to do, the editor reached an instant decision. For answer he rose, strode across to the corner cupboard and took out the telephone. Judge Hanchett watched him, with a half-smile on his lips.

"Hello, *Journal*," Elder said in a moment. "Put North on. . . . . That you, North? . . . . Elder. Are you ready for the first page? . . . . Good. Armstrong ought to be there any minute with the story—Judge Hanchett's resignation. Run it two columns, double-leaded, with a ten-point lead. Hold Barbour on an open line from the capitol and have the Governor standing at his elbow not later than eleven-ten. . . . . Yes? . . . . Oh, tell Fennessey to keep his shirt on—we'll go to press about eleven-thirty. . . . . I'm coming over presently. Print five thousand the first run, then twenty thousand for up-State points and across the river. . . . . Fine. . . . . Hold them all ready for the gun. Good-by!"

He turned from the telephone.

"That's how far this child's play has gone, Judge," he said.

JUSTICE HANCHETT pursed his lips—rubbed his fingers once or twice over the smooth knob of onyx on his cane.

"I don't know what to say to a blackmailer like you, Elder," he began slowly. "Of course your case is silly—preposterous. A single line of what you have just charged me with, published in the *Journal*, would mean libel suits, civil and criminal, that would wreck you and your sheet. You know that."

"I've heard that sort of thing before, Judge—yes!"

"Exactly. You and I aren't young enough to waste time or words in idle threats or quarreling, even over a thing as vicious and cowardly and—dastardly as your attack. For argument's sake, let us assume that you have in your possession all these facts, as you call them. What sort of a bribe is this supposed to have been?"

"Four hundred thousand dollars' worth of Harbor City Water Company bonds, transferred to you by Charley Slade the day after you changed your opinion in the case that gave him a four-million-dollar estate instead of a legacy of a few thousand a year."

"All right. Assuming that this ex-convict friend of yours, and your other friend, who, if I am correctly informed, may shortly become a convict for defrauding a few thousand people of their life savings in some corrupt land deal—"

Babbin leaped up, shaking with anger.

"You lie!" he cried. "You know who got their money in the Delta scheme—and left me holding the sack! You did, Max Hanchett!"

The Judge whirled on him.

"I advised you to clear out of this!" he said in a slightly raised tone. "I'll have no words nor dealings with you at all, Babbin. And you make it almost impossible for me to stay here and give Mr. Elder even that scant courtesy a well-meaning blackmailer merits! . . . . Now, Elder."

The editor smiled.

"The only courtesy I ask, Judge, is that you sign your resignation and give it to me."

"So I understood. As I was saying, assuming that these men testify to the facts as you represent them to me, your case would fall utterly to pieces in any court in the land. The best evidence of that hypothetical stock-transfer—was it stocks?"

"Go on, Judge."

"Stocks or bonds, then—would be found in the records of the corporation issuing them. Now, I believe you named the Harbor City Water and Power Company. Is that correct?"

"Go ahead."

"Then perhaps you have forgotten that, in about 1913 or '14, the office-

building of that corporation burned down. To the ground, Mr. Elder. . . . . Oh, you do recall that, now?"

In spite of himself Elder had started. He had seen from the first his urgent need of those books, had at the first required them of Babbin and his mysterious conspirator. The jurist—cool, careless, easy—had put his finger instantly on the one weak link in the chain of evidence. The testimony of Gaffey, the ex-convict, would need potent corroboration. Mark Rosen had testified to little—might even be reached, yet, by powerful friends of Hanchett; and Hanchett had powerful friends, as Elder had good reason to know. The remainder of the case was circumstantial—damning, but poor stuff with which to defend a libel suit, bitterly prosecuted! Now—this reminder!

He sat for a moment looking at the copy spread before him on the table, and the corners of his mouth sagged a little. Then he looked up.

"Yes, Judge," he said frankly, "I had forgotten that fire. But I am satisfied with our case, in spite of everything." He leaned forward and laid his clenched hands on the table before him. "Judge Hanchett," he said solemnly, in the voice of a crusader, "I would jeopardize the *Journal* and my own freedom to break the gang to which you belong at next Tuesday's election. I tell you honestly that I will take my chances. Do you want to take yours?"

Judge Hanchett laughed, caught the top buttons of his coat, tucked his cane under his arm.

"The dignity of the bench on which I have the honor to sit," quoth he, "usually gives pause to snapping dogs. I think you will change your mind."

HE was turning for a second time to leave the room when the stairway door opened. Two men entered,—roughly dressed, furtive, unlovely men,—bearing a suitcase. Elder, his eye caught by the first movement of the door inward, had a fleeting impression that the pair had been almost pushed into the room by a third; he thought or imagined that he saw, dimly, a vague face that wore a cunning and satisfied smile. But he could not be sure, either then or afterward. And at no time could he revisualize that face in memory.

Meantime, however, Justice Hanchett had stepped aside swiftly, lightly, until his back was to the wall opposite Babbin. He gripped his cane and waited. Babbin and Gaffey stared.

"Well, boys," Editor Elder said, breaking the moment's tense silence, "you've got the wrong room, haven't you?"

"I guess we aint," the first man answered shortly. "I was told to come here with some junk. You're Mr. Elder, aint you?"

"Yes."

"I've seen you around. Don't matter who I am. Me and my pardner, here, was sent to touch a plant tonight—we jest got through."

"You mean to commit a burglary, do you?" Elder asked.

"Don't need to use such hard language, brother," the second man interrupted, grinning.

But the first, contributing a slight, cold smile to his companion's levity, nodded.

"Call it that," he said, clearing his throat and spitting noisily. "We was to get a certain record-book. Number Twelve book, it was. Well, when we got into this here plant—"

"Some people have all the luck!" his companion interrupted hoarsely.

"A certain friend of ours is one of 'em," the other retorted. "Yes, the luck broke good. There was a fire in them books sometime—when we got at 'em, the whole damn' row was burned from the ends—clear to the middle. Twenty-five books in the damn' row. Luck? I'll say it is!"

Elder, humoring these precious scamps and hiding his impatience, spoke mildly.

"The fire destroyed some of these records, then?"

"Burned 'em up from both ends of the row. But it left the guts of Book Twelve—scorched, but all ka-hunky. If a fellow was religious, now, by God—"

He interrupted himself on this philosophical tag and raised the suitcase. From it he took the charred and smoke-blackened fragment of a ledger and threw it to the table.

Babbin leaped for it; Elder half rose in his chair. Judge Hanchett licked dry lips.

"Gaffey!" Babbin cried. "Gaffey, see here! You told us Volume Twelve. Is this it?"

Gaffey came shuffling forward, took hold of the ruined volume with familiar hands, searched hastily and turned up a page—put his finger on an entry. Then he started back, with a frightened cry.

For the face that was thrust forward at his shoulder—a face from which had been wiped all confidence, all sneering, and that was now slate-colored, weary—was that of Justice Maxwell Hanchett.

Hanchett swallowed, to make speech possible.

"What do you want me to do, Elder?" he asked in a low tone—brokenly.

THE BARNACLE

(Continued from page 38)

Special messengers would bring the other things tomorrow.

Arrived once more in the gloomy fastnesses of the Gainsley castle, Mattie dressed. For the first time she felt the intimate touch of silk against her body. She put on gray silk stockings, cobweb thin, and oddly cut gray slippers that buckled with little clusters of gleaming stones. Then the new dress. A slip of silvery satin, flushed somehow with pink, and over it a great square of rosy gray tissue full of silver leaves and flowers, fine and thin. It dropped over the head, and hung in subtle folds, its corners weighted with silver tassels. Low around the waist the stuff had been slashed to admit a twisted cord of dull silver beads, starred with a pink rose. It was a dress of moonshine and mystery, and turned Mattie from a slim and boyish girl into a twilight flower.

"If you would only let me do your hair, Madame!" said Louise mournfully. "And a little, a very little rouge."

But Mattie shook her head.

SHE dined alone with Ned and his father, and the two men were frankly interested in her metamorphosis. "You're lovely as a dream, Mats," Ned declared. "Gee, I'm glad George Marsh isn't here tonight. He'd steal you, sure."

And Richard Gainsley had looked at her with his cold eyes, and said: "I'm afraid you're a vast deal more clever than Thérèse gives you credit for." To which Mattie made no answer. From it, however, she could imagine Thérèse's comments: "Dowdy—stupid—country." However, that didn't matter. She was willing to build a wall between the Gainsley women and herself, provided she could keep Ned on her side of the wall.

Tonight she had a happy evening. The great house was as new and strange to Ned as it was to her, so they went, at his suggestion, on a tour of exploration. They trailed through the wide rooms, even venturing below stairs, which Mattie found most interesting of all, since here was the real internal mechanism of the great place. The French range, the excellently planned scullery, the tiled, well-fitted laundry, the two enormous, self-icing refrigerators, the servants' dining-room, all amused her by its contrast with the primitive kitchen, the old cook-stove, the "cool well," the pump and wash bench, and the icehouse of Virginia.

"Oh my, I'd like to run this place," she told Ned. "Wouldn't it be heaps of fun? How does your mother ever do it?" Secretly she thought Thérèse must be far more capable than she looked.

"Oh, Thérèse never bothers—there's a housekeeper."

Afterward, in their rooms, she asked Ned about his work.

"It's easy enough, Mats. Dad put me in old Putnam's office; he's the purchasing agent for all the factories, and he's been there twenty years, so you may imagine it doesn't leave me much to do. It's all sort of confusing, and mixed up. Putnam's very kind, though, and I think I'm going to like it when I get the hang of it. You wouldn't believe how Dad's plants have grown. When I haven't anything else to do Putnam suggested that I take reports and figures and study them, and make a digest—to get some idea, you know. I dare say Dad told him to put me up to it. I think Dad means to be—kind. But he's hard. He likes you, though; that's plain. Don't let the things he says hurt you."

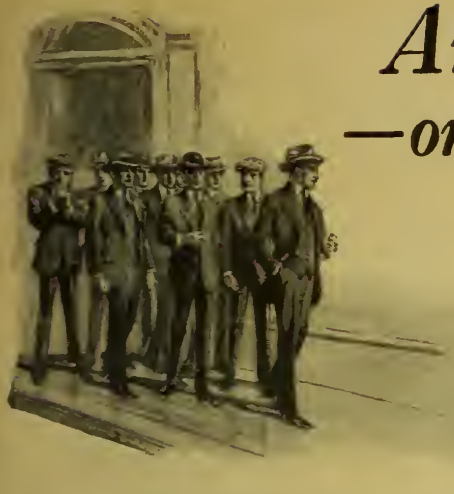
"They don't hurt me. I think he's very unhappy."

"Unhappy! Dad!"

She put her arms around him. "Ned, he hasn't anything but money. That's why I think he's unhappy. I can't imagine that he and Thérèse ever were as you and I."

They clung to each other. "Oh, Mattie," said the boy, brokenly, with a flash

Are You the Ten-pin —or the Ball?



WHEN a championship contest is impending, the athlete who trains spasmodically, or who refuses to train at all, is regarded by his team-mates with contempt. His self-indulgence is never a subject for joking—it is nothing short of treachery.

The business world views the matter somewhat differently.

If a man neglects to train for a bigger job, why worry? There are plenty of able and ambitious men who *will.*

Every year, for example, more than 60,000 men enrolled with LaSalle Extension University are throwing themselves heart and soul into the all-engrossing contest for the better positions in business—are earnestly declaring their purpose to win or know the reason why.

In the contest for success they know that they must be either the ten-pin or the ball —*and they prefer to be the ball.*

* * *

The career of C. C. Mollenhauer well illustrates the opportunities that unfold to the man equipped to take advantage of them.

Obliged to leave school at the age of twelve, Mollenhauer started life as a clothes-brusher in a factory, at $2.50 a week. Today, at thirty-five, he is partner in a large real-estate firm, a director in the great First National Bank of Brooklyn, and a trustee of the Dime Savings Bank in Williamsburg, New York.

"The big event of my life," says Mollenhauer, "was the day I enrolled with the LaSalle Extension University. The Problem Method, developed by LaSalle, is surely the quickest way to the top I know of. It has meant thousands of dollars to me, to say nothing of the innumerable other benefits I have derived from it. The only regret I have ever had is that I did not enroll sooner."

When a man held down to so unpromising a start is able—by the aid of home-study training—to outclass his competition so decisively, how certain should be the future of the man who starts to train without unusual handicap.

Thousands of LaSalle-trained men unconsciously direct attention to this thought; their letters are replete with evidence, of which such statements as the following are typical:

"At the last stockholders' meeting I was made general auditor, at a salary-increase of 200 per cent since my enrollment. Without LaSalle I should not have been considered for this responsible position."—F. H. Ranney.

"Since enrolling I have increased my income from $90 to over $400 a month, and the end is not in sight."—M. C. Kochman.

"LaSalle training has meant a tremendous thing to me in mental development and financial profit."—W. A. Twelkemuir.

"Passed bar examination with second highest honors in a class of 71."—M. A. Caruso.

"LaSalle training has taken me from the $65-a-month class to a present earning power of over $7,000 per annum."—R. A. Warner.

* * *

To overcome the obstacles that every man must face who hopes to attain executive responsibility requires earnestness of purpose; and beyond a doubt the unusual success of LaSalle-trained men is due, in considerable measure, to the inherent pluck and determination which gave them the urge to make the start.

The *rapidity* of their advancement, however, brings forth a different explanation—to be found, as many assert, in the LaSalle Problem Method.

Under this plan, distinctive with LaSalle Extension University, a member masters business principles by solving actual business problems—under the direction of some of the ablest men in their respective fields in America. The business power that results from such practical and thoro preparation is *a constant menace to the man who will not train.*

During three months' time, for example, as many as 1,193 LaSalle members reported definite promotion—over the heads of untrained men. Incidentally, the total salary-increases of these men amounted to $1,248,526, *an average increase per man of 89 per cent.*

In the face of such plain handwriting on the wall, how pathetic is the man who fails to see the necessity for specialized business training—or who casts aside his present opportunity, to await a day that never comes.

On the other hand, how great the rewards that accrue to the man who *recognizes* his need—and acts decisively to meet it.

* * *

During coming months what will *you* be doing with *your* spare evening hours? Will you be preparing to hold your own against these thousands of men who are plussing their natural ability and stamina with training—or will you go down like a ten-pin, beaten by some man, not so good as you, perhaps, who has equipped himself to play the game *successfully?*

A booklet which has proved of unusual worth to many thousands is available to you; it will give you full particulars of a definite plan for self-improvement—will show you compelling evidence of what other men in circumstances similar to yours have done to increase their salaries and to step ahead to responsible executive positions. With this booklet LaSalle will send you without obligation your copy of "Ten Years' Promotion in One," a human-interest recital of how an *average* man won his way to success.

The arena is built—the great game for success in business is in progress—and whether you will or no you must step to the mark and do your best.

Just such a coupon as appears below this text has given many a man his start toward real achievement. Check, sign and mail that coupon NOW—and write it on your heart that *you* are in the fight to *win.*

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Name.....*Present Position*.....

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of prescience. "They might have been, if Thérèse was your sort. Don't ever go away from me, will you? I don't mean your body; I mean your heart, your interest."

"Never. Never as long as I live."

And she promised herself passionately: "They sha'n't take him from me. I've begun to fight, and I'll fight."

IT was not so easy to be courageous in the tedious days that followed, the empty, uninteresting days, passed in an environment wholly uncongenial, with people who were frankly hostile. Gradually she came to know the intimates of the Gainsley house, the people who came from similar great palaces of idleness all about them.

There was, for instance, Billy Carrington, a youth for whose favors Eleanor and Thérèse frankly competed, and who greatly enjoyed playing one against the other.

There were the Marshes, whom she had met on her first evening in the Gainsley home. Gabrielle never looked at, but past her. George looked at her too hard. It was not easy always to discourage his attention.

There were the Sanford Bassetts, the McLeans, the Percivals—idle wives with working husbands.

There were "Goober" Wright and "Art" Higgins, two privileged and somewhat diverting bachelors.

There were others, of course, but these were the immediate circle. Over and beyond them Mattie could now and then catch glimpses of families where life was not a constant seeking for excitement, men and women who maintained their wealth with dignity and simplicity, who had a normal home life, with children. But these were not in the Gainsley set.

Excitement, that was what they all sought, the excitement of drink, of cards, of daring speech, daring dress, anything to keep the aimless, frenetic movement of the group from slowing down.

Ned slipped back into it easily enough. After all, these were the people he had known. They were not new to him; hence there was no surprise or shock. But to Mattie they seemed at times like creatures under an evil spell, doomed to dance through life to a relentless tune of banging jazz, swung jerking, like marionettes, by some power far greater than their own—the fear of an instant's boredom.

They were unaffectedly glad to have Ned and his wife amongst them, because they brought in a new element. The women expected to laugh at the dowdy country girl, the men to plumb the depths of her unsophistication. It was disappointing that she so soon deprived the women of cause for laughter, and that she discouraged the promiscuous gallantries of the men. It ended in their liking her no better than she did them.

Through it all, she fought for Ned—for his companionship. She learned to absent herself from the Gainsley house in the afternoon, go in town and dine alone with him on some flower-garlanded high roof, perhaps to go on later to a summer show in order that their return might not be until whatever diversion Eleanor and Thérèse had on hand was over. She learned to plan for Saturdays and Sundays long beforehand, and present her plans as immutable. Then they would take long, long rides together, or motor trips, picnic jaunts as simple and as sweet as the days in Virginia. And she watched him closely for any sign of restiveness.

MATTIE, coming one afternoon late to tea on the lawn, heard Thérèse's high, fluting voice: "Really, old Ned would be fun if it wasn't for the—Billy, dear, what do they call these wretched things that fasten themselves on yachts and things, and spoil their speed?"

"Barnacles," quoth Billy.

"That's it—the little Mattie is a barnacle. Hereafter I'll call her that—it's a much more distinguished name than Mattie—don't you think?"

They laughed. And Mattie waited a moment or two that her color might fade before she presented herself. So she was a barnacle—and reduced Ned's speed. Well, names hurt no one, and Mattie did not mind. It did not move Ned an inch toward their side of the wall. But now she knew that they all were allies to Thérèse, knowingly, and where before she had had one skillful enemy, she now had a dozen or more.

She set her will doggedly against theirs. She would not let them have Ned, never, never. But as she looked about at them, gay exotic creatures, as artificial and as one-surfaced as the little flat figures on an old fan, she wondered why it was she was so deadly afraid of what might happen if Ned were once won to them.

Why was she not sure of him?

If she did not distrust him, why did she not let him alone, leave him to his old-new companions and friends, choose

their ways of diversion, take up their mode of life, be at one with him in what he had always known. Some instinct commanded her not to do this. "If you do, he will hurt you, but he will hurt himself still more," it warned her. No, she must stand between him and them, always, and hold him to her.

She had not, curiously enough, any fear that he would turn to the women of the Gainsley set. There she knew she was safe. Gabrielle and Edith Bassett and Lisa McLean and Cara Percival might frankly invite any degree of intimacy, without, she felt sure, ruffling Ned's amused indifference. But when Goober Wright and Billy Carrington beckoned him to their pleasures, it was different. What could she urge against them? Mattie knew that a man is very little swayed in his opinion of other men by any woman.

It was Billy Carrington, chiefly. Seeing the warfare between herself and Thérèse, he became the latter's active ally, and far more dangerous and powerful than her original foe, Mattie found him.

He knew Ned's keenness for cards, so it was there he drew him—at first on a pretext of teaching him the newest tricks in auction. There seemed to be no reasonable objection to that.

But then:

"Oh Lord, how tired I get of auction. It's a woman's game." This was Billy.

"Well, what about a little Red Dog?" Goober Wright suggested it.

Naturally: "What on earth's Red Dog?" —from Ned.

"That's the new game—more fun than anything except maybe *vingt-et-un*. Want to try it?"

And the rest was perfectly easy.

At first Mattie opposed, as adroitly as she could. But that was no avail.

Then she opposed, as openly as she dared. She saw that Ned scarcely heard her.

Then she grew desperate. She went to Richard Gainsley, and put it to him plainly that Billy Carrington and the rest of them would be Ned's ultimate ruin. His father must do something about it.

The grim man listened, unmoved. At the end he said: "If Ned's got no more guts than to let Thérèse's pet lizard ruin him—he'd better be ruined and done with it."

"A strange way," Mattie struck at him, "for a man to talk about his own son."

For the first time since she had been under his roof, she saw Richard Gainsley give some signs of emotion. She was sure that his hand trembled a little, and he did not look at her. But he answered as grimly as before: "A man's son has got to be a man, too."

So that was an end to that. Mattie cast about her desperately. She might appeal to Thérèse, as a last resort, but it would be no use. Oh, it might be worse than no use.

THE long days and nights of the summer dragged on, and the dark thunderstorms that rolled up from the bay seemed to Mattie the clouds that hung over her own soul. She rode as much as she could—to be on a horse was temporary forgetfulness, and the compan-

ionship of the dumb animal she bestrode was far more comforting, more kindly, than that of the human beings about her. She would ride until she was so tired that she would have to sleep. In the evenings she usually sat in some remote corner of the drawing-room and read, waiting for Ned to come home. Rack and thumbscrew would have been less painful torture than those evenings.

For Ned Gainsley was the type to whom gambling is a senseless, irresistible lust. He played as did those pitiful old before-the-war habitués of Monaco, with febrile eagerness, with an absolute abandonment of himself to chance. If he gathered a stake, he plunged. If he lost, he doubled. He took his cards in his hand and simply ran amuck with them, deaf, dumb, and blind to everything except the whim of Fortuna. Mattie shook with terror as she saw him. Even Eleanor brought herself out of her selfish discontent one day to speak of it.

"Ned and Billy and the bunch are hitting it up too hard, I think," she said. "Can't you do something about it?"

"No," said Mattie, shortly. "Can you?"

"I!" Eleanor opened her eyes wide. "Why, what can *I* do?"

And the very droop of her eternal cigarette expressed her impotence more powerfully than her words.

"But this summer can't last forever," reflected Mattie, "and if we can only once get a little house, or an apartment to ourselves, I *know* I could get Ned away from a thousand Billy Carringtons. It's living in this house of hate and hardness that has changed him. But oh, God, if the summer were only over! I'm afraid. I'm afraid. He looks so different. He's so uneasy. He's so unhappy. If there was only some way out of it all, away from them. I could pray for the fire and the whirlwind."

There were two things she did not want to do—for they were not remedies, only ways to write unhappy finis to the chapter. She could go back to Virginia, alone. And she could make an appeal to Ned with all her strength, all her love, only— She knew that was not enough. If he should yield to her, for a while, it would be a confession of her to him that she had found him weak. The wife who lets her husband know that she has found him weak is halfway to losing him. She has spoiled something beautiful and precious between them forever.

Oh, for the fire and the whirlwind!

SHE did not except them quite so soon, however. She had been riding and was tired, and stickily hot. A black storm was muttering on the horizon. She came in wearily, her courage drooping, almost extinguished, and as she entered the house Richard Gainsley came out of his library and beckoned her. It was unusual to see him at home so early in the day, and there was something of agitation about him that was strange. He was angry, shaken, and yet, somehow, triumphant.

"Come in here," he commanded.

She followed him, and as she did so Eleanor and Thérèse came fluttering down the stairway, evidently at his summons.

Richard Gainsley dropped down behind his desk, and eyed the three women. "I sent for you all," he began. "I'm going to tell you before Ned gets home, because he's coming home only long enough to get his clothes and get out. This time I'm through. He's going for good this time." He kept his eyes on Thérèse. Eleanor gave a weak cry and shrank into a chair.

"What has he done?" asked Mattie, before the others could speak.

"He's been stealing money—from me. He's in deep with Carrington and the others, I suppose. Oh, he was pretty slick about it. Putnam let him open the bids, and he slipped round to Verney and White's and tipped them off, got them to change their figures. It was the last lot of manganese. He was to get fifteen thousand. I sweated it out of Verney himself this morning. I suspected; no, I knew—and I'm through."

Mattie listened, unmoved, yet with a strange and instant joy. She did not care what Ned had done. This meant —release. She had to wait and be still a moment to get her bearings. And in the stillness came Thérèse's voice, shrill, and Thérèse's face was distorted into ugliness. "You did this on purpose, Richard. You wanted to get him into trouble, to make a scandal—"

"I! Who set that skunk Carrington on him in the first place, and the rest of the rag-tag and bobtail that run with you—"

"You should have looked out for him. He's your son!"

Something electric flashed through the room—not the lightning from the storm outside, but the lightning of Richard Gainsley's long-pent, hopeless rage and humiliation.

"Is he my son?"

Ah, now Mattie understood—now she knew. Here was the thing that had poisoned this man, had poisoned Thérèse, had poisoned this desolate great house. That bitter question told the whole story.

Thérèse laughed, a little brutal laugh, and turned away. This granite man who stood before her was less strong than she, and she knew it. Mattie might have felt sorry for him, save for the overwhelming happiness that was still flooding into her own heart. They were free—she and Ned—free at last. They could go. Back to the old life, back to the blue hills of Virginia!

But she must still be cautious. "What are you going to do?" she asked Richard Gainsley. "Are you going to have him arrested, or anything like that?"

"And let everybody know that there could be a leak like that in my organization? I guess not. So long as he gets out and never lets me set eyes on him again, I wont prosecute. But look here —I've nothing against you. You're a damned decent girl. I've watched you, and I like your sense and your grit. I'll settle a good income on you, so that you wont suffer from his rottenness. That'll leave you free of him, too. You can cut away clean—I'll pay the lawyers for you. You'll be wise if you take my advice, Mattie—get clear of him, now, while you can. I wish to God I'd done the same, years ago, when I first—but there's no use going into that. But you cut away, clean like I tell you—though now you know what he is I don't suppose you'd do anything else."

She almost laughed aloud. Free—of Ned—now that he needed her, now that he must perforce come back to her! More than ever before he must have her tenderness, her understanding, her never-ending, boundless love. It was silly to stand here wasting time when she might be packing. Tonight they would be on their way home—to Virginia. But she could not leave without answering the gray, unhappy man who had at least tried to be kind, according to his lights.

"No, I'm not going to leave Ned. We'll go away together—today, and—and always." Her eyes fell on Thérèse and Eleanor, now standing together, staring at her, that same cold hostile regard she had come to know so perfectly. She smiled at them whimsically—how miraculously little it mattered to her now how they might look at her! She had escaped them utterly. She addressed them light-heartedly as she turned to the door:

"Barnacles—stick," she said.

Pickles in Patterns

Just one example of uniformity in food preparation

EXAMINE closely a jar of Heinz pickles. They look good to eat, yes—but note the arrangement of the contents. Everything placed *just so.*

Now look at another jar. It shows the same uniform pattern. You can't tell them apart. And any number of jars, each packed by a different girl, show the same orderly, tasteful arrangement.

The neat, prim, white-capped "Heinz girls" do this very skillfully and rapidly. Visitors to the Heinz spotless kitchens marvel at their deftness.

This uniformity in packing is proof of a still greater thing—the uniformity of the products which are packed. It speaks volumes for the care in sorting and selecting.

And the Heinz principle of uniformity goes still further. It is uniformity of grade and quality as well as of size—uniformity in every phase of preparation. Any one jar of pickles or any one can of beans is exactly as good as any other jar or can. The uniform quality and taste of each of the 57 Varieties is something which can always be depended upon.

The reason is not only high standards of food preparation—but cheerful loyalty to these standards by the men and women who do the preparing.

H. J. HEINZ COMPANY

57 Varieties

Beauty at Your Finger Tips

TODAY, as the possibilities of intelligent care of the skin are becoming more generally realized, it is literally true that thousands upon thousands of women are growing younger in looks, and likewise in spirits.

The secret of restoring and retaining a youthful complexion lies chiefly in the faithful and well-directed use of the proper sorts of face creams. The constant employment of creams by actresses in removing make-up is largely responsible for the clearness and smoothness of their skins.

First, the beautiful skin must be clean, with a cleanliness more thorough than is attainable by mere soap-and-water washing. The pores must be cleansed to the same depth that they absorb.

This is one of the functions of Pompeian Night Cream. It penetrates sufficiently to reach the embedded dust. Its consistency causes it to mingle with the natural oil of the pores, and so to bring out all foreign matter easily and without irritation to the tissues.

The beautiful skin must be soft, with plastic muscles and good blood-circulation beneath. A dry, tight skin cannot have the coveted peachblow appearance; set muscles make furrows; poor circulation causes paleness and sallowness.

Pompeian Night Cream provides the necessary skin-softening medium to skins that lack the normal degree of oil saturation. Gentle massaging with it flexes the facial muscles, stimulates the blood circulation and tones up all the facial tissues.

Upon retiring, first use Pompeian Night Cream as a cleanser; apply with the fingers and then wipe off with a soft cloth, freeing the pores of all the day's accumulated dust and dirt. Afterward apply the cream to nourish the skin, leaving it on over night.

The faithful following of this simple treatment works wonders in the skin—removing roughness, redness, and blackheads, and warding off wrinkles, flabbiness and sallowness. It is the most approved treatment for restoring and retaining a youthful complexion.

Pompeian Night Cream	50c *per jar*
Pompeian Day Cream (*vanishing*)	60c *per jar*
Pompeian Beauty Powder	60c *per box*
Pompeian Bloom (*the rouge*)	60c *per box*

Send the coupon with ten cents for samples of Pompeian Night Cream, Day Cream, Beauty Powder, and Bloom. New 1923 Pompeian Art Panel of Mary Pickford sent with these samples.

POMPEIAN LABORATORIES, 2019 Payne Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio
Also Made in Canada

The Art of Powdering

By Mme. Jeannette

As a rule women give too little thought to the way they use powder. Perhaps one reason is that for so many years powder has been a necessary part of the toilette among practically all classes of women.

Powdering correctly is so simple if you will just use a little thought.

Be sure to select a shade of face powder that will tone in with your own coloring. Many a lovely face has been very nearly spoiled by flesh-colored powder on an olive skin, or the rachel shade used by a delicately tinted blonde.

—:—

Powder should be placed first upon the portions of the face that are normally whitest—brow, chin, and nose—then a delicate coating brushed over the whole face. And above all be sure that you do powder your face all over. It is impossible to emphasize this too strongly, for one of the greatest crimes against appearance is that the work of powdering is so often left unfinished. A woman is too apt to forget that, when her face is freshly washed, the skin on her temples and under her chin is the same color; and never by any possible chance does nature make the mistake of having the one several shades lighter or of a different texture than the other. So be sure that these often-neglected outside edges are given the same attention that you give to nose and chin. Nature always blends, and it is by powdering correctly that you can best get this desired effect.

—:—

When you have that uncomfortable feeling that you need more powder, and there is perhaps no mirror near, always pass your handkerchief over your nose first. The pores of the nose are so constituted that there is usually more moisture there than on any other part of the face. This means that powder becomes damp and may cake, so it is wiser to remove what may be left of the first layer, before using more.

—:—

Pompeian Beauty Powder is absolutely pure, and harmless to any skin, smooth, fine in texture, will not flake, and stays on for hours.

Jeannette

Specialiste de Beauté

Pompeian Night Cream

Cleansing and Skin-Nourishing

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Gentlemen: I enclose 10c (a dime preferred) for the samples named in offer. Also send 1923 Pompeian Art Panel of Mary Pickford.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____

Flesh shade powder sent unless you write another below.

WITHIN THESE WALLS—

(*Continued from page 49*)

a while but grow at last into their structures, the secrets that began as cancers became a part of the hard, gnarled bark that people and trees acquire, or perish. The RoBards' home was being held together by misfortune as much as affection. The longing for utterance that makes secrets dangerous was satisfied by common possession. Patty and her husband knew the worst of each other, and their children, and they made league against the world's curiosity.

She was insatiably curious about the secrets of other homes while protecting her own; but this was hardly so much from malice as from a longing to believe that other people had as much to conceal as she.

The children had talked the thing over with their parents, and the strain was taken from their minds. Immy less often slashed the silence with those shrieks of hers. She and Keith were busy growing up and playing in the toyshop of new experiences.

RoBards tried lawsuits with fair success, and his fees were liberal; he often secured fifty dollars for a case requiring no more than two or three days in court. His house-rent was six hundred dollars a year, and his office-rent and clerical expenses took another five hundred. This left enough to give Patty and the children all the necessary comforts, including two hired women, though most of these were ignorant, impudent and brief of stay, even though servants' wages had gradually trebled until some of them were demanding as high as two dollars a week.

While RoBards practiced the law, Patty visited the shops and the gossip-marts, went to church and indulged in modest extravagances of finance, scandal and faith.

Another baby came to the RoBardses, but Patty never became quite matronly. Like all the other women, who could (or could not) afford it, Patty dressed in the brightest of colors and flaunted coquetry in her fabrics. Visitors from overseas commented on the embarrassments they had encountered from mistaking the most respectable American wives for courtesans because of their gaudy street-dress, their excessive powder, their false hair and freedom from escort.

THE chief cross in her life and her husband's was the burden of her parents' company. They were not interested in modern heresies and manners, and found them disgusting. Patty was bored to frenzy by their tales of the good old times of their memory.

The old man grew increasingly impatient of the law's delay. He had less and less time to spend on earth, and that two hundred thousand dollars the city owed him grew more and more important. It seemed impossible, however, to speed the courts. One or two similar suits against the city on account of buildings similarly blown up to check the fire of 1835 were won by the city, and RoBards dreaded the outcome of his father-in-law's claim. He dreaded the loss of the vast sum at stake even less than the effect on Mr. Jessamine's sanity.

The fire had died out, and its ravages were overbuilt for ten years before the case drew up to the head of the docket at last. As Mr. Jessamine grew more and more frantic, he felt less and less confident of his son-in-law's ability to win the action. He insisted upon the hiring of additional counsel and cruelly wounded RoBards by his frank mistrust. But he could not make up his mind what lawyer to employ, and since he was out of funds, he must depend on his son-in-law to advance the fee for his own humiliation.

Patty herself was zealous for the splendor that two hundred thousand dollars would add to the establishment she found all too plain in spite of her husband's indulgence. And she shamed him woefully by her lack of confidence. She saw his hurt and added exquisiteness to it by constantly saying:

"Of course, I think my Mist' RoBards is the finest lawyer in the world, but the judges can't be relied on to appreciate you."

Lying on his arm, she would waken him from slumbers just begun, crooning:

"Two hundred thousand dollars! Think of it! Papa and Mamma are too old to spend it, so we should have the benefit. I'd buy you a yacht so that you could join the new club, and I'd buy myself—what wouldn't I buy myself!"

"First catch your cash, my dear," RoBards would mumble, and try in vain to drown himself in a pool of sleep that would not accept him, though Patty sank away to blissful depths of oblivion.

ONE hot July New York daybreak had just begun to annoy his unrested eyes when the firebells broke out. He had promised himself and Patty long ago to resign from his company, but a sense of civic duty had kept him in the ranks.

Patty slept so well among her visions of wealth that she did not heed when he withdrew his arm from under her head, nor hear him getting into his uniform. Remembering the icy December night of the disaster of 1835, he rejoiced in the absence of wind and the plenitude of the Croton water. Neptune would soon prevail over his enemy element, as in the banners of the parade.

The Fire Kings, who had been frost-nipped on that other night, were dripping with sweat this morning when they drew near the origin of the fire in a New Street warehouse. This contained a great mass of stored chemicals, and they exploded just as the Fire Kings coupled up the hose. The world rocked about them. Buildings went over as if an earthquake had rattled the island. The glass of a thousand windows rang and snapped, and the air rained blocks of granite, timbers and chimneys.

Two of the Fire Kings were struck dead at RoBards' side, and he was bruised and knocked down. The whole fire army was put to rout; and the flames bounding in all directions were soon devouring a hundred and fifty buildings at once, most of them new structures that had risen in the ashes of 1835.

Once more the fear of doom fell upon the city, but after three hundred and sixty-five of the city's most important buildings were piled up in embers, the Croton came to the rescue. Once more the heart of the city's commerce was eaten out. Again the insurance companies went bankrupt in the hour they had assumed to provide against. Once more financial dismay shook the stout frame of the town.

But carpenters and masons were at work before the ruins ceased to smoke. They had to wear gloves to protect them from brick and stone too hot to be touched with naked hands.

WHEN RoBards came home after the fire, Patty was still blessedly asleep. She woke with a little cry of petulance when his helmet fell from his bruised hand as he lifted it from his bleeding forehead and dropped sickly into a chair. But when she saw how hurt he was, she was at his side in an instant, hurrying like a slipperless Oceanid to comfort him. The battered hero's wounds were made worth while when they brought the delicate ministrations of the barefoot nymph in the flying white gown so thin that it seemed to blush wherever it touched the flesh beneath. Patty looked all the bonnier for the panic that left her nightcap askew upon the array of curl-papers bordering her anxious brow.

And the fire had another benefit. It brought to old Jessamine the first grin of genuine contentment RoBards had seen on his twisted lips since 1835. For the old wretch chuckled to realize that many a wealthy merchant whose carriage-dust he had had to take afoot for ten years was now brought down to his own level.

If only he could drag his two hundred thousand out of the city, he that had been poor among the rich, would be rich among the poor. That would be repayment with usury. He could hardly endure to wait the day when he should regain his glory, and he smothered Patty with kisses, when she brought home the inspiration that promised to hasten his triumph.

She brought it home from a party, from a dinner so fashionable that it was not begun until seven o'clock. In only a few years the correct hour had been shoved further and further down the day from three o'clock in the afternoon until deep into the evening. At the same time the fashionable residence district had pushed out into the country until it was necessary for the RoBardses' hired carriage to travel for this occasion out Hudson Street for two miles to Ninth Avenue and nearly a mile more to Twenty-eighth Street. As Patty laughed into his ear:

"It's nice to be bound for the North Pole on so hot a night."

She was blissful as a new queen in her lustrous dress of peach-blossom silk.

RoBards marveled at the perverse heroism with which she and other women endured these martyrdoms to vanity. He had ridiculed Patty's devotion to tight stays for years with the usual effect of male counsel on female conduct. When RoBards quoted the parsons against the corsets, Patty answered:

"If God didn't want women to wear corsets, why did he fill the seas with whales and fill the whales with whalebone? What else is it good for?"

Heaven was an appellate court that RoBards did not practice in, and he dropped the case.

PATTY was the mother of a long family, yet she was still a girl, and a girl by virtue—or by vice—of avoiding the penalties of growing up. Her extravagances, her flippancies, her very determination to evade the burdens of grief and responsibility, her refusal to be in earnest about anything but beauty, were, after all, the only means of keeping beauty.

At such moments, he felt that she and her sort alone were wise, and that those who bent to the yoke of life were not the wise and noble creatures they thought themselves, but only stolid, sexless, stupid oxen. She still had wings because she used them always, was always fugitive.

At this bright dinner there were many eminent women among the eminent men in the drawing-room, but when Patty made her entrance, swimming in like a mermaid waist-deep in a peach-blossom billow, all the babble stopped. All the eyes rolled her way. Her husband following her, slim, black and solemn, felt a mere lackey, and yet was proud to lag at the heels of such a vision.

His pride sickened and his heart lurched when he saw Harry Chalender push forward and lift her hand to his lips. RoBards had once seen those lips on his wife's mouth, and he felt now that he ought in common decency to crush them both to death.

But of course he did not even frown when he shook Chalender's hand. After all, Chalender had saved his life once,—that black night in the fire of 1835,—and he felt a twisted obligation.

Another twisted emotion was his delight when he saw Chalender crowded away from Patty by other men. He felt that a man ought either to cage his wife in a cell or give up all respectable ideas of monopoly or monogamy. One might as well accept these insane notions of women's rights to their own souls. And with the souls would go the bodies, of course. And then the home, the family, society, the nation! He could not imagine the chaos that would ensue. His own heart was a seething chaos in little.

And then all the men were eclipsed by the entrance of Daniel Webster—no less a giant than Daniel Webster. As a citizen, RoBards felt an awe for him; as a lawyer, a reverence.

To his amazement, Patty gasped with pride at meeting the man. She bowed so low that she almost sat on the floor. And Webster looking down on her, bent till his vast skull was almost on a level with Patty's little china-doll head.

Her humility was such a pretty tribute to his genius that his confusion was perfect. His mastiff jaws wagged with the shock of her grace. His huge eyes saddened in a distress of homage. For once he could find no words; there was only a groan of contentment in that columnar throat, equally famous for its thirst and for the eloquence of the angelic voice that stormed the Senate chamber and shook the judicial benches, yet purled like a brook at a female ear.

Patty almost swooned when she learned that she was to go out on Webster's arm.

When the black servants folded back the doors, a table like a lake of mahogany waited them, gleaming with a flotilla of heavily laden silver, platters, tureens, baskets, and bowls in a triple line.

Patty and the leonine Daniel followed the lady of the mansion, and when she was formally handed to her throne, the clatter began. The servants fairly rained food upon the guests, soup and fish and ham and turkey, venison and mutton, corn and all the vegetables available, sweets of every savor, cheeses and fruits, claret and champagne and a dulcet Madeira brought down from the attic where it had spent its years swinging from the heat of the sun-baked roof to the chill of the long winters.

RoBards noted that many of his old schoolmates, still boys in his eye, were far older than Patty had allowed him to be. And their wives were as shapeless as the haunches of meat whose slices they attacked without grace. Patty made a religion of little manners and charming affectations. She spread her napkin across her lap, though like the Prioresse, she never let any food "from her lippes falle." She took off her gloves with caressing upward strokes and folded them under her napkin. She sipped her soup with a birdlike mincingness.

And when Mr. Webster, with old-fashioned courtesy, challenged her to champagne, she accepted the challenge, selected the wine he named, held her glass to be filled, and while the bubbles tumbled and foamed to the brim, and broke over it in a tiny spray, she looked into the monstrous eyes of the modern Demosthenes, and with the silent eloquence of her smile, nullified the ponderous phrases he would have rolled upon her.

HE found his voice later, but RoBards could hear Patty's voice now and then, tinkling like raindrops between thunders. And finally he heard her murmur in little gasps:

"Oh, Mr. Senator! If only you—you—would take my father's case—against this wicked city—then—justice would be done—at last—for once at least."

A faintness, less of jealousy than despair, made RoBards put down his Madeira glass so sharply that a blotch of the wine darkened the linen of the cloth. And this blunder completed his misery.

But Patty stared up into Webster's eyes as if she had never seen a man before.

By this time Mr. Webster was well toward the befuddlement for which he was also noted, and his reply was more fervent than elegant:

"My dear, 'f you want my assisshance in your father's—your father's lawsuit, I shall consider it a prilivege, a glorious pril—op'tunity to pay homage to one of mos' beau'iful wom'n, one of mos' charm-

ing— Madam, I challenge you to champ— champagne."

Patty went through the rites again, but put her hand across the glass when the servant would have refilled it. She finished her dessert, deftly resumed her gloves before the hostess threw down her napkin and rose to lead the ladies to the dressing-room. Patty, for all her accepted challenges, was one of the few women who made the door without a waver.

Her husband followed her with his eyes and longed to go with her and unpack his heart of the grudge it held. In his very presence she had asked another lawyer to supply the ability she denied him. But he had to stay and watch with disgust the long tippling and male gossip.

ON the next morning Patty received a note from the Astor House, where Mr. Webster lived in New York. She took it to her father with a cry of pride:

"See, Papa, what I've brought you— Mr. Webster's head on a platter."

Old Jessamine was so sure now of his two hundred thousand dollars that he decided to spend more of it in making doubly sure. He would engage the next best lawyer in America, Benjamin F. Butler.

"With Webster and Butler as my counsel," he roared, "I'll make even this old city pay its honest debts."

RoBards' head drooped as he noted that his own name was not even mentioned, though he had fought the case for ten years at his own expense and must instruct the two Titans in all its details.

He felt a little meaner than ever when Patty noted his distress and said:

"Don't forget, Papa, that you have also the distinguished assistance of the eminent Mr. David RoBards."

"Umm—ah—yes! Yes, yes, of course!"

But lesser alarms were lost in greater. When RoBards went to the post office he found there a letter from his farmer:

"Mr. D. RoBards, Esq.

"Las nite in the big storm here youre chimbley was strok by litening and the seller wall all broke wat shall I do about it or will you get a mason from the sitty with respects as ever youre obed. servt.

"J. Albeson

"P. S. Too cows was also strok by litening and a toolup tree.

"J. A."

The letter was itself a lightning stroke in RoBards' peace. Time and security had almost walled up Jud Lasher's memory in oblivion. And now he seemed to see the body disclosed by a thunderbolt from heaven splitting apart the stones to show it grinning and malevolent.

After the first shock he realized that the body could not have been revealed, or Albeson would have mentioned it. This gave him one deep breath of relief.

Then fear took the reins and made his heart gallop anew; for how could he expect a mason to repair the walls without tearing deep into the foundation of the chimney?

The ancient walls of Tulip-tree house see yet more dramatic scenes in the forthcoming installment of this great novel—in the next, the February, issue.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S School Department will help you solve the problem of your child's future training—see pages 7-10.

GOLDEN SILENCE

(Continued from page 79)

Capetown, South Africa, and it read as follows:

"Just seen old copy of *Times* announcing your engagement. Implore you to wait my arrival. Leaving by Saturday's ship, Liverpool and New York. Letter should reach you in few days telling of my big strike in newly opened fields. Millions in sight. Wild with anxiety. Cable Consulate, Capetown, that I am not too late. All my love. Dick."

For the severalth time in the last twenty-four hours Jerome's heart went through some violent gymnastics, while his mouth was subject to that sudden dryness which comes with powerful emotion. But he was getting inured to this, and so managed to croak, awkwardly albeit with sincerity: "My warmest congratulations, Alison. Who is Dick?"

"Richard Crandall. We were engaged two years ago, but he hadn't a cent. Then there was a silly fight, and he slammed off in a rage."

Jerome reflected that this appeared to be a habit of Alison's fiancés, but it did not seem quite the moment to remark on it. He felt as if suddenly attached to a very large balloon.

"Dick was really the one love of my life, Jerry. I've been bitter ever since. You're not too cut up about it, are you?"

"I shall try to weather it," said Jerome dryly. "How long did you say it takes to get an annulment?"

"Oh, Father can manage that quickly, with his influence."

"We might go up and break the glad news to him," Jerome suggested. "I'd rather like to have his official acquittal."

Alison laughed. "That's a happy thought. You *are* a good sport, Jerry."

JEROME told the driver to go to the Metropolitan Building. As the taxi moved away, Alison, seized with a sudden contrition, laid her hand upon his arm.

"You really are a dear, Jerry. I've been a cat. But honestly, don't you think that this marriage of ours was foredoomed to failure?"

"I'm afraid so, Alison. Even without Dick, I doubt that it would have been a brilliant success."

"You don't blame me, do you, Jerry?"

"I do not," said Jerome with emphasis. "You have shown a lot more sense than I did."

"But I mean about getting engaged to you in the first place. You see, Jerry, I might as well confess there were other reasons besides my fondness for you. I found out by accident that Father was planning to marry again—a woman I can't stand."

Jerry understood suddenly what had puzzled him considerably—to wit, Mr. Arnold's ready acquiescence in his daughter's marriage to a man who, though of good social position, had so little to offer in a material way.

"Do you think me very cold-blooded, Jerry?" Alison asked, then added quickly: "No, I'll withdraw that question. You're such an honest old dear, and I want that we should part friends."

"A girl has got to consider her future in these uncertain days," said Jerome oracularly, "especially a girl *de luxe* like you."

"I'm afraid I *am* extravagant, my dear," Alison admitted cheerfully; "and as my prospective stepmother is even worse, I could scarcely have expected much from Father."

"Mr. Arnold has some good news in store for him."

"Of course," Alison agreed naïvely, then laughed. "Oh, dear! I'm so excited I scarcely know what I'm saying. You must think me a horridly mercenary wretch. But now that it's all arranged, do tell me, Jerry, what was in that nasty note."

JEROME, a bit rattled himself, was about to obey a sudden impulse, but as he glanced at Alison's finely chiseled and beautiful profile, he strangled it.

It held an expression that he had seen there many times before, but which now for the first time he was able accurately to interpret. It told of an intense covetousness not alone for money nor for the man, but toward the combination of the two. In fairness to Alison it may be said that money alone had failed to bind her, and Jerome's own case was the nearest in which she had ever come to surrendering herself to the man alone.

He had evidence enough that as a male individual he pleased her infinitely, but looking at her now, he shuddered to think what must inevitably have happened when this attraction failed to satisfy. So at her request to see the note, he shook his head.

"What good could that do you now?" he asked.

"Oh, very well!" she answered irritably. "But if it's what I think, it might help in the annulment of the marriage."

"On the contrary," said Jerome, "it strikes me that my stubborn refusal to show it either to yourself or to your father should count for more in getting you clear of me. Leave well enough alone, my dear girl. If I hadn't refused in the first place, just think what you might have missed."

Alison nodded. "I fancy you're right, Jerry, but I hope this is not going to make a woman-hater of you."

"Oh, no. I realize that our recent disagreement must have left a spot which is still sore, while yours and Dick's has had time to cicatricize, so to speak. Besides, fresh kale is a splendid surgical dressing."

Alison shot him a suspicious look. "You *are* bitter, Jerry," said she.

"I'll get over it....Well, here we are. Your father has a pleasant surprise in store for him."

Mr. Arnold was in his office, and they were ushered in immediately. His face was rather dark as they entered.

"Well," he snapped, "what's the matter now?"

"We have come to sign an armistice which we hope may be followed by a lasting peace," said Alison.

"And the formation of a new alliance," said Jerome.

"I don't get you," growled the lawyer. "There was nothing the matter with the ceremony, was there?"

"Only that it took place," said Jerome. "Show your father the telegram, Alison."

She did so, and it was wonderful to Jerome to observe the dissipation of the storm-clouds on the face of the lawyer. He glanced sharply at his daughte .

"I never had much confidence in young Crandall," said he, "but it's for you to decide."

"I've done so, Papa," said Alison. "Jerry and I agree that our marriage was a great mistake. We've never been compatible temperamentally, and I must admit I don't think a girl brought up as I have been, ought ever to marry a poor man, especially"—she looked with meaning at her father, who flushed beneath her knowing gaze—"when her male parent is still young and handsome and a widower."

"Come, come, daughter," Mr. Arnold interrupted gruffly. "You need not go into personalities. Since you are both of the same mind in this matter, there can be but one course for us to pursue, and we shall get about it with as little discussion and delay as possible."

THE hour-hand of the big clock on the Metropolitan Building's tower had traveled about a quarter of a mile around the dial before Jerome received official announcement that his contract of holy matrimony with Alison was null and void. To the orthodox religious mind, it is a little difficult to think of any holy covenant becoming ever null and void; but aware that legal findings must sometimes clash with sacred ones, Jerome did not permit himself to worry over this detail. He sped with all dispatch to Sylvia, who received him with a pale but radiant face.

"Oh, Jerry!" she whispered. "Are you really free?"

"No," he answered. "I am engaged—to you. I expect to remain in that stage for not more than about two hours. The marriage-license is in my pocket in a long envelope with the annulment papers, and I hope very shortly to have a third document to add to the collection. I stopped at the Little Church Around the Corner, and the course is being cleared for the third event."

There was no hitch to this program, which was carried out before a small but carefully selected audience. As they rolled away Sylvia nestled close to her husband. He looked at her with sparkling eyes. "I think it's time I showed you that scrap of paper which ruptured relations between Alison and me."

He reached into his pocket and produced the yellow envelope, which he kissed, and handed to his bride. "Read it aloud, sweetheart. I love to hear it."

Sylvia read. "'Shreveport, Louisiana, June 1, 1922. Over the top of the derrick, twenty thousand barrels, strong. Standing off the rush for leases. Your share worth a million. Better bring your bride here for honeymoon. Have got Niagara swamped for gush. Hearty congratulations. Love to—'"

Jerome snatched the paper from the trembling hands of his bride, whipped out his pencil, drew a line through the last word of the dispatch and wrote above it: *"Sylvia."*

THE PLUS FOURS

(*Continued from page 61*)

"You may not," retorted Charlotte. "They are the poor boy's mascot. You've no idea how they have improved his game. He has just beaten me hollow. I am going to try to learn to bear them—so must you. Really, you've no notion how he has come on. My cripple wont be able to give him more than a couple of bisques if he keeps up this form."

"It's something about the things," said Wallace. "They give me confidence."

"They give *me* a pain in the neck," said Raymond Gandle.

TO the thinking man, nothing is more remarkable in this life than the way in which humanity adjusts itself to conditions which at their outset might well have appeared intolerable. Some great cataclysm occurs, some storm or earthquake, shaking the community to its foundations; and after the first pardonable consternation one finds the sufferers resuming their ordinary pursuits as if nothing had happened. There have been few more striking examples of this adaptability than the behavior of the members of our golf-club under the impact of Wallace Chesney's plus fours. For the first few days it is not too much to say that they were stunned. Nervous players sent their caddies on in front of them at blind holes, so that they might be warned in time of Wallace's presence ahead and not have him happening to them all of a sudden. And even the pro was not unaffected. Brought up in Scotland in an atmosphere of tartan kilts, he nevertheless winced, and a startled "Hoots!" was forced from his lips when Wallace Chesney suddenly appeared in the valley as he was about to drive from the fifth tee.

But in about a week conditions were back to normalcy. Within ten days the plus fours became a familiar feature of the landscape and were accepted as such without comment. They were pointed out to strangers, along with the waterfall, the Lovers Leap, and the view from the eighth green, as things you ought not to miss when visiting the course; but apart from that, one might almost say they were ignored. And meanwhile Wallace Chesney continued day by day to make the most extraordinary progress in his play.

As I said before, and I think you will agree with me when I have told you what happened subsequently, it was probably a case of autohypnosis. There is no other sphere in which a belief in oneself has such immediate effects as it has in golf. And Wallace, having acquired self-confidence, went on from strength to strength. In less than a week he had plowed his way through the Unfortunate Incidents—of which class Peter Willard was the best example—and was challenging the fellows who kept three shots in five somewhere on the fairway. A month later he was holding his own with ten-handicap men. And by the middle of the summer he was so far advanced that his name occasionally cropped up in speculative talks on the subject of the July medal. One might have been excused for supposing that, as far as Wallace Chesney was concerned, all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

And yet ——

THE first inkling I received that anything was wrong came through a chance meeting with Raymond Gandle, who happened to pass my gate on his way back from the links just as I drove up in my taxi—for I had been away from home for many weeks on a protracted business tour. I welcomed Gandle's advent and invited him in to smoke a pipe and put me abreast of local gossip. He came readily enough—and seemed, indeed, to have something on his mind and to be glad of the opportunity of revealing it to a sympathetic auditor.

"And how," I asked him, when we were comfortably settled, "did your game this afternoon come out?"

"Oh, he beat me," said Gandle, and it seemed to me that there was a note of bitterness in his voice.

"Then he, whoever he was, must have been an extremely competent performer," I replied courteously, for Gandle was one of the finest players in the club, "unless, of course, you were giving him some impossible handicap."

"No, we played level."

"Indeed! Who was your opponent?"

"Chesney."

"Wallace Chesney! And he beat you, playing level! This is the most amazing thing I have ever heard."

"He's improved out of all knowledge."

"He must have! Do you think he would ever beat you again?"

"No — because he wont have the chance."

"You surely do not mean that you will not play him because you are afraid of being beaten?"

"It isn't being beaten I mind."

And if I omit to report the remainder of his speech, it is not merely because it contained expressions with which I am reluctant to sully my lips, but because, omitting these expletives, what he said was almost word for word what you were saying to me just now about Nathaniel Frisby. It was, it seemed, Wallace Chesney's manner, his arrogance, his attitude of belonging to some superior order of beings, that had so wounded Raymond Gandle. Wallace Chesney had, it appeared, criticized Gandle's mashie-play in no friendly spirit, had hung up the game on the fourteenth tee in order to show him how to place his feet, and on the way back to the clubhouse had said that the beauty of golf was that the best player could enjoy a round even with a dub, because, though there might be no interest in the match, he could always amuse himself by playing for his medal score.

I was profoundly shaken.

"Wallace Chesney!" I exclaimed. "Was it really Wallace Chesney who behaved in the manner you describe?"

"Unless he's got a twin brother of the same name, it was."

"Wallace Chesney a victim of swelled head! I can hardly credit it."

"Well, you needn't take my word for it unless you want to. Ask anybody. It isn't often he can get anyone to play with him now."

"You horrify me!"

Raymond Gandle smoked awhile in brooding silence. Finally he queried:

"You've heard about his engagement?"

"I have heard nothing, nothing. What about his engagement?"

"Charlotte Dix has broken it off."

"No!"

"Yes. Couldn't stand him any longer."

I GOT rid of Gandle as soon as I could and made my way as quickly as possible to the house where Charlotte lived with her aunt. I was determined to sift this matter to the bottom and to do all that lay in my power to heal the breach between two young people for whom I had a great affection.

"I have just heard the news," I said, when the aunt had retired to some secret lair, as aunts do, and Charlotte and I were alone.

"What news?" said Charlotte dully. I thought she looked pale and ill, and she had certainly grown thinner.

"This dreadful news about your engagement to Wallace Chesney. Tell me, why did you do this thing? Is there no hope of a reconciliation?"

"Not unless Wally becomes his old self again."

"But I had always regarded you two as ideally suited to one another."

"Wally has changed completely in the last few weeks. Haven't you heard?"

"Only sketchily, from Raymond Gandle."

"I refuse," said Charlotte proudly, all the woman in her leaping to her eyes, "to marry a man who treats me as if I were a *Kronen* at the present rate of exchange merely because I slice an occasional tee-shot. The afternoon I broke off the engagement ——" Her voice shook, and I could see that her indifference was but a mask. "The afternoon I broke off the en-gug-gug-gagement, he t-told me I ought to use an iron off the tee instead of a dud-dud-driver."

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THE stricken girl burst into a uncontrollable fit of sobbing. And realizing that if matters had gone as far as that, there was little I could do, I pressed her hand silently and left her.

But though it seemed hopeless, I decided to persevere. I turned my steps toward Wallace Chesney's bungalow, resolved to make one appeal to the man's better feelings. He was in his sitting-room when I arrived, polishing a putter; and it seemed significant to me even in that tense moment that the putter was quite an ordinary one, such as any capable player might use. In the brave old happy days of his dubhood, the only putters you ever found in the society of Wallace Chesney were patent self-adjusting things that looked like croquet-mallets that had taken the wrong turning in childhood.

"Well, Wallace, my boy," I said.

"Hullo," said Wallace Chesney. "So you're back?"

We fell into conversation, and I had not been in the room two minutes before I realized that what I had been told about the change in him was nothing more than the truth. The man's bearing and his every remark were insufferably bumptious. He spoke of his prospects in the July medal competition as if the issue were already settled. He scoffed at his rivals, and I had some little difficulty in bringing the talk round to the matter which I had come to discuss.

"My boy," I said at length, "I have just heard the sad news."

"What sad news?"

"I have been talking to Charlotte ——"

"Oh, that!" said Wallace Chesney.

"She was telling me ——"

"Perhaps it's all for the best."

"All for the best? What do you mean?"

"Well," said Wallace, "one doesn't wish, of course, to say anything ungallant; but after all, poor Charlotte's handicap *is* fourteen, and wouldn't appear to have much chance of getting any lower. I mean, there's such a thing as a fellow throwing himself away."

Was I revolted at those callous words? For a moment, yes. Then it struck me that, though he had uttered them with a light laugh, that laugh had had in it more than a touch of bravado. I looked at him keenly. There was a bored, discontented expression in his eyes, a line of pain about his mouth.

"My boy," I said gravely, "you are not happy."

FOR an instant I think he would have denied the imputation. But my visit had coincided with one of those twilight moods in which a man requires above all else sympathy. He uttered a weary sigh.

"I'm fed up," he admitted. "It's a funny thing. When I was a dub, I used to think how perfect it must be to be scratch. I used to watch the cracks buzzing round the course and envy them. It's all a fraud. The only time when you enjoy golf is when an occasional decent shot is enough to make you happy for the day. I'm plus two, and I'm bored to death. I'm too good. And what's the result? Everybody's jealous of me. Everybody's got it in for me. Nobody loves me."

His voice rose in a note of anguish; and at the sound, his terrier, which had been sleeping on the rug, crept forward and licked his hand.

"The dog loves you," I said gently, for I was touched.

"Yes, but I don't love the dog," said Wallace Chesney.

"Now, come, Wallace," I said. "Be reasonable, my boy. It is only your unfortunate manner on the links which has made you perhaps a little unpopular at the moment. Why not pull yourself up? Why ruin your whole life with this arrogance? All that you need is a little tact, a little forbearance. Charlotte, I am sure, is just as fond of you as ever, but you have wounded her pride. Why must you be unkind about her tee-shots?"

Wallace Chesney shook his head despondently.

"I can't help it," he said. "It exasperates me to see anyone foozling, and I have to say so."

"Then there is nothing to be done," I said sadly.

ALL the medal competitions at our club are, as you know, important events; but, as you are also aware, none of them is looked forward to so keenly or contested so hotly as the one in July. At the beginning of the year of which I am speaking, Raymond Gandle had been considered the probable winner of the fixture; but as the season progressed and Wallace Chesney's skill developed to such a remarkable extent, most of us were reluctantly inclined to put our money on the latter. Reluctantly, because Wallace's unpopularity was now so general that the thought of his winning was distasteful to all. It grieved me to see how cold his fellow-members were toward him. He drove off from the first tee without a preliminary hand-clap; and though the drive was of admirable quality and nearly carried the green, there was not a single cheer. I noticed Charlotte Dix among the spectators. The poor girl was looking sad and wan.

In the draw for partners Wallace had had Peter Willard allotted to him; and he muttered to me in a quite audible voice that it was as bad as handicapping him half a dozen strokes to make him go round with such a hopeless performer. I do not think Peter heard him, but it would not have made much difference to him if he had, for I doubt if anything could have had much effect for the worse on his game. Peter Willard always entered for the medal competitions because he said that competition-play was good for the nerves.

On this occasion he topped his ball badly, and Wallace lit his pipe with the exaggeratedly patient air of an irritated man. When Peter topped his second also, Wallace was moved to speech.

"For goodness' sake," he snapped, "what's the good of playing at all if you insist on lifting your head? Keep it down, man, keep it down. You don't need to watch to see where the ball's going. It isn't likely to go as far as all that. Make up your mind to count three before you look up."

"Thanks," said Peter meekly. There was no pride in Peter to be wounded. He knew the sort of player he was.

The couples were now moving off with

smooth rapidity, and the course was dotted with the figures of players and their accompanying spectators. A fair proportion of these latter had decided to follow the fortunes of Raymond Gandle, but by far the larger number were sticking to Wallace, who right from the start showed that Gandle or anyone else would have to return a very fine card to beat him. He was out in forty-one, two above bogey, and with the assistance of a superb second, which landed the ball within a foot of the pin, got a three on the tenth, where a four is considered good. I mention this to show that by the time he arrived at the short lake hole, Wallace Chesney was at the top of his form. Not even the fact that he had been obliged to let the next couple through, owing to Peter Willard's losing his ball, had been enough to upset him.

The course has been rearranged since, but at that time the lake hole, which is now the second, was the eleventh and was generally looked on as the crucial hole in a medal round. Wallace no doubt realized this, but the knowledge did not seem to affect him. He lighted his pipe with the utmost coolness; and having replaced the match-box in his hip pocket, stood smoking nonchalantly as he waited for the couple in front to get off the green.

They holed out eventually, and Wallace walked to the tee. As he did so, he was startled to receive a resounding smack.

"Sorry," said Peter Willard apologetically. "Hope I didn't hurt you. A wasp."

And he pointed to the corpse, which was lying in a used-up attitude on the ground.

"Afraid it would sting you," said Peter.

"Oh, thanks," said Wallace.

HE spoke a little stiffly, for Peter Willard had a large, hard, flat hand, the impact of which had waked him up considerably. Also, there had been laughter in the crowd. He was fuming as he bent to address his ball, and his annoyance became acute when, just as he reached the top of his swing, Peter Willard suddenly spoke.

"Just a second old man," said Peter.

Wallace spun round, outraged.

"What *is* it? I do wish you would wait till I've made my shot."

"Just as you like," said Peter humbly.

"There is no greater crime that a man can commit on the links than to speak to a fellow when he's making his stroke."

"Of course, of course," acquiesced Peter, crushed.

Wallace turned to his ball once more. He was vaguely conscious of a discomfort to which he could not at the moment give a name. At first he thought that he was having a spasm of lumbago, and this surprised him, for he had never in his life been subject to even a suspicion of that malady. A moment later, he realized that this diagnosis had been wrong.

"Good heavens!" he cried, leaping nimbly some two feet into the air. "I'm on fire!"

"Yes," said Peter, delighted at his ready grasp of the situation. "That's what I wanted to mention just now."

Wallace slapped vigorously at the seat of his plus fours.

"It must have been when I killed that

wasp," said Peter, beginning to see clearly into the matter. "You had a match-box in your pocket."

Wallace was in no mood to stop and discuss first causes. He was springing up and down on his pyre, beating at the flames.

"Do you know what I should do if I were you?" said Peter Willard. "I should jump into the lake."

One of the cardinal rules of golf is that a player shall accept no advice from anyone but his own caddie; but the warmth about his lower limbs had now become so generous that Wallace was prepared to stretch a point. He took three rapid strides and entered the water with a splash.

The lake, though muddy, is not deep, and presently Wallace was to be observed standing up to his waist some few feet from the shore.

"That ought to have put it out," said Peter Willard. "It was a bit of luck that it happened at this hole." He stretched out a hand to the bather. "Catch hold, old man, and I'll pull you out."

"No!" said Wallace Chesney.

"Why not?"

"Never mind!" said Wallace austerely. He bent as near to Peter as he was able. "Send a caddie up to the clubhouse to fetch my gray flannel trousers from my locker," he whispered tensely.

"Oh, ah!" said Peter.

It was some little time before Wallace, encircled by a group of male spectators, was enabled to change his costume; and during the interval he continued to stand waist-deep in the water, to the chagrin of various couples who came to the tee in the course of their round and complained with not a little bitterness that his presence there added a mental hazard to an already difficult hole. Eventually, however, he found himself back ashore, his ball before him, his mashie in his hand.

"Carry on," said Peter, as the couple in front left the green. "All clear now."

WALLACE CHESNEY addressed his ball. And, even as he did so; he was suddenly aware than an odd psychological change had taken place in himself. He was aware of a strange weakness. The charred remains of the plus fours were lying under an adjacent bush; and clad in the old gray flannels of his early golfing days, Wallace felt diffident, feeble, uncertain of himself. It was as though virtue had gone out of him, as if some indispensable adjunct to good play had been removed. His corrugated trouser-leg caught his eye as he waggled, and all at once he became acutely alive to the fact that many eyes were watching him. The audience seemed to press on him like a blanket. He felt as he had been wont to feel in the old days when he had had to drive off the first tee in front of a terrace full of scoffing critics.

The next moment his ball had bounded weakly over the intervening patch of turf and was in the water.

"Hard luck!" said Peter Willard, ever a generous foe. And the words seemed to touch some almost atrophied chord in Wallace's breast. A sudden love for his species flooded over him. Dashed decent of Peter, he thought, to sympathize. Peter was a good chap. So were the spectators good chaps. So was everybody, even his caddie.

Peter Willard, as if resolved to make his sympathy practical, also rolled his ball into the lake.

"Hard luck!" said Wallace Chesney, and started as he said it; for many weeks had passed since he had commiserated with an opponent. He felt a changed man—a better, sweeter, kindlier man. It was as if a curse had fallen from him.

He teed up another ball, and swung.

"Hard luck!" said Peter.

"Hard luck!" said Wallace, a moment later.

"Hard luck!" said Peter, a moment after that.

Wallace Chesney stood on the tee watching the spot in the water where his third ball had fallen. The crowd was now openly amused, and as he listened to their happy laughter, it was borne in upon Wallace that he too was amused and happy. A weird, almost effervescent exhilaration filled him. He turned and beamed upon the spectators. He waved his mashie cheerily at them. This, he felt, was something like golf. This was golf as it should be—not the dull, mechanical thing which had bored him during all these past weeks of his perfection, but a gay, rollicking adventure. That was the soul of golf, the thing that made it the wonderful pursuit it was—that speculativeness, that not knowing where the dickens your ball was going when you hit it, that eternal hoping for the best, that never-failing chanciness. It is better to struggle hopefully than to arrive, and at last this great truth had come home to Wallace Chesney. He realized now why pro's were all grave, silent men who seemed to struggle manfully against some secret sorrow. It was because they were too darned good. Golf had no surprises for them, no gallant spirit of adventure.

"I'm going to get a ball over if I stay here all night," cried Wallace Chesney gayly, and the crowd echoed his mirth.

On the face of Charlotte Dix was the look of a mother whose prodigal son has rolled into the old home once more. She caught Wallace's eye and gesticulated to him blithely.

"The cripple says he'll give you a stroke a hole, Wally!" she shouted.

"I'm ready for him!" bellowed Wallace.

"Hard *luck!*" said Peter Willard.

UNDER their bush the plus fours, charred and dripping, lurked unnoticed. But Wallace Chesney saw them. They caught his eye as he sliced his eleventh into the marshes on the right. It seemed to him that they looked sullen. Disappointed! Baffled!

Wallace Chesney was himself again.

THE SMILE

(*Continued from page 57*)

But her smile was almost the first thing he saw when he entered, and he was alarmed by the effect it had on him. The consciousness that it was ready to pounce the moment his eyes strayed, seemed to deprive him of that serenity and patience so necessary for the trial of Common Law cases.

And the next day it was the same, and the next.

SITTING in his club that third evening before dinner, he seriously reviewed the courses open to him to abate this nuisance. It was less than a fortnight to the Easter vacation, but he felt as if a fortnight of this daily irritation would make him ill. The idea of having her removed, or committed for contempt of court, did not seriously return to him—it was too like the Red King in "Alice in Wonderland;" and what if like the Cheshire Cat, she left her smile behind—for it was not so much the woman, as what her smile meant, which was now so on his nerves. Something it meant—and he could not reach that meaning! What courses then were left? To go to the woman's house and confront her point blank? Impossible! The dignity of his office forbade it.

Equally undignified to write!

To go sick and begin his vacation at once? That was to leave her with the victory!

To get a friend to interfere? He could not confide his weakness to a friend.

To take to smoked glasses? They would merely blur his view of Counsel and witnesses, and leave the smile undimmed; it was a "haunt" now, too mental in its effect to be removed that way. Besides—the woman would rejoice!

To laugh—at himself, at her! All very well if it were just a revengeful trick; but one could not laugh at something that one could not understand.

He rose from that session of sweet, silent thought, powerless, devoid of remedy or anodyne. He must just stick it out and trust to time to wear the woman down. And with a deep sigh he went in to dinner.

The woman missed no single one of the ten days that followed; for two to three hours, morning or afternoon, she sat in his court and smiled whenever he gave her a chance; and that was far more often than he wished, God knew; for when a rider has a weak spot, out of sheer nervousness he always falls on it.

By this time he had almost lost consciousness of how the thing began; the woman and her smile were as unreal, and yet as hopelessly painful, as a recurrent nightmare. When he adjourned his court for the Easter vacation, his face had a jaundiced look, his eyes were restless and unhappy, his dark, twisting eyebrows seemed to have lost their attractive bristle. And the woman looked as freshly full-blown, as meaningful, as mocking under her large black hat as on the first day he saw her. She had battened on him.

Never had he entered train for his vacation with such intense relief. Brighton air would set him up, remove all this silly nerve trouble and exasperation. He drove up from the station to his hotel with the buoyant feeling of a man out for the first time after an illness. Walking up to the desk through the hall lounge, he passed two ladies. One of them turned and smiled. For a moment he felt positively faint; then, with the thought: "Ha! but I'm not a judge here; I'm a man!" he stepped up to the desk and registered. Here she was no privileged harpy, he no helpless official butt. He was a man, she a woman—and she should know it!

HE spent the hour before dinner maturing his resolve to dog her to some quiet nook and give her the half-hour of her life.

"Madam," he would begin, "I think I have reason to know your face. I think you have been so good as to favor me with certain smiles these last three weeks." By heaven, his tongue should tear the skin off her!

In the coffee-room he searched every table, looking at every face; she was not there. Perhaps she had an inkling of what was before her; perhaps she had repented of her rashness in pursuing him down here.

After dinner he continued his restless searching of every face; he could not see her anywhere, and at last, tired out, sat down in the lounge, where a screen kept off the draft, and lay back in his chair drawing feebly at his cigar. Unnerved, exhausted by this spurt of savage feeling, he dozed.

He was awakened by voices. Two women were talking somewhere close to him.

"And he doesn't know me from Eve—isn't it priceless? My dear, I've had the time of my life. From the moment he said that Kathleen shouldn't have the child, and sneered at her, and wouldn't have it that Charles pursued her, I made up my mind to get back on him. He—*he*—of all men! Why, do you know, twenty-seven years ago, in my first marriage, when I was twenty-three, slim and pretty as an angel—my dear, I was, though you wouldn't think it!—he—*he*—a barrister he was then, and quite a buck—he made violent love to me; wanted me to go off with him. And I should have, my dear, if it hadn't been that Kathleen was on the way! *He—he!* He's clean forgotten that he ever was flesh and blood! And now! Oh, my God! What a humbug! *What* a humbug, in his precious wig! —Hallo!"

The screen was tottering. Mr. Justice Belliver, risen from his hastily pushed-back chair, stood with one hand grasping the falling screen and his other hand crisped on the lapel of his evening coat, as if to conceal the feelings in his chest. His lips quivered, thin and bloodless from compression; with eyes deep in his head, he looked at the woman who had spoken, and as he looked, she smiled.

He bowed slightly, let go of the screen and walked shakily away; and in a mirror he saw her smile slowly fade, and a look of compunction, almost of compassion, take its place.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S School Department will help you solve the problem of your child's future training—see pages 7-10.

RITA AND THE JAZZ BO

(*Continued from page 75*)

"Stuart is president of the Civic Association. And he's a worker—particularly when it comes to working some one else. Every spring he writes me a note inviting me to call at his office. He greets me like a long-lost brother. 'Well, Barrett,' he says, 'what sort of a show are we going to provide this October?' So I plan the show; he gets the publicity and the credit; the town does a rushing business, and I go to a sanitarium. I feel my hair turning gray now from trying to think up something novel for this October. When I went to see Stuart a few weeks ago, he had the nerve to say: 'Now, Barrett, I'm afraid the electric floats and the ballet are something of a chestnut. Get that wise old head of yours working on something new. Let's have a real novelty this year. Something new, huh?' "

"What have you planned?" asked Rita, blandly.

"Nothing," he answered gloomily. "That is, I've not been able to think of anything out of the ordinary. We've had ballets of nations, ballets of flowers, ballets of the ages, and all the other ballets. I suppose something will suggest itself, but so far I'm stumped."

"I shouldn't worry about it, Father, if I were you," said Mrs. Barrett.

"Why not a masque or pageant? I mean one written especially for the occasion," Rita suggested.

"H'm," said Mr. Barrett, "that sounds promising; who'd write it?"

"I would," answered Rita. "This town has a stirring history. I've been reading up. It would make a great show."

"Sounds good," asserted Barrett.

"It should satisfy Mr. Stuart too," continued Rita. "His grandfather was one of the founders of Westville, and when the place grew big enough, one of the names suggested was Port Stuart."

"Go to it, little one," beamed Barrett. "You'll take a ten-ton load off my mind. Draft a skeleton of your idea, and we'll go and talk it over with Mr. Stuart. Say, you'd have to have some special music, wouldn't you? Maybe we can get Rosey, who conducts our orchestra, to write it. He composes a little."

"I think perhaps I can take care of the music, too," smiled Rita.

SHE read everything she could find in the library and in the old newspaper-files about the early history of Westville, from when it was the smallest sort of trading post, up through the time a few shacks on the river-front gave it the dignity of a settlement, until now, when it had reached the point where it was called a "metropolis."

When her scenario was in shape, she took it to Mr. Barrett, and the next afternoon at three o'clock, the two of them entered the administration building of the Stuart Shoe Company. As they were shown into Mr. Stuart's private office, he was dismissing his secretary, and he turned to them with a welcoming smile.

"Mr. Barrett tells me that you have a plan for our Fall Festival that will surpass anything we've done," he said to Rita.

"I'm sure I shouldn't say that," she protested. "Perhaps it may be sufficiently different to be interesting."

"Read to Mr. Stuart what you have written, Miss Moffatt," suggested Barrett.

Rita sketched her ideas for the pageant, and every minute or two Mr. Stuart, his face full of animation, interposed, "Excellent!" "Splendid!" "Very good, indeed. Very good."

It was nearly six o'clock when they finished, and Mr. Stuart offered to take them uptown in his car. On the way, he recalled that he had no dinner engagement and invited them to dine with him, but they pleaded the necessity of reaching the theater early for the evening performance. As he shook hands with Rita, in parting, he said: "I am quite familiar with the history of Westville, and I shall be happy to assist you in your work if I can be of any help at all."

Rita thanked him and smiled. At the performance that evening she descried her father-in-law in the back of one of the boxes.

When Rita's scenario was sufficiently far along to give the composer a working-basis for the music, she sent it to Gus Hertz, and he in turn sent for Norman.

"Well, son," he said, "I've just got a report on that ballad of yours, 'When the Dear Old Days Are the Here Old Days,' and in two weeks' time it is on the way to smashing the sales-record of this place."

Norman flushed with pleasure. This was the second ballad he had written since Rita's departure, and it was hailed as the "hit of the year."

"But son, you're too big for that class of stuff. There is a gloomy-looking old building down on Broadway at Fortieth Street that is going to resound one of these days with the kind of great music you will write."

"Fortieth and Broadway?" said Norman, knitting his brow.

"I'm referring to the Metropolitan Opera House," said the King of Tin Pan Alley.

Norman laughed.

Hertz laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. "I'm in dead earnest. It's up to you, my boy. And right here's your chance to prove I'm right. Take this manuscript and look it over. Then tell me what you can do with it."

Norman glanced at the title, "Westville Ho!" "Why, why that's my home; my dad is the big gun of that town. Say, watch me."

And Gus Hertz had to write Rita that he was now having a more difficult time in stopping Norman from working too hard than he ever had had in getting him started.

WHEN Rita received the piano arrangement, she asked Barrett and Mr. Stuart to call at her apartment. Barrett read from the manuscript while she played the music, so that Mr. Stuart could

follow the development of the drama concurrently with the music theme.

"It is the music that I am counting on more than anything else to interpret the story," Rita explained. "The piano, of course, only gives a poor idea of the sweep and grandeur of the full orchestration."

She put her best skill into the performance. She felt, and was sure Mr. Stuart, too, must have felt the very spirit of the adventurous pioneers setting out for the Great West, the songs of the 'forty-niners, the monotonous creaking of the wheels of the wagons on the cross-country journey —the Indians! But through the musical narrative there was carried the *Leitmotif* —a stirring, exultant strain, the soul of a city, the sweet music of a triumphant industry, the whir of machinery, the clang of street-car bells, the *rat-a-tat* of the pneumatic hammer, the thousand and one surging noises that go to make the mighty chorus of a city.

When she had finished and turned from the piano, Mr. Stuart arose and extended both his hands to her.

"It is wonderful," he said, "beautiful. That music almost talks. Its message is as clear as the story itself. It is sheer genius. Wonderful!"

Then for no reason at all Rita burst into tears, and still holding to his hands, rested her head on them and sobbed.

Then she raised her eyes. "Wasn't that too foolish for words? Oh, I'm so happy. You really do like it?" she choked.

"Yes, yes," insisted Mr. Stuart. "It reminds me of— of,"—he searched for the name of the composer,—"of Wagner," he ended.

"Oh, I think it is too American," said Rita, "though some of the sonorous, harmonious discords are a little like Wagner. I should say there is more of the influence of Débussy in it, particularly the descriptive passages."

This was beyond Mr. Stuart's depth. "Yes, yes, Débussy," he agreed. "I think you're right. It's wonderful. Yes, it's American."

After Barrett was well out of earshot, he took Rita's hand and pressed it warmly, gazing into her eyes with something more than friendly interest. "What a wonderful girl you are!" he said. "And you are as beautiful as you are wonderful."

Norman had come by his winning ways naturally enough, thought Rita, when her father-in-law had gone.

Mr. Stuart hurried after Barrett. "Exceptional young woman, very," he said.

"College girl," said Mr. Barrett. "Was in Barnard for three years; some family financial difficulties came about, and so she turned to the stage as being the medium best suited to her talents."

"So!" said Mr. Stuart.

"Yes, Mr. Stuart," declared Barrett, "the stage is not what it used to be, if it ever was anywhere near as bad as it has been painted. It is attracting really exceptional people these days."

"So it seems, so it seems," acknowledged Mr. Stuart.

The evening before the pageant's first performance, a dress rehearsal was held. The amateur actors forgot at once everything that had been drilled into them; Barrett stormed and swore, and more than one factory girl who had been browbeaten by brutal autocratic foremen walked away from the scene in tears, vowing: "I've never been treated that way in my life."

MR. STUART, viewing the rehearsal, was in despair. Seeking Rita, he asked her to ride back to town in his machine. It was evident that there was something he wished to say, but the terrifying thought that the pageant would be a failure prevented him from expressing it. He did unburden his fears to Rita, but to make sure that she would not construe his remarks as reflecting on her, he said:

"It's really for you I'm worrying, little girl. It would be a tragedy if your work should go for nothing."

"I shouldn't worry, if I were you, Mr. Stuart," she smiled. "In the theater, when a final rehearsal goes as badly as this one, we always count on a good first performance, and even if everything else should fail, the music alone will save it."

"The music! Yes, yes," said Mr. Stuart. "It must take great genius to create music like that. Nothing has ever moved me so."

"The music is bigger than the pageant," said Rita. "It means more in many ways. It is the first big thing which that composer has done. Mr. Stuart, you are a patron of the arts. You believe, don't you, that a natural gift of music should be encouraged?"

"Most assuredly," he answered.

She rested her hand on his arm. "If this man were poor and struggling, carrying on his work against great odds, don't you think he should be encouraged—even assisted?"

Mr. Stuart looked into her eyes. How personal was her interest in this composer, he wondered. "Yes, indeed," he agreed. "I believe he should be encouraged. I shall see to it that the Festival Committee sets aside an adequate amount to compensate him for the music he has written for us."

Mr. Stuart begged her to have dinner with him, and promised that he would surely get her to the theater in time for the performance. They stopped at a little roadside inn, and had dinner served to them out on the lawn under the trees. Mr. Stuart fell into a morose mood, a strange and unnatural thing for him. Then he brightened up a bit. He reached across the table and captured one of Rita's hands.

"I'm going to ask you a question," he said, smiling. "You need not answer it, if you don't want to. But before I ask it, I want to give myself a sort of melancholy pleasure by telling you something. Do you want to hear it?"

Rita felt guilty, but she did not withdraw her hand. He *was* her father-in-law. "Yes," she whispered in answer to his question.

"Until tonight," he said, "I never knew I was an old man."

She shook her head. "You're not," she said finally.

"Thanks, dear," he smiled. "For the last few months I really thought I was young again, because—because I met you—"

Rita did not make a sound.

"Are you angry?"

"No," she whispered.

They sat silent for some time. After a while he asked:

"Does this composer mean a great deal to you?"

"Yes," she said, "a very great deal."

He patted her hand, and sighed.

BETWEEN fifty and sixty thousand people journeyed to Hope Park on the day of the Festival. The huge, natural amphitheater was a living mass before noon, and the surrounding hills were densely thronged.

In the valley was a level, grassy plateau, half encircled by a heavy growth of oak, maple and elm trees, affording at once a back-drop to the stage, and an exit for the performers. The river, coming from around the bend, was a silvery surprise in the sunlight.

The great orchestra of two hundred and fifty pieces was set to the right of the stage, the musicians themselves being hidden from the audience by a screening of foliage. At the back a huge sounding-shell had been built so that the music would not be wasted in perverse winds, and for the conductor a tall stand had been erected.

The Festival committeemen, their families and friends, the social élite of Westville, were gathered to view the pageant from a specially constructed grandstand, not too near, nor yet too far, from the stage. It was within a minute before two o'clock when Rita, accompanied by a short, fat man, arrived beneath the box she was to occupy with Mr. Stuart, and a party of his friends. She almost ran into Mr. Stuart, hurrying along from the other direction. He had just held his last conference with Mr. Barrett, and he was far from being a happy man. His face was marked with the strain of the great responsibility he felt to be his.

"Everything all right?" asked Rita.

"They are all ready to start, but the composer is not here. There was a special delegation at the train to meet him, but if he came in, he missed them, or they missed him. He's *your* composer; where is he?"

"He should be here by now," smiled Rita. "I want you to meet an old friend of mine from New York, Mr. Hertz."

The two men shook hands.

"The composer is Mr. Hertz's protégé," explained Rita.

"But he received his inspiration elsewhere," said Hertz.

They mounted the stairs leading to the box, and as they reached the topmost step, the leader of the orchestra was seen climbing to his stand. The crowd caught sight of him, and burst into a roar. It was a tall, lithe, smiling young man who very composedly turned to bow his acknowledgments before taking up his baton. For a moment he seemed to look straight into the eyes of Rita. Then he turned to the orchestra, raised his wand.

Rita, tingling to the roots of her hair, hardly realized that Mr. Stuart was gripping her arm, and struggling to speak. There were tears in her eyes as she turned to him.

"Norman," he whispered brokenly. "Norman—my boy!"

"Norman—my husband," said Rita.

The pageant was on. A noble swell of melody swept from the orchestra in the valley, and flowed upward and over the hills, sounding a note of exultant triumph. It was music of transcendent beauty, but deep within its throbbing grandeur there lay a simple theme of simplicity and sweetness and faith and love.

"My son, my son!" Mr. Stuart kept repeating, bewildered. Then he gripped Rita's hand even closer in his.

"My daughter," he whispered.

THE BLUE RIBBON

(*Continued from page 43*)

to win a little money for a *ranchita* with some mango trees." He went away, smiling happily, and leaving Señorita Romero contemplating the sugar-lumps.

Life moves swiftly at Mexacana. An hour later Dolores was whispering her sweet hopes to Madam Double-chin, and neither was aware that Brayfield's young gamekeeper had just killed a man, and was imprisoned in the *cuartel*. Truly, the dice are well named "the devil's teeth."

NINE times the house had lost, and there was twenty-two hundred dollars on the table. The law of averages was yielding to the reckless play of Pancho Gonzales, gunman from the Tres Pinos country. Back of an imperturbable mask, the mind of Johnny Powell analyzed swiftly the last nine throws, and recalled that Gonzales had first rolled the dice clear down the table, and they had been tossed back to him by a fat man with beady eyes, chewing nervously upon a black cigar.

"Just a minute, *amigo*," said Johnny Powell. "I feel a little superstitious. Try your luck with these bones, and I'll relieve you of the others."

He reached into the case, and tossed out another pair of dice.

"*Por Dios, no!*" flared the man from Tres Pinos. "I keep the dice by which I ween! You think I cheat?"

Thirty men, packed around the long table, held their breath.

"I told you I was just superstitious," reminded Johnny. "The house has the right to change the dice at any time. Use that pair, or pick up your money."

Pancho Gonzales hesitated. Then, quick as the dart of a snake's head, he drew and fired. The shot went wild; and he did not live to get in another. There was a flash of blue from the other side of the table, a spurt of red—and the man from Tres Pinos went down, clutching vainly at the table. No one else stirred or spoke.

"All right," sighed Johnny Powell. "Pick up your money, boys, and get out. Don't you move, Morwych—*I've got you covered.* Everybody else, beat it!"

In a few minutes Brayfield's was cleared of its usual patrons. There remained only Johnny Powell and his fellow gamekeepers, the prostrate figure on the floor, and Mike Morwych.

Johnny walked up to the proprietor of the Palace, tore open the latter's coat, and reaching one hand into the left vest pocket, withdrew a pair of dice with the Brayfield house-mark. They were apparently identical with the ivory cubes that Pancho Gonzales had been using, but there was this difference: The dice on the table had the usual markings—the trey on the right and the four on the left when the ace was uppermost and the deuce in front; but on the dice taken from Morwych's pocket, this order was reversed, and by that token Johnny knew his own dice. Cold blue eyes looked at Morwych.

"Don't you ever come in here again," warned Johnny. "Don't even walk on the same side of the street—understand? I should have seen it when you picked up my dice and threw yours to your partner, but I was thinking of something else. I shot in self-defense; but you, you yellow dog, you're getting away with a cold-blooded murder! Get out now before I drill you."

Morwych left without saying a word. A few minutes later, red-trousered soldiers showed up from the *cuartel*, and Johnny Powell surrendered. He had no misgivings. A Mexican's life counts for little on the border if the man who takes it is employed by Brayfield; and even though his employer was away, Johnny knew how things were managed. He slept peacefully on a couch in the *comandante's* office.

EARLY in the morning Señorita Romero hurried to the *cuartel*. She was trembling so violently that when the prisoner appeared, she would have fallen if he had not caught her.

"There, there, sister," he comforted. "Why, what's the matter, honey? You're not worrying about me!"

"*Si, si,*" she quavered. "Canst thou not understand? I have loved all along, and now thou art in danger. *Ay, Dios!*"

Johnny Powell waved one hand at the gold-braided bailiff, and that individual discreetly withdrew, thereby missing the sight of Brayfield's young gamekeeper bending his head to meet upturned lips.

"*There,*" said Johnny, "that shows how *I* stand. Now you go on back home, honey—and tonight you'll have your blue ribbon. I'll be out before noon, and that'll give me time to get across the border and back. You wait at Madam Double-chin's, and when I get there, we'll talk things over. You aint stuck on Mexacana, are you?"

"*John-nay mio,* anywhere with thee would be heaven."

He grinned boyishly. "Girl—oh, girl! I'm going to call you on that; but run along, babe—the air's too cold for you in that light dress."

"*Ay—ay!*" she bantered. "But what dost thou know about dresses, *amor mio?* Never mind, thou wilt learn. I go to pray; but first—"

She raised on tiptoe for another kiss, and then departed unwillingly, with many backward glances and much waving of a small hand. Later in the day she returned and was told that Señor Powell was no longer there. So she went back to Madam Double-chin's and all that afternoon was busy with most delightful preparations. On the advice of Madam, Dolores chose a dress that was very simple—the whitest of billowy frocks and the smallest of slippers.

JOHNNY POWELL came riding back from San Ramón, gold fireflies dancing in the dusk, a new moon silvering the mesquite, and in his pocket a blue ribbon for the dark hair of the Border Nightingale. Ah—a hair-ribbon is such a magic emblem.

From out of the gathering darkness a rifle spoke sharply. The youth with the blue ribbons in his pocket threw up both hands, swayed in the saddle, and then slid slowly off—to sprawl in the road, face downward and inert.

A long minute passed, silent save for the restless stamping of the riderless horse. Then the chaparral at the roadside crackled, and there emerged, warily, a native *rurale,* rifle in hand. He walked cautiously toward the prostrate figure in the road, and bent over. A swarthy sandaled foot was not two inches from Johnny Powell's right hand. White fingers closed upon brown ankle, wrenched upward—and in another second the positions of the two men were reversed. A falling rifle exploded aimlessly, and the *rurale* looked up to see the moonlight playing on an automatic.

"Your aim was pretty good," said Johnny, "but not quite good enough. You cut the reins out of my hands. Now, what's the big idea?"

"Your pardon, señor; I make mistake. I was take you for some one else."

"Don't lie, *hombre.* You know that horse of mine. Who told you to pot me? *Pronto*—or I let you have it!"

The Mexican spread his hands in the familiar deprecating gesture of his countrymen.

"The word has go out that you have escape', señor. There is five hundred *pesos* on your head."

The young American digested this information slowly. Life is a complex game in Mexacana.

"Darned if I don't think you're telling the truth," he muttered. "Somebody's pulling trick-dice again. If you don't

mind, *amigo,* we'll change horses and outfits, and you'll stay here for a while. The next man might shoot a little straighter."

He exchanged his own hat and coat for the jacket and sombrero of his captive, bound the man hand and foot, and picked up the latter's rifle.

"Caballo?" he inquired.

"Alli, señor," replied the other, nodding toward a clump of willow.

Johnny led his own horse in the direction indicated, picketed him in the place of the *rurale's* mount, and swung into the fresh saddle. Then he resumed his journey, to all outward appearances a *soldado* scouting in the moonlight for an escaped prisoner. He was not likely to be shot at in that uniform, but there was still a problem for his wits to solve: A gambler's hunch told him that the *rurale* had spoken the truth. For some reason, the *comandante* at the *cuartel* had readily granted him twelve hours' leave, and then proclaimed him a jail-breaker. It was the oldest of border tricks—this "killed while trying to escape." But why pull it on him? Who wanted his life that badly? Who was using loaded dice?

Across the mind of Brayfield's gamekeeper floated a vision of a fat spider with beady eyes, chewing a black cigar, and tossing a pair of false cubes to a gunman from Tres Pinos. *Morwych!* Just as plainly as if he had been present, Johnny Powell divined what had happened. A word to the Jefe Politico, a peremptory demand upon the frightened *comandante* who had lied to save his skin, then a wink and the rattle of cash from Morwych.

Johnny Powell drew rein. Behind him lay the American border and safety; ahead blinked the lights of Mexacana, where at eleven o'clock Don Tostado's *baile* would open at Mike Morwych's place. In Johnny's pocket was a blue ribbon for Dolores, and she was waiting for him at Madam Double-chin's.

"Well," he mused, "I've been following the dice all my life; I might as well follow 'em now. Double hearts is my point, boys, and I'm out to make it. Get your money down!"

He struck off in a brisk canter toward Mexacana.

DID we say that the dice were well named the devil's teeth? Madam Double-chin, her fat face pasty under the rouge, hurried into Dolores' room an hour later with the tidings she had just learned from Little Bill.

"Dearie," she panted, "sump'n awful's happened. I just hate to tell you. Johnny broke jail, and they grabbed him a little while ago at the office of the Jefe Politico. He put up an awful fight, but there was too many of 'em. They say the fellow he shot last night was a cousin of the governor of sump'n. Little Bill thinks it's all off with Johnny. They'll put him against a wall before mornin'. Aint that *hell,* dearie?"

The Border Nightingale reeled against the door.

"Madre de Dios!" she wailed. "He did not escape! The *comandante* told me that he let my *querido* go. John-nay, John-nay *mio!* Where is he?"

"Aint I said that the *rurales* have got him? Honey, it's a frame-up. You get hold of Morwych, dearie! Get hold of him quick! When Brayfield aint here, Mike's the only man who can fix things. Run, dearie! For Gawd's sake get hold of Morwych!"

Santa Madonna, what a very old story! A moth fluttering into a spider's web to plead for the life of her lover! Morwych was waiting; and he laughed!

"You aint talkin' to me," he told her. "Your jail-breaking friend is the bird who advised me last night never to walk on the same side of the street with him again. Well, I'm just sittin' nice and pretty."

"But he did not escape—and he but used the *pisvola* to defend— Ah, Dios, I see in your eye that you have done this—"

"You do, huh? Well, you should have seen things a little earlier. Go up to the *cuartel* in the morning and get your blue ribbon; it'll have some pretty red spots on it."

The Border Nightingale closed her eyes, and her fragile body quivered from head to foot. In that brief moment she attained crucifixion. When she again looked at Morwych, she was as hard and self-possessed as he.

"Bueno!" she accepted. "All is over. Now I shall play the game at Mexacana too! Señor John-nay Powell goes in safety across the border before morning. You know why?"

"I'll lay you a thousand he don't."

"Then, señor, you lose, because tonight I wrap Don Tostado around my leetle finger, and in the morning I go 'way with him, and for love of me, he do just what I say! Does he not own the Jefe Politico? Has he not been robbed by you? *Bueno!"* Her voice rose to a shriek. "Harm but one hair on the head of my *querido,* and the woman who goes away with Don Tostado will make him close up Mexacana, and send you to the wall!"

O-ho! The little moth had become a tarantula! Morwych blinked.

"No use us trying to cut each other's throats," he grunted. "I told you once that we were all down here for the money. When you talk a language I can understand, I'm willing to string along. You take care of Tostado; I'll take care of your friend."

"You—I do not trust," she answered. "Tostado himself shall obtain the release, and it is to be remembered by you that if anything happens afterwards, you still pay!"

"What about your contract at the Pigeon?"

Her lips curled ironically. "Is not Don Tostado a *muy gran' caballero?"* she mimicked. "He pay for everything."

"Fair enough," said Morwych. "But if you take my tip, you'll get busy damn quick!"

WHEN Mexacana gets something for nothing, it is a celebration indeed. Don Tostado's *baile* that night was a most memorable occasion. The dancing started at eleven o'clock. Behold a temporary bar, stretching the length of the floor, with shirt-sleeved, perspiring attendants serving free liquor to all! Behold an orchestra, imported from San Rey, blowing brass and pounding drums for the delight of strangers and townsfolk!

"Cost much, but what I care?" said the Señor. *"Viva* the Nightingale! *Viva la diabla bonita! Vamos,* everybody! When the morning come, Don Tostado go 'way wiz the *prima señorita* of the worl'. Ees it not so, leetle dove? *Por cierto!* At the Casa Cruz I have already arrange' breakfast. Me, I am mos' happy and not yet ver' drunk. Flower of my heart, we dance again!"

"It shall be ever as thou sayest," said little Dolores. "Thou art indeed a *galanteador* who is irresistible, and I am thy slave. Out of the goodness of thy heart, though, thou wilt see that no harm befalls the young Americano who give me ribbons?"

"Have I not said so? Ver' good. It ees already done. *Santita mia,* you shall send back the *cinta* you now wear, to your frien' and say zat Don Tostado have tell him to go 'way. Me, I buy ninety-seven more ribbon—all different, and each more beautiful zan other one. Then I put one t'ousan' diamonds on each leetle finger. Me, I'm bes' dam' *caballero* in worl'!"

Válgame Dios! A nightingale paired with a fat cockatoo, and dancing to the will of a spider! The hours flew by on the wings of revelry.....Dawn brought the first flush to purple mountain-tops. Juan Cabrillo, secretary to the Jefe Politico, presented himself at the *cuartel.* He had notes both from His Excellency, who was indisposed, and from Señor Morwych, who was also drunk. It was all a mistake about the Americano.

"Bueno!"

The matter had been adjusted; he was to go free.

"Bueno!"

The secretary had a note from her who was the lady of Don Tostado's choice—also a hair-ribbon; the Americano would understand.

"Bueno!" again! Who cares?

So, at the hour which is usually selected for removing a man from the *cuartel* to a spot against the adobe wall,—out three feet so there will be no stain,—they liberated Johnny Powell and handed him a note from Señorita Romero, accompanied by a hair-ribbon that was not as beautiful as the one in his pocket. The message was this:

Señor Powell:

I return thy ribbon that thou mayst understand there is nothing any louger between us. Señor Tostado, who is very rich and honorable, is to take me away, and this morning I go with him joyfully. Because of his goodness of heart, he has interceded in thy behalf, but thou art to cross to thine own country at once and never return.

I who am most proud and happy advise thee to think no more of—

Dolores Romero.

Does a man who knows all the whims of the Ivory God cry out when the turn of

the dice is against him? Johnny Powell had been led forth expecting a dozen bullets; this was not much different—merely another case of false dice.

He fingered the satin bow, and was about to toss it aside as beyond his comprehension, when sensitive fingers, trained to detect the slightest irregularity in an ivory cube, felt the crinkle of paper under the center knot of the ribbon. He stuffed the bow carelessly into his coat pocket.

"Make a nice little souvenir," he said to the secretary. "*Tiene cigarillo?*"

The secretary proffered cigarette and a match. He sighed profoundly and observed:

"Women— zey are what you call the bunk. I too, one time, have been jilt'. *Caramba,* yes!"

"Right," said Johnny. "I suppose you're going to stick around, and see that I vamoose *muy pronto?*"

The other shrugged apologetically. "It ees quite possible. His Excellency would prefer that you not return to the hotel, and so I have myself collect' your money at Señor Brayfield's. It ees here. We ride south to Ayala, and there you may cross."

Johnny pocketed a roll of currency, and followed his guide to where horses were waiting.

"You're *some* little master of ceremonies," he acknowledged. "Lead on!"

THEY rode slowly along the trail that winds east and then south from Mexacana. Twenty feet past a jutting rock that hid them from view of the *cuartel* on the hill, Johnny Powell leaned forward in the saddle, and his right fist caught Juan Cabrillo just behind the ear. The secretary to his Excellency slumped off sideways, one foot catching in the stirrup. His head struck the road. In another moment he would have been dragged to destruction, but Brayfield's gamekeeper seized the bridle of the startled horse, and then liberated the foot of the unconscious rider. The secretary sprawled face downward in the dust. Forth from Johnny Powell's pocket came his lady's ribbon. Under the knot was a second note. His eyes deciphered the lines written hurriedly in pencil!

Querido Mio:

Thy kiss is still warm on my lips—how can I go to my death, knowing thou wilt think me false? Tostado is old and ugly, and a most terrible monster. But the price was thy life, beloved—and gladly therefore do I pay.

In my bosom there is poison that I have got from La Belle Hélène. This will I take when thou hast reached safety. Go quickly and carefully, dear one—for my heart aches with fear lest they still attempt harm. Go, and in the days to come (may they be many, amor mio), think sometimes of the little one who is no more.

Adios—
Dolores.

Gambler though he was, Johnny Powell's control crumpled. Juan Cabrillo was coming back to life. Brayfield's gamekeeper flung himself on the secretary. He slapped, and shook, and clawed the man out of his stupor, found a gun and jammed it into Cabrillo's ribs—pulled

the whole wretched story out of him in gasps.

"At the Casa Cruz," shuddered his victim, "on the Camino San Miguel. *Si, si*—they are to breakfast there. God's mercy, señor, do not kill!"

Flung bodily into the mesquite, Cabrillo lapsed again into coma. A moment later his horse, cut across the flank with a rawhide, galloped off over the mesa. Johnny Powell regained his own saddle, wheeled and struck off toward Casa Cruz. Never had any man seen on the face of Brayfield's young game-keeper an expression like that!

You comprehend that the Casa Cruz was a *posada,* an inn that lay southwest from Mexacana and but a stone's throw from Mission San Miguel. It is not more than an hour's hard ride. Legend and custom have made San Miguel a Gretna Green for lovers. There is a well into which one throws *centavos* that every wish may come true. Padre Fernandez performs the very same ceremony by which he once united Don Sebastian Aquilar to Teresa Pico, who waited for him twenty years in the garden where as children they had planted the rosebush. That, as all men know, is a most admirable classic. But it was not in Don Tostado's mind to visit the padre. When one is a *gran' caballero* of many loves, one bothers not with ceremonies; they are for children.

WHERE the road curves away from San Miguel, and the white 'dobe walls of Casa Cruz welcome the traveler, Johnny Powell flung himself off a wind-blown horse. In the courtyard a dozen of Don Tostado's *soldados* sprawled on benches after the manner of men who have left a long night behind, only to face a still longer day. They recognized him for a young Americano whom they had last seen in the Mexacana *cuartel,* but he had a drawn revolver in his hand, and they made no move until he had disappeared through the doorway of the Casa itself. Then they closed the heavy gates, and flocked toward the *patio.*

Ay! Ay! What chance has one man against fifty? *Ninguno!* Can a young gringo with a single *pistola* kidnap Don Tostado's *chiquita* when there are fifty rifles to say no? The attempt is not to be recommended, señor.

Once more the dice rolled against Johnny Powell. He was standing in the doorway of the dining-room, Juan Cabrillo's revolver trained on a fat cockatoo, and his left hand beckoning to the spell-bound Señorita Romero. Johnny should have known better than to stand in a doorway. Dolores shrieked a warning, but it was too late. Behind the young American, José Garcia, proprietor of the Casa Cruz, appeared suddenly with a heavy wine-bottle. He brought it down with compelling force on the head of Johnny Powell, and Johnny crumpled up.

When he came to himself, Dolores was kneeling by his side in the courtyard, and they were surrounded by a wall of Tostado's men.

"*Querido mio,*" whispered a voice, "I had so hoped to save thee! Thou shouldst have gone. But ah, beloved, I understand!"

He nodded dully, and struggled to his feet, swaying like a drunken man.

He put a protecting arm around the Border Nightingale and steadied himself. In front of them stood Señor Tostado, holding in his fat hands a blue hair-ribbon, and two notes that had been taken from the captive's pocket. The Señor's dark eyes were ringed with red. A cockatoo does not like to have his crest sheared away.

"So," he hissed, "it is the gringo that I already save' from being shot, who would interfere some more, eh? And you, señorita—you theenk that I am old and ugly and such a monstair, eh? You try to make the fool of Don Tostado—no? *Nombre de Dios,* I show you a leetle joke, too! With your backs against the wall—both! *Vamos!*"

Johnny Powell's head cleared instantly; but his face went linen white. Tostado's face was inflamed with fury and much liquor.

"Hold on," he pleaded. "She's not in on this. Smear me all over the place if you want. But you let this little girl go. You're a good fellow, *hombre*—you're a big sport, see? You wouldn't shoot a baby just because she did a little kiddin'. She didn't mean—"

DOLORES put a small hand over his mouth. Her eyes were lit with the flame of a Joan of Arc.

"Hush, beloved! Did I not tell thee there was poison in my bosom. *Querido,* it is God's will that we die together; otherwise we but die apart."

She turned to Tostado. "Señor, may I but have the ribbon that is so blue? You will not refuse a last request."

"What I care?" roared the Señor. "Ho-ho! *Válgame Dios*—let your lover tie the ribbon in your hair, and then say good-by with one leetle kees—so! It will be a good play in the theater. Two minute', I ring down the curtain. —*Amigos,* to your guns!"

In the shaded courtyard of the Casa Cruz, Don Tostado's men formed in a compact double file, long-barreled muskets poised obediently. The little Border Nightingale turned to Johnny Powell. Her hands pressed into his the satin symbol of their fragile romance. They are brave little creatures, these Mexacana moths!

"Look you," she instructed, "where the braid begins—nay, but it is simple, Johnnay *mio!* Give no thought to him....We are married, and all is well. With your right hand, so—and then the clasp under and back....There is a catch, beloved—often have I dreamed of this.....Ah, *bravo!* Thou art admirable! And now tell me, do you love, or no?"

She twisted in his arms, just as though they had been alone in the grape-arbor that borders the Purple Pigeon, and death was not a matter of seconds.

"Girl—oh, girl," said Johnny Powell, "you're braver than I am, and God knows I love you!"

He folded her a little closer, and drew back against the wall. A moment he steeled himself, and then looked at Don Tostado as quietly as he might have contemplated a patron of the gaming-table. Dry lips framed the message:

"Shoot!"

Dolores hid her face against his coat. Johnny Powell's lips caressed her hair. What lovers! What children!

Over the face of Señor Don José Maria Lopez Tostado, who in his own eyes was a very great *caballero* indeed, there passed the look of an artist who stands spell-bound before the work of a rival hand. He continued to contemplate the master-piece. Somehow he no longer looked like a cockatoo, and his dark eyes reflected first growing incredulity, then profound admiration, and finally the divine light of a heaven-sent idea. He waved a pudgy hand at his *rurales*.

"Go 'way, leetle mens, go 'way. I am a ver' gran' *caballero*. *Dios*, yes—what a man I am! All by myself I desire to have my revenge."

The ragged firing-squad lowered their weapons and lazily withdrew. Who cares what happens at Mexacana?

The Señor advanced upon the lovers, making odd little clucking noises with his tongue.

"Listen, you naughty leetle ones," he directed. "I have an idea that is much more better. Look you, while it ees unfold. In the stable are two ver' good horses. These you will mount at once. Ovair there is the road to San Miguel, where the silly leetle padre live' that ride a white burro; and beyond lies the country that is safe for children. *Thees* shall be the gran' revenge of Señor Don José Maria Lopez Tostado, who ees old and ugly and a monstair, but still the bes' damn' *caballero* in the worl'!"

He drew himself erect and snapped one hand to his *sombrero*.

"Señor, I salute!"

He bowed as low as his waistline would permit.

"Señorita, I kees the hand of the only lady I nevair ween! And now—*adios amigos!* But no! First—ho-ho-ho! I buy one dreenk!"

THE tale is almost told. Far down the West Coast, sandwiched between the new railroad and the very old sea, there is a *rauchita* where of evenings two sit in the moonlight, and figure up the profits from the carloads of tomatoes that go forth in ever-increasing number. Dolores rolls the cigarettes for both, and sings *canciones de amor* in defiance to the mountain lions that sometimes whimper in the cañons.

In the autumn Madam Double-chin came down to visit them, and she is not respectable but very wise. With the diamonds from off her own fingers did she seal the lips of a *rurale* who came across a fat and loathsome thing one morning, huddled among the rocks that border the Mexacana highway.

"Johnny," muses Madam Double-chin, "sooner or later a man gets just what's comin' to him in this world. You remember Sadie—the little blonde with the cough that worked in the restaurant? Morwych didn't know that was Little Bill's sister. Well, dearie, you can guess what happened. Mike wont never put no red ribbons in the hair of any other girl. Look, dearie, in a spot you could cover with a saucer: *six* shots, and every one of them—"

"Hush." says Johnny. "Here comes the Missus—"

And Dolores Powell appears, with a smile on her lips, and the brightest of blue ribbons in her hair.

McGILLICUDDY

(*Continued from page 84*)

"Throw your spot on the signboard!" he yelled.

But McGillicuddy had already swung to the right and quickly had his car flying along the road.

"Doan be scared honey! Keep you' head down!" he cried after a hasty glance behind.

The crack of a pistol was echoed by a snap of the wind-shield as a bullet that had crossed McGillicuddy's shoulder bored a hole in the glass. The girl had fallen to her knees, and McGillicuddy's right hand held her down until a second pistol-crack sounded faintly behind.

Through the window of the rear curtain McGillicuddy saw the young man following, a swift-moving shadow soon left far behind.

"All right now, honey! You doan need to be scared o' nothin' no mo'."

When she sat erect he saw that she was crying again; this would never do.

"Doan cry, li'l girl! You better tell me now where you wanter go. That man aint never goan to get you. He's got some business gettin' hisse'f home from heah!"

He guffawed loudly, and the joke of her late suitor's embarrassing situation evidently touched the girl's own humor. She laughed and they turned toward each other and laughed again.

"I'm so silly," she said. "What made me do it! I was hating him and hating myself before we had gone a mile!"

SILENCE was maintained until McGillicuddy stopped the car at a road which, if followed, would land him in Cornford. The girl hadn't yet indicated where she wished to go, but it was clear to McGillicuddy that a decision on this point must be reached immediately. Her next words pleased him; they proved her to be unselfish and of gentle heart, and she uttered them in a tone he found charming in its sincerity.

"He tried to shoot you," she said. "And I'm awfully, awfully sorry!"

"Oh, that's nothin', miss. It doan scare this ole niggah to be shot at!" And he reproduced the Simms' chuckle.

"You're a dear angel! I shall be grateful to you all my life!" she cried.

"Doan you worry about that, miss. What fo' you run away?"

"I was just a silly little fool; that's all! My name is Grace Trimble, and I live in Hartford. I've been visiting my cousins in New Canaan, and George is my aunt's chauffeur, and I thought—I thought—I was in love with him. I'd only known him two weeks; isn't that ghastly! And there was a party tonight, and afterward I was going over to Cornford to visit the Rangeleys, and so George said we might as well go on down to Stamford and be married, and I ran away from the dance and—and you know the rest!" she ended breathlessly.

"Yes, miss."

"But he was so rough and not nice at all, and I knew I'd made a terrible mistake; and that's why, that's why—"

She was again at the point of tears; and he hastened to prevent a further inundation of her bewitching eyes.

"You-all done jes' right!" he exclaimed. "That was jes' Providence takin' care o' you, li'l girl, when you' machine busted and I comes along!"

"I suppose it was," she admitted with a gulp. "But the Rangeleys wont understand why I didn't come, and they'll telephone my aunt, and if Papa and Mamma find out how near I came to running away, they'll never trust me again."

"I guess anybody's got to forgive a li'l girl like you! You want to go back to you' aunt's at New Canaan?"

"Oh, that will take so long, but I ought to let Mrs. Rangeley know."

"Guess that's right, miss. They sho'll be worried when you doan show up!"

McGillicuddy was a practical man; and to deliver the girl to her New Canaan relatives would be to disclose the cause of her failure to report at the Rangeley's, a thing to be avoided if it could be done. To carry her direct to the Rangeleys at that hour would not do. He knew them only slightly, and he would be sure to bungle the business if he attempted to lie to shield the girl; and she must be shielded; there was no debating that. His judgment on this point was confirmed by his companion's next remark, let fall with the most innocent candor.

"I was almost engaged to Fred Rangeley at York Harbor last summer; and I do care a lot for him, and his family are so nice; but after this—"

"Oh, you'll done forgit all about this li'l circumstance befo' you's a day older."

As McGillicuddy offered this consolation, he decided upon a course of action. The girl must be placed immedately under the protection of a woman who would care for her and assist in covering up her escapade; and Jean Watson, his ideal of a resourceful and diplomatic woman, occurred to him instantly. Jean, he was satisfied, would manage everything, quieting the fears of Miss Trimble's relatives and accounting to the Rangeleys for the delay in her arrival. Jean was just the person to minister to a girl in distress. To rouse anyone else he knew, would be to publish the whole thing; and he reflected with misgivings that in his black paint and stage costume he was not in a position to stir up a strange household with a runaway girl on his hands.

"They's a lady—awful nice lady at Cornford that'll take care o' you!"

"A—a white woman, do you mean?" she asked apprehensively.

"Bless you, yes, a frien' o' the folks I wo'ks fo'."

"Well, if you're sure it will be all right—"

"You be dead sho', miss, it's all right, or I wouldn' take you-all theyeh."

THE Watson Airedale lifted a long howl as McGillicuddy sent the car spinning up to the bungalow. It was slightly past two o'clock and the dog's fury was not without justification.

A prolonged attack on the bell resulted presently in the lifting of a window.

"That you, Phil!"

"It certainly is; who the devil are you?"

"Me—Roger! I'd like to speak to you a minute."

The front door opened, disclosing Watson in his bath wrapper.

"Good Lord, Roger, what's the matter?"

"Nothing, that is, nothing much," said McGillicuddy, dropping his dialect. "I picked up a girl who was eloping but changed her mind about getting married. Lives at Hartford—visiting relatives at New Canaan. Car broke down; I picked them up, and she cried—really she was terribly sorry and wanted to get out of it. I'll tell you the rest sometime. Just now I want Jean to be nice to the girl."

"Where is she?" demanded Phil.

"Out there in my machine."

Watson darted upstairs, meeting Jean at the landing.

"How romantic!" McGillicuddy heard her exclaim. "And Roger is still in his make-up—how perfectly screaming!"

"All right, Roger!" she called cheerily. "Send her right in!"

"I came away in my party dress, and I'm awfully cold!" Miss Grace Trimble's teeth were audibly chattering as McGillicuddy helped her out of the machine. Jean was at the door waiting to welcome her guest, and without ado hurried her upstairs.

"Now, Roger, you've got to come in; you have no business running around in this fashion," said Phil.

"Thanks, no! You have only one guest-room; I'll push on home. Just a moment; there's some luggage, half of it belongs to Miss Trimble."

"You're certainly breaking all records," said Phil as McGillicuddy handed in a suitcase marked "G. T." Here was a new Roger, a Roger G. McGillicuddy possessed of an undreamed-of spirit and dash. That he should be cruising about with his make-up on was funny; but that he should have added to his blackface rôle that of knight errant was a matter for laughter.

"Just one thing I want to ask of you,"

remarked McGillicuddy. "You'd better hurry and give the tip to Jean. I don't want that girl to know I'm not a colored chauffeur."

Watson grinned as he watched McGillicuddy tranquilly light a cigar.

"All right; your secret is safe with me! I'll say this for you, Roger: your taste in girls is good. I got only a glimpse, but she's certainly a credit to the human race."

"I noticed it," replied McGillicuddy, and he walked away, carrying his head high, as was pardonable in a man who has met adventure face to face and proved his merit in the encounter.

WITH his teeth clenching the cigar, McGillicuddy set off with an agreeable consciousness that he had done a good night's work. He was surprised to find himself not only unwearied, but refreshed and exultant as though he had drunk from the fountains of youth. He, Roger G. McGillicuddy, had been fired upon, a fact supported by the hole in the windshield. A very foolish young man he considered Miss Grace Trimble's aunt's chauffeur, and McGillicuddy hoped he had learned a profitable lesson. The recollection of his chagrin at the frustration of his plans kept a smile on McGillicuddy's face as he drove, a little recklessly and dare-devilishly, feeling that fate rode with him.

The aura flung over the top of a hill by the lights of an approaching car brought him to attention. He dismissed instantly the thought that the discarded lover might be in pursuit, for that young gentleman could hardly have found a machine and picked up the trail so quickly.

The oncoming car came to a standstill, and four men jumped out and planted themselves across the road. Two of them carried objects which, to McGillicuddy's surprised vision, looked very much like shotguns. He stopped short and watched them approach in open formation. Only a few nights earlier, bandits had held up a motorist near Litchfield, and it was wholly possible, he reflected, that he was to be the victim of a similar outrage. One of the men jumped on the running-board of the roadster and flashed a hand-lamp upon McGillicuddy's imperturbable dusky countenance.

"It's that damned coon!" cried the leader. "Orders was to look out for a fat darky, and this is our meat!"

"Fits the description all right," said another of the party.

"How much whisky you taking down this time?" asked the leader.

"Aint got no lickah," McGillicuddy protested.

"Don't try that on us! We been lookin' for you! Driggs, dig into the back of the car, and I'll see what's under the seat."

"You-all makin' a big mistake. If you think I'm a whisky-runnah, you go ahead and fin' the goods."

Two men were fumbling in the locker; one stood on the running-board, and the other opened the door on the driving side and profanely bade McGillicuddy climb out.

"Turn off your engine first, you blank skunk!"

"Jes' gimme a minute, boss; you-all got me kind o' flustered!"

Pretending to have difficulty in shutting off the engine, McGillicuddy gained a moment in which to weigh the chances of escape. His headlights defined his captors' machine as a much lighter car than his own. To bolt and leave it intact would be to invite a chase which might result in disaster, as he had found when he stopped at the Watsons that his gas was running low.

"No monkey business; shut that thing off!"

McGillicuddy replied by "stepping on it." The car leaped frantically at one of the officers who was planted in its way, hurling him into the roadside. The man on the running-board went sprawling after him, while the two who had been looking for concealed alcoholic beverages in the locker clutched madly at the receding car.

THE roadster, with twenty yards in which to gather speed, struck the officers' machine a neat glancing blow on its nose that sent it into the ditch. McGillicuddy felt his car quiver as it rebounded but it resumed its flight as though sharing its owner's intolerance of impediments of every kind. Profiting by his earlier experience of the night, McGillicuddy bent low over the wheel, and not too soon. The shotguns boomed gloriously as though they were saluting a field marshal, and a shower of hail swept the machine. McGillicuddy's first thought was of his tires, but in their fury the foe had aimed too high, and the car rolled smoothly on. Half the windshield had ceased to exist, and McGillicuddy was seized suddenly with a curious desire to scratch his back.

He was headed for home, and the thought of home was alluring; but as he might be a murderer, for all he knew as to the present physical condition of the gentleman he had caromed into the roadside, he decided that it would be extremely dangerous to seek his own domicile.

He had gone several miles when by unmistakable signs he became aware that his gas was running low. He could not leave his car in the highway where the hounds of the law would find it, and obtain a definite clue to his identity; the remaining motive power must be conserved to hide the roadster beyond peradventure of discovery.

An unfenced field suggested deflection from his course, and he was soon bumping over a cornfield in which the stalks still stood. Beyond there was a strip of wood through which he had once followed his own brook. Guiding the halting machine through the trees presented difficulties, but it perched presently on the bank, and then with a last effort plunged down and became a fixed portion of the landscape.

McGillicuddy got ashore, lighted a fresh cigar, and considered his problems philosophically. The road was only a quarter of a mile behind, and soon the hum of a machine warned him that his pursuers were again abroad in quest of him. They were proceeding slowly, and he waited anxiously till they passed the point at which he had swung into the field.

Now that he had hidden the roadster where it might, with good luck, remain undiscovered all winter, home seemed a less hazardous refuge, and McGillicuddy set out for his own acres. Creeping along under the bank, he encountered malevolent briars that scratched his legs viciously, and low branches that seemed to have been distributed at just the proper height to slap him in the face. Finding himself at last under the bridge, he sought firm earth and sat down for rest and meditation.

At several points on his back and shoulders pins seemed to be pricking him. Just under his collar-button his fingers touched something round and hard imbedded in his flesh. His shirt over this point was wet, and this was odd indeed. Further exploration disclosed other moist spots and similar hard lumps. And then it dawned upon McGillicuddy that he was wounded, peppered indeed over a considerable area of his ample back with shot. The thought of it thrilled him. Twice in one night he had been a target for murderous missiles, and yet he lived to tell the tale!

PRESENTLY the silence was broken by the crunching of gravel in the road. Some one was walking toward the bridge, and his recent experiences had taught him caution. The step sounded loudly on the bridge flooring. Against the stars he saw vaguely limned the figure of a man carrying something on his shoulder that bore every appearance of a gun. The officers, believing that he might have hidden himself near the place where they had lost track of him, had left a man behind in the hope of picking him up. So McGillicuddy reasoned, and his logic was sound.

The guard passed and then retraced his steps. McGillicuddy felt moved by every consideration of safety to leave the neighborhood. The lead that had been urged into his system by the guns of his enemies would have to be removed. There was no escaping this conclusion, particularly as his back began to feel sore in those spots where the shot had bitten into him. The guard, weary perhaps of his fruitless patrol, now paused most annoyingly on the bridge and lighted his pipe. As the match flamed McGillicuddy saw a bearded face which he was sure belonged to an unreasonable being with whom closer acquaintance was highly undesirable. He began feeling his way slowly through the willows that bordered the stream. He was making satisfactory progress when he lost his hold, clutched wildly at a branch that cracked under his weight, and rolled like a barrel until he landed in the brook. His descent had created a hateful and fearsome noise, and to add to his discomfiture, the water that soaked into him through the broken ice was hideously cold.

"Hey there!" came from the bridge. "Come out o' that!"

McGillicuddy gained the further bank under the impetus of a patter of shot, and crouched behind a log. The guard was already down in the stream, flashing an electric lamp and demanding that a certain person profanely described come out of hiding and surrender.

McGillicuddy had no thought of surrendering. On the contrary, he left the brook and struck out boldly for the open. The booming of the gun was likely to reunite the scattered foe, and McGillicuddy ran as he had never run before. This, to be sure, means no record-breaking speed, for his stage shoes would have been an embarrassment even if they had not been obliged to carry two hundred pounds of human being over a rough pasture. But it had always been McGillicuddy's way to do the business in hand with all his might, and just now there was nothing on his mind except the desire of life and liberty and the continued pursuit of happiness. Old friends who had admired his splendid poise in all emergencies would have marveled to see him trotting over uneven meadows with the quick steps compelled by his short legs and close-buttoned ulster.

A dark blur ahead proved to be the outbuildings of a farm; and tumbling over a fence, he lay quietly behind the barn until he regained his wind. He was in a mood to enjoy peace, but this was a boon not so lightly to be won. A machine was making its way up the lane from the road, and soon, with a distinctness he did not relish, he heard the officers inquiring for him of the awakened householder.

"You aint seen a fat darky round here, have you? Last we saw of him he was headed this way."

With considerable asperity the farmer repudiated the idea that he was harboring a criminal of any race or color. To the best of his knowledge, there wasn't a negro anywhere within twenty miles of his place.

Lying as close to the barn as he could press himself, McGillicuddy followed, by the sounds and occasional flashes of light, the investigations of the hounds of the law. While ransacking the barn, the men got into a row among themselves as to the responsibility for McGillicuddy's escape. One of them was sternly rebuked by the leader for suggesting that the negro they had encountered could hardly be the whisky-runner they were seeking. The man they had been warned to look out for drove a touring car with a New Hampshire tag, and the machine they had poured shot into wasn't built to carry liquid merchandise, and moreover it bore a Connecticut registration. They were tired, as was evidenced by their ill-humor. The guard who had failed to prove a Horatius at the bridge received a severe rating.

"Well, it may have been just a clod slipping down the bank," he said defensively.

"You'd no business to shoot unless you saw something!" snarled the leader. "We stopped and went back for you when we heard the gun, and that coon's too smooth to be caught again."

WHEN they drove away and the household became quiet again, McGillicuddy observed that the stars were paling. While he had kept his bearings through all his vicissitudes, it was one thing to follow the roads and quite another to traverse the same section cross-country. A heavy fog added to his perplexities, and finding that he had passed the same straw-stack twice, he intrusted himself to the guidance of a fence that seemed to lead in the right direction and trudged bravely on.

The sun crept into view, looking like a great smear of red through the mists. The earth close to fences he found to be rough and overgrown with prickly things, and dogs were abroad in great numbers. One odious creature dashed at him as he was crossing a lane, and was so belligerent that McGillicuddy ran a considerable distance before he got rid of him. He was leaning upon a gate that arrested his progress when a young man coming out of the fog found a black face placidly gazing at him, and departed into the unknown with a yell of fright. Recognizing the alarmed young man as a neighbor's son, McGillicuddy now knew that he was near his own house. He climbed a fence that placed him on his own territory, and in a few minutes had let himself in at the front door.

He went to his room and rang for Ijima. The Japanese boy appeared quickly, looked at McGillicuddy, still in cap and ulster and with his make-up intact save for certain white lines where he had been scratched in his peregrinations, glanced at the bed turned down but not slept in, and bade his master a respectful good morning.

"Please run the bath for me, Ijima," said McGillicuddy in his usual courteous tone. "Then call Dr. Foster and ask him to come over as soon as possible. And you might suggest that he bring his surgical kit—nothing serious, merely a precaution. And then you may serve my usual breakfast here, and please hurry it up. I want my coffee."

"Yezzeh."

"Thank you, Ijima!"

And thus McGillicuddy met Oriental calm and indifference to fate with like qualities as they are occasionally perfected in the Occidental. He took his tub, carefully scrubbing the black from his face, and got into bed.

"WHAT I ought to do," said Dr. Foster, when he had picked six shot out of McGillicuddy's back, "is to tell you to keep your bed for a week, with a couple of nurses to wait on you. But if you really feel that you're up to appearing in vaudeville for positively one night only, I'll have to stand for it. You're likely to feel pretty stiff, but I'll instruct Ijima to rub your legs to minimize the effects of your unusual exercise."

"Thank you, Foster! If I'm alive, I'll appear in the show. By the way, confidences to a physician are—"

Foster laughed aloud as he counted the shot into McGillicuddy's collar-button box.

"Don't be afraid! If the laws of my profession didn't protect you, the fear of being called a liar would! Nobody would ever believe the yarn you've told me!"

McGillicuddy smiled cheerfully. The Doctor remained until his patient went to sleep under the soothing influence of Ijima's massage.

When McGillicuddy wakened at five o'clock, he found Phil Watson established by the window, where he had been sitting since noon.

"That you, Phil? Mighty nice of you

to come over," said McGillicuddy, sitting up and stretching himself.

"Foster told me to hang around and take your temperature when you woke up. So here goes!"

"How ridiculous!" said McGillicuddy. "I'm feeling fine!"

"Normal!" declared Watson after the mercury had registered.

"Of course, Phil, I kept rather late hours last night, and took a little more exercise than usual, but the dancing I've been doing put me in condition for anything."

He got out of bed and did his dance, humming the tune, and sang a verse of his song.

"Not even hoarse!" he exclaimed jubilantly, and sat down on the bed. "I thought sure the night-air would do for my voice. It sounds all right, doesn't it?"

"Yes; you look as fit as a fiddle. But see here, Roger, you don't want to fool around at night with your face blacked up. A negro whisky-runner was shot and killed over near Stamford by Federal officers last night. He was a chap they'd been trying to pick up for some time, and all the sheriffs and police in this part of the State were watching for him."

"Deplorable," murmured McGillicuddy sympathetically. "How's the guest I left on your doorstep?"

"Oh, she's wonderful! She told us all about her infatuation for her aunt's chauffeur, and how she thought it would be terribly romantic to run away with him, but you know the rest. We drove her over to the Rangeley's this morning after fixing up a plausible story for her to tell. She's perfectly charming, and Jean's crazy about her. The girl lost her head; that's all; but it's on straight now. You may be sure she'll never be so foolish again. The fact is, she's in love with Ned Rangeley, but forgot it for a day or two. The Rangeleys are very conservative and if they knew—oh, Lord!"

"But if she decides to marry Ned, she must confess the whole business to him," said McGillicuddy soberly. "You'd better tell her that!"

"Oh, she's as fine as gold, and you may trust her to do the square thing. But there's one embarrassment: She's keen, as she should be, to reward you, assuming you to be a rather stout colored person who works for his living. Your disguise fooled her completely."

"She had a narrow escape; I'll say that! That chap she was running away with is a bad sort, with a devil of a temper. She's well rid of him."

"He tried to kill you; I don't overlook that! Do you realize, Roger, that at this very minute you might be a dead man!"

"The thought has occurred to me," McGillicuddy assented; "but after you've been shot at a few times, you really don't mind it. It's like any other habit."

AFTER Watson left, McGillicuddy went throught his act half a dozen times, laying stress on the dance to limber up. His shoulders and back were slightly uncomfortable from the adhesive plaster where Foster dressed his wounds, but otherwise he had never felt better.

To conserve his strength as much as possible, he had Ijima drive him to the country club in a touring car he kept as part of his establishment. When his turn came, he faced a capacity house that welcomed him rapturously. His trousers had fared badly in his wanderings, but this only added to their effectiveness; and if the shoes had shrunk a trifle from their frequent immersions in ice-water, McGillicuddy's dance suffered in nowise from this fact. The dance was an artistic thing as Simms had taught it, but McGillicuddy brought to it now an abandon, a droll insouciance that he had never commanded in his rehearsals. The curtain rose six times, that he might bow his thanks for applause long continued and unquestionably sincere.

He went to the locker-room to clean up and change his clothes, and when the last act was concluded, he found himself sought by all Cornford, anxious to praise an exhibition which everyone said was a challenge to professional vaudeville.

They were taking out the chairs to make ready for the dance that was to follow when Jean cornered him.

"You old dear!" she cried. "I never was so proud in my life! Papa came, and will be grabbing you in a minute, but I must have just a word with you first. These people don't know what a hero you are! It was perfectly glorious the way you saved that dear girl! The Rangeleys brought her to the show of course. And Ned is very happy, you may be sure; but if it hadn't been for you—"

"It was a mere trifle," said McGillicuddy. "I suppose there's no danger of the young lady—er—recognizing me?"

THIS question, which had not occurred to him before, filled him with apprehensions—apprehensions that were destined to immediate realization.

Across the room Ned Rangeley waved his hand and started toward McGillicuddy with a tall young lady who, even as transformed by her ball-gown, he knew to be the girl who had tearfully confided in him the night before. She was smiling and radiant now, and after Rangeley had presented Miss Grace Trimble and McGillicuddy had given her every opportunity to ignore their earlier meeting, she laughed into his eyes, threw her arms round his neck and kissed him on the cheek.

"I've told Ned everything!" she said. "But how can I ever thank you?"

"It's for me to do the thanking!" said Rangeley.

"You embarrass me terribly," said McGillicuddy, "when you speak of thanks."

"My God, that scoundrel might have killed you!" cried Rangeley. "Grace says the bullet just skimmed your ear!"

"Last night wasn't my night to die," replied McGillicuddy, smiling. "But here's my check for that hundred. I lose, because I found it necessary to change my raiment and my complexion between the rehearsal and the show tonight."

"It was my fault, then," said the girl, "for putting you to so much trouble, and I ought to pay the bet."

"Not at all," said McGillicuddy, pressing the check into Rangeley's hand. "Our drive, Miss Trimble, was the least exciting incident of a busy night, and you are in no way responsible for my losing the bet. I'm starving to death; let's have our refreshment together!"

CONTRABAND

(*Continued from page 71*)

"Doc Stewart's some'eres. I'll git him."

The Doctor was found and came. He examined Evan as best he could. "Better get him to town. Can't tell much now. Depends on whether there's concussion. I'll go along with you."

"Before you go, Miss Lee," asked some one. "where is the Sheriff—Sheriff Churchill?"

"Follow the shore—that way. You'll find him—on the edge."

"We got Peewee Bangs—he was hidin' in a boathouse."

"I—I'm glad," said Carmel.

The car moved away, bearing Carmel, Evan and the Doctor. Somehow it seemed like the end of the world to her—a definite stopping-place of things. The lurid flames making a ghastly forest, black figures flitting about from shadow to shadow, the confusion of her thoughts, the piling up for days of event upon event and emotion upon emotion—all this seemed to be a climax—a finality.

The car stopped before the Doctor's house, and Evan was carried up to a bedroom, unconscious still. Doctor Stewart tried to exclude her from the room, but she would not be excluded. This was all she had left, all life held for her—that faint, irregular beating of Evan Pell's heart. She knew those heartbeats were her own, would be her own so long as they persisted. She would remain, would sit by him watching, watching, waiting. This scarcely perceptible life was all she would ever have of him, and she dared lose no instant of it.

Doctor Stewart worked over the bed. Carmel thought him calm, terribly indifferent, businesslike. He was a tradesman working at a trade when she would have had him a god performing a miracle. After a time he turned to her.

"I cannot tell," he said. "Some concussion is present. There seems to be no fracture of the skull. What internal injuries he may have suffered—it is impossible to say. In the morning—"

"He will be dead," said Carmel.

The Doctor shook his head. "I do not think so. I hope—in such cases one cannot be sure—but—"

"He will be dead," said Carmel.

"It is in God's hands," said the Doctor.

"They have killed him—because he was brave, because he loved me—because—oh, Doctor, that is the awful thought—he is dead for me. He gave his life for me."

His hand rested upon her shoulder with the gentle touch which some men earn by a life of service—and Dr. Stewart, country physician, unrecognized, unsung, had lived such a life. "My dear," he said, "how better could a man die?"

"*He* killed him—Abner Fownes killed him."

"Abner Fownes has run his course," said the Doctor.

"It is not enough—not enough. The law can do nothing to him which will make him pay."

"The punishment of the law," said the Doctor, "is a puny thing beside the punishment of God."

Carmel stood up; she bent over the bed and kissed Evan upon the cold lips. Something possessed her, controlled her, a power stronger than herself, an impulse more urgent than she had ever known. It moved her as if she were an automaton, a puppet ordered and regulated by strings in the hands of its fabricator. She moved toward the door.

"Where are you going?" asked the Doctor.

"I have a thing to do," she said.

He peered into her face and saw there that which shocked him, startled him. He would have stayed her. "Wait—" he commanded. She eluded his outstretched hand and hurried down the stairs. There was no indecision in her step or in her manner. There was no indecision in her soul. She knew where she was going, and why she was going. She was on her way to find Abner Fownes!

Chapter Twenty-six

ABNER FOWNES was sitting in his library waiting for word from Sheriff Jenney. If matters went tonight as he felt certain they must go, he could live again in security, untroubled by conscience, with no apprehensions, and with his financial worries removed. Five truckloads of liquor had been discharged at the Lakeside Hotel. He knew that. The importation had been successful, without a hitch. Within a week the whisky would be distributed and the cash in hand. It would be sufficient to clear his most troublesome obligations and to put him on his feet again. He considered this with a glow of satisfaction.

Carmel Lee had constituted a threat, but she was powerless now. At any moment word would arrive that she was in Jenney's hands; her reputation in Gibeon would be destroyed, and she would be powerless. Public opinion would drive her from the place.

Abner sat back comfortably in his chair and looked forward to a life of quiet and importance. He would continue to live in security as Gibeon's first citizen. He might even seek political preferment. In a year there would be a senatorial election. Why should he not stand for the position. To be Senator from his State—that was something, indeed. And why not? His reflections carried him to Washington. He saw himself in the Senate chamber, listened to his voice rolling forth sonorous periods, heard with infinite satisfaction the applause of his fellow senators. . . .

The telephone rang, and he was guilty of unseemly haste to reach the instrument.

"Hello. Hello. Who is it? Is it Jenney?"

"No," said a voice, "it's Deputy Jackson. Look out for yourself. There's hell—"

"What's that?"

"The whole town meetin's rushin' off to Peewee's place. Reg'lar mob. Jenney, he set out to stop 'em, but he's arrested."

"Jenney arrested!"

"Federal authorities. Him and two others is pinched. Better look out for yourself. I'm goin' to."

The receiver banged on its hook at the other end of the line. The Federal authorities! He had considered them negligible. Somehow one lost sight of the Federal officers in that remote region; they were unfamiliar; it seemed a spot to which their writ did not run.

He tried to consider the fact coolly and calmly, but his brain refused to function in such a manner. He was confused; the suddenness, the unexpectedness of the blow from such a source shook him from his foundations. What did it mean? How had it come about? Clearly, if Jenney was under arrest, he could not complete his raid on the Lakeside Hotel and so abolish Carmel Lee. That was that. But how did it affect him? How did it affect the thousands of dollars' worth of liquor so necessary to his financial rehabilitation?

The big question—was he threatened personally?—was one he could not answer. There had been no sign of threat. Jenney was arrested. Perhaps they did not mean to arrest him, had no evidence against him. But could Jenney be depended upon to keep his mouth shut? Jenney, he confessed to himself, did not seem a man capable of great loyalty, nor possessed of high courage. He would weaken. Under pressure he would tell all he knew. The advice of the voice over the telephone was good. He would look out for himself.

He rushed up the stairs to make ready for flight. It would be a good idea to absent himself, no matter what happened. If worst came to worst—why, he would be out of reach of the law. If matters turned out otherwise, it would be easy to return from a hurried business trip. He began packing frantically. Having packed, he went to the safe in his library and transferred sufficient funds to his pocketbook. Then, as a precautionary measure, he carefully destroyed certain private papers. This consumed time.

The telephone rang again, and Abner answered in no little trepidation.

"Mr. Fownes?" asked a voice.

"Yes. Who is it?"

"Tucker. Say, the mob's burned the Lakeside Hotel. They've got Peewee. Burned her up slick and clean—and everythin' in it. The whole shipment's gone."

FOWNES dropped the receiver and sank nerveless into a chair. At any rate he was ruined. That much was certain. Nothing remained to fight for now but his personal security, his liberty. He snatched up his bag and moved toward the door. His plan was not clear—only the first step of it. He would rent an automobile and drive out of town with what speed was possible. As he reached the door, he realized with a sudden sharp pang that he was leaving his house for good, leaving Gibeon forever. He, Abner Fownes, first citizen, man of substance, was fleeing from his native place like the commonest criminal.

Dazedly he wondered how it had come about. Somehow, he felt, that girl was at the bottom of the thing. His misfortunes were due to her meddling. He wished he could get his fingers upon her throat.

He descended the steps and walked toward the street. The night was dark, dark enough to conceal his movements, perhaps to avert recognition. A certain confidence came to him. He would get away; he would possess liberty and the intelligence which had served him so well. There were other places—and he was not old. Perhaps—

As he turned out upon the street, a figure confronted him. He halted, drew back.

"Abner Fownes," said a voice, "where are you going?"

"You— You—" he said hoarsely. His fingers twitched; fury burned in his heart, and the desire to slay. He looked about him. All was blackness. Here she was, this girl who was sending him crashing down to ruin.

"He is dead," said Carmel. "You are a murderer again, Abner Fownes. You're running away."

"Out of my way, you—you—"

"You've killed him," she said. "You must be punished for that. Don't go away. You must wait until they come."

"You—you've done this—you—" He was working himself into a rage. He was not the man to do a violence in cold blood.

"He is dead—is dying. Nothing can pay for that. He will go away from me forever. Abner Fownes, you are a murderer, and you must pay for it. Oh, if I could make you pay a thousand, thousand times! And you *shall* pay!"

He dropped his bag and reached for her throat with clutching fingers. She stepped back, avoiding him.

"They are coming now," she said. "See! There are their lights. Wait, Abner Fownes. You cannot get away. If you try to go, I shall hold you."

He turned. Up the road approached a multitude of automobile lights. Gibeon was returning from its crusade! He uttered a shrill, unnatural cry and made as if to rush past her, but Carmel grasped his arm. "Wait," she said.

A feeling of powerlessness swept over him, a sense of impotence and defeat and despair. He could not force himself to raise his hand against this girl. He was afraid. He was afraid of *her*.

She remained standing in the middle of the walk, blocking his way, but it was unnecessary to block his way. He could not have moved. A cold, clinging dread was upon him. He was afraid of the night, of the darkness. He dared not be alone with the night. If Carmel had gone, Abner Fownes would have followed her, would have called her back, begged her to stay with him.

The lights of the first car rested upon them, illuminating the spot. Carmel stepped forward and signaled. The car stopped, halting the procession. Men got down and surrounded them.

"Where," said Carmel, "is Sheriff Churchill?"

"There," said a man.

"Carry him here," she ordered, and it was done.

Wrapped in blankets, the thing that had been Sheriff Churchill was laid on the sidewalk at Abner Fownes' feet.

"Uncover his face. Let this man look at him," Carmel said. "Make him look!"

Fownes covered his face, staggered back. "No! No! Take—take it away."

"Uncover his face," said Carmel. "Take this man's hands from his eyes. Make him look."

They obeyed. Fownes stood quivering, eyes tightly shut.

"Look," said Carmel. "*Look!*"

She overmastered him. He opened his eyes and looked at the dreadful sight. He stared, bent forward. His hands stretched out, clawlike, as he stared at the horror. Then he threw back his head and laughed, and the laughter ended in a shriek. He swayed, half turned, and fell back into the arms of the men of Gibeon.

Jared Whitefield forced his way to Fownes' side. "I will take charge of him," he said. "Will some one take care of this girl? She hain't herself. Take her back to Doc Stewart's."

MORNING penetrated the room where Carmel sat, entering gently, gently pushing back the night. Carmel sat wide-eyed, waiting, waiting. She had not slept, had not closed her eyes. From time to time she had climbed the stairs to look upon Evan Pell's face, to be told that he lived, that his condition was unchanged. She was worn, weary. Nothing mattered now. She was at the end of things, wishing for death.

Doctor Stewart came to the door.

"Can you step upstairs, Miss Lee?"

"Is—is he—"

The Doctor shook his head.

Carmel followed. Doubtless he was sinking, and she was summoned to be present at the end. She entered the room. Her heart was cold, heavy, dead. As she approached the bedside, she could not lift her eyes to Evan's face.

"Carmel—dear—" said a voice.

Her heart came to life; it warmed, leaped in her bosom. She dared to look. His eyes were open, conscious, intelligent.

"Evan! Evan!" she cried, and sank on her knees beside him. Her eyes devoured his face, and he smiled.

"Doctor—Doctor," she cried, "is he—will he—"

"I think," said the Doctor, "we can have him on his feet in a week, slightly damaged, of course."

"And I thought—I thought you would die!" she said.

"Die!" Evan Pell's voice, weak and faint, nevertheless carried a note of surprise. "Er—of course not. I had not the—slightest intention—of dying." He fumbled for her hand. "Why, my dear—I have—just come to—life."

"You would have given your life for me! Oh, Evan, I love you! And I'm so—so proud of you."

"Er—very gratifying," said Evan. Then for a moment he was silent, reflecting.

"It is—very satisfying to—be in love," he said. "I—like it." Then: "I want you to—be proud—of me." He smiled. "There's just—one thing—I am proud of."

"What is that, sweetheart?"

"The—er—way I—handled that doorknob—with so little practice," he said. "It was—er—so foreign to my training. It—showed adaptability."

THE END.

"MADAM, I'M ADAM"

(Continued from page 55)

thundered and the rain fell and the blackness of night descended on the forest. He was not of the forest, not he! He craved the companionship of humans. But he did not come to the call of Miss Poole. He had long before attended to his own case and had pulled up his stake and had instinctively sought out Mr. Trask—thereby topping out Mr. Trask's monopoly of the full collection of the props of the Koshland Photoplay Company.

FULL of raspberries and fraternal feeling, Nicodemus apologetically slouched in at the open door of Mr. Trask's retreat and stood erect and wistfully made the obeisance that Miss Poole had impressed upon him as being good manners.

Mr. Trask, on account of the inclemency of the evening and entertaining in the back of his head an apprehension that, in those troublous times and in that season of mysteries, he might be compelled to make a quick get-away, was arrayed in his bearskin. But his natural instincts as a makeshift bear did not extend to any depth below the skin. When Nicodemus dropped upon all fours and amicably sidled toward the host, Mr. Trask was dreadfully frightened and stood up and cursed horribly by reason of that fright.

"I aint no bear," he informed the caller.

Nicodemus did not require any vocal assurances on that point. He would have run away from a real wild bear with just as much speed as Mr. Trask could have shown in flight if inspired by menace of the sort.

Nicodemus was filled with thankful joy in finding one of the agreeable specimens of humankind with whom he had always been associated, and the garb this person wore was, at first glimpse, merely reassuring evidence that he liked bears. When Mr. Trask picked up a three-legged stool and showed hostility, Nicodemus bowed again.

Mr. Trask considered that he knew a whole lot about wild animals, and he found this amazing politeness absolutely baleful. It presaged something wholly outside his reckoning. Since his return from his foraging, he had been meditating further, sorting over his loot, and had decided that the world was tipped upside down and was being "sluiced to sancho, hell-bent by the slippery-ellum route." Now it looked to him as if the bears were on the way too. This particular bear further astounded Mr. Trask by shuffling a bit of a jig and by sticking out an appealing paw for a handshake after the jig was finished.

Then Mr. Trask astounded the bear; the host banged the polite caller on the head with the three-legged stool, drove his foot against Nicodemus with a thrust that sent him slumping into a corner and fled out into the night with a hoarse squawk of terror.

As much as he admired human beings, Nicodemus, after his years of meek submission to training, was also accustomed to the churlish vagaries of human temperament. He whined his regret at this misunderstanding for a few minutes after Mr. Trask's departure, then went to sleep behind the stove.

Mr. Trask, after he had roamed in the night for a little while, began to assure himself that he was not afraid of a bear as a bear, having been for fifty years a hunter. Therefore he tiptoed back to see what could be done in the matter. He did not marvel because he had run away before intrepid second thought came to him. His nerves had been unstrung by the previous experiences of the day; even at that, so ran his thoughts, he would have been up and coming in the case of an onslaught by a savage bear, a bear who stuck to business according to approved bear methods.

But to have a bear come in from the night, and bow and scrape and dance and want to shake hands—it was distinctly irregular. Mr. Trask excused himself for his precipitate flight. It was a crazy bear! Mr. Trask had known for a long time that all the world outside of Misery Gore was crazy. He was determined to suppress lunacy in his own bailiwick, remorselessly, without mercy—and no bear could come it over him by any such airs! If this thing were not discouraged, bears would be coming around seeking to kiss him and maybe sing songs.

But when Mr. Trask peered in at the open door, he noted that the intruder was lying behind the stove directly under the rack where the shotgun and the rifle were hung. Such being the circumstances, and there being no telling what a lunatic bear would do if he were stirred up, Mr. Trask unhasped the door of a kennel, called out the tame bobcat and the domesticated minks and took to the woods again.

IN the first flicker of the gray dawn Miss Poole dared to walk away from the spot where she had been jumping up and down and threshing her arms in order to keep from freezing to death. Therefore, before long, the lady happened upon the homeless Mr. Trask, who was sitting on the log at the bottom of the gulch, snoring in unquiet slumber with his elbows propped on his knees.

Miss Poole knew that she was thoroughly wild; she had been telling herself so in the dark hours. But when she spied game, and began to hunt around to find the biggest rocks she could manage as weapons, her mood of implacable savageness was screwed up to concert pitch. She had definitely ceased to view Nicodemus as a pet. He was merely a resource in extremity. She desperately feared that she could not find her way out of that tangle of landscape. And in the condition in which she was, as to raiment, she rather fervently hoped she could not find her way out just then—at any rate, not until she had been able to touch up her toilet in some degree.

Mr. Koshland and bug-eyed observers were guarding the passes—that was the understanding. As she looked at it, to give up after one night and sneak out to

them and cry quits was to spoil a professional future of which she had become jealous and extremely proud in anticipation of fame to be won. Miss Poole had plenty of grit and strength. And she was raving mad with Mr. Koshland. She was convinced that he had lied to her in order to put her through the real stunt, in his fear lest the newspaper sleuths would be able to detect a fake.

All her tumultuous emotions were blended into grim determination to show 'em! She had never skinned a bear! But she needed something more substantial for clothing than the ribs of burdock leaves! She had never tried to eat raw bear! But she had no notion of spoiling a career by dying of hunger when there was a bear handy.

It was fortunate for Mr. Trask that he had brought along a vigilant friend in the person of the bobcat. Otherwise the desperate, prehistoric woman would have secured her quarry. The first rock missed him by a narrow margin. The bobcat squalled. Miss Poole had been able to register distance and elevation by her first shot, and Mr. Trask opened his eyes just in time to dodge the second missile, which was coming straight at his head.

HE leaped up, fell over the log and regained his balance on all fours and was more frightened by what he beheld than he had been by the rock that whizzed past his ear. In tattered newspapers which had been wrapped around his salt-pork purchases, he had read about "the new woman" and had been indifferently interested in the clamor over dress-reform. This amazing specimen of the twin contentions was coming at him with fresh rocks. One of the rocks glanced off his back as he turned to flee. He stumbled to his feet and let out all links of speed, with the minks and the bobcat as pace-makers. He knew by the rocks that crashed into the bushes and barked the trees along his line of retreat that the attacker was attentively and consistently with him.

Mr. Trask was fully conscious that he had had no success whatever in attempting to explain to a bear that he himself was not a bear. This assailant, whatever she or he or it might be, seemed to be in no state of mind to be willing to listen to any sort of explanations. Furthermore, so it seemed to the gasping fugitive, he had mislaid his voice. The morning light was wan and eerie. Mr. Trask, running, was not sure, as he pondered, just what he had seen. He did not dare to take the time to look back and make sure. The ground was rough and required all his attention. Therefore he put his dependence on speed and on his knowledge of an especial place of refuge. This was a dark cave by the side of Tougas Brook, where he stored his pelts in an atmosphere that kept them pliable.

The mouth of the cavern was hidden by bushes, and Mr. Trask dived through them like a circus rider through a hoop, putting his faith in two possibilities of salvation: perhaps the pursuer would not see where he went; probably, were it really a woman, she would not dare to follow him. If she did venture to follow—

She did!

MISS Poole had a professional future in films ahead of her, and a professional future as an animal trainer behind her; and ambition was putting the goad to her natural self-reliance. She was after food and raiment, both of them on the hoof within reaching distance, and she proposed to get what she was after. Beyond all question, if Mr. Trask had been made aware that this new woman doggedly purposed to kill him and wear his hide, he would have died of sheer terror then and there in his tracks; but Mr. Trask was too thoroughly conversant with the methods of wild game to allow himself to be caught at bay in a *cul de sac*. He had dodged into the cave because it offered still another, and a final resource: there was a sort of a chimney in the rocks leading up to the slope above. He climbed up nimbly and galloped on his way; the bobcat and the minks ducked out past Miss Poole in the darkness and escaped.

As soon as Mr. Trask was out of the chimney, the dim light of the morning entered by that passage.

Miss Poole beheld objects that instantly availed to take her mind off the chase and turn it to matters that were more suitable for feminine consideration.

Furs! Many furs!

She knelt and stroked them and fondled them and held them to her cheeks and murmured her delighted surprise. Then she heaped them in her arms and went forth from the cavern and examined her treasures in the light of the morning. She did not attempt to classify them. She did not bother her head about the natural history end of the discovery. Her joyous vision embraced possibilities of muffs and stoles and coats and toques! She could see where her professional film future was well furred up, at any rate. And in the extremity of dishabille in which she found herself on that bleak morning, and in that keen wind that followed the rain, she was not taking time to bother about the fine rights of property or to what extent findings were keepings. For that matter, she reflected that perhaps wild animals crawled into caves and shed their skins after the fashion of the snakes with which she was familiar.

Beside the brook there were bushes with long thorns. She patched up a garment of assorted furs that swathed her from neck to heels and dragged on the ground.

The two domesticated minks came down to the brook to fish for their breakfast, not minding the furred Miss Poole in the least, having been habituated by association with Mr. Trask to feel perfectly at home in the presence of a human being thus attired. When they clambered upon the bank, each lugging a good-sized trout, they were painfully disillusionized by being obliged to dodge rocks that this skin-clad person flung at them; they dropped the fish and scurried away.

IN the daylight Miss Poole was able to retrace her steps, or at least to find her way through a pass, and she arrived at a farmhouse where Mr. Koshland and his party had located themselves. She was obtrusively gnawing at a raw fish when she walked in on Mr. Koshland, and she flung the fish in his face and followed it with prolonged objurgation.

It required a full half-hour of apology, protestation, entreaty and fulsome promises of more salary and a share in the royalties before the new wild spirit of the primitive woman indicated the least symptom of being tamed, before Miss Poole consented to drop her rôle.

"Well, answer me this! Do you admit I have done it?" she demanded.

"Yes!" bleated Mr. Koshland. "But how—"

"Do you admit I have done it all on my own hook?"

"Sure! But the thief that stole all my good property, he—"

"Forget it! I don't need to fake nothing in my professional career. I come out eating my breakfast, don't I?" She picked the fish from the floor and bit into it.

"Yes, you do! But how do you catch 'em?"

"That's my own business! And it's my own business how I got these skins after I played September Morn when the foliage dropped off! I aint sure yet that you aint a piker, Koshland, but we'll let it stand at that, on condition that a new contract is to be drawed. And I want a scenario for a Frozen North picture, seeing I've got the furs!"

Mr. Koshland had a temper of his own when his inquiring disposition had been snubbed. "Keep it to yourself how you got 'em, if I aint fit to know about the things you do when you're working on the salary I give you. But I think they got so scared they jumped out of their skins when they saw you looking like you say you looked."

"We'll let it go at that, if you say so," retorted Miss Poole stiffly. "But we'll consider that's about enough from you on the subject, Koshland, and that goes for now, and from now on!"

And as the lady said, so it was. And that's all she ever did say!

THE DROP-IN

(*Continued from page 66*)

SHE had come out from the south side of Misery Gore. Mr. Trask marched down over the mountain from the north side. He lugged a croker-sack on his back, and it was stuffed with articles that he never showed to anybody. He found a job as a hired man on a farm, and he always kept his mouth shut about a bear who danced and tried to shake hands and about a—well, Mr. Trask shook his head dubiously when his thoughts ran on that matter and on what he kept hidden in the croker-sack, and he allowed his general explanation to new and inquiring friends to cover the whole question: he said that he had come out to dwell among human beings because living too long alone in the woods, as a hermit trapper, was apt to "tiddledoo a man's brains, no matter how naturally solid the brains was."

grew stronger, and he turned his face to the left, seeking to make out the form of some dead animal, but it was too black under the trees, and he could not distinguish objects more than a few feet away. There was a sudden tug at his leg below the knee, as if a vine had grown across the trail, and then—a sudden report jarred his eardrums, and a brilliant flame seemed to spurt straight for his eyes.

For a moment Ross' faculties seemed paralyzed, and he was absolutely blinded. Then he groped ahead. His eyes were gradually readjusted to the night after he had stumbled headlong against three different trees. He felt sick and faint at the realization of his narrow escape. One of Matt Caulkins' spring-guns!

Probably Caulkins had set it there for deer, with a cord stretched a foot above the trail; or perhaps it had been baited for bobcat or bear, which would account for the pungent smell. It must have been a shotgun, judging from the intensity of the flash, and Ross shuddered at the thought. It occurred to him that the thing had been trained in such a manner that it would strike a deer behind the shoulder, and this accounted for the fact that the charge had failed to riddle him. The buckshot had passed behind him. He felt the back of his coat to determine if the slack of the cloth had been pierced by the shot. The garment seemed intact, but he experienced a queer squirming sensation in the small of his back at the knowledge that the slugs could not have missed his spine by more than six inches.

Ross turned aside and dropped the rifle down a crevice in the rocks, having selected the place long ago. Shortly thereafter he knocked softly at Aunty Hodges' door. She came forth to prepare his coffee and before retiring she observed that it was not yet ten o'clock. After she had retired, Ross reset the clock at eleven-thirty and sought his room. The thing had gone through as planned, without a hitch; yet more clearly than ever before, he saw the logic of the sheriff's theory of the unknown element. Twice that night the grisly apparition of the drop-in had loomed beside him and stretched forth its long claws—once when Caulkins' horse had winded him, again when the spring-gun had belched forth its leaden slugs to search for him in the night. There was sound logic in this drop-in stuff that the sheriff preached.

The next morning Ross worked in the field with a sense of expectancy. The girl would have gone at once to some neighbor's house, and some one would have started for the Forest Service cabin to telephone the news to Marsten. Early in the morning three different neighbors came in separately to carry the tidings to Ross and Aunty Hodges. The coroner drove past before nine o'clock, and an hour later the sheriff and a deputy passed up the road. Ross attempted to visualize Turner's arrival at the deserted Gregory place, none there to greet him save the coroner and the dead man sprawled where he had fallen.

BUT the reality of Turner's arrival was in no way similar to the one Ross pictured. The sheriff found a score of neighbors clustered round the place, each one

eager to render his own opinion on the case. Turner listened carefully and decided that every version was based solely on the narrator's knowledge of the feud between Caulkins and Gregory, not on any fact at all relative to the actual shooting. One bit of real evidence was the empty cartridge which one man handed to him along with the information that Caulkins' rifle was the only one in the neighborhood that carried that particular type of shell. Another neighbor, living a mile down the road, volunteered the information that Matt had stopped at his place on the homeward way, riding away from his house not to exceed thirty minutes before he heard the sound of the shot.

The girl was inside, and Turner sought her for a private conference.

"Suppose you tell me what all happened, Millie," he instructed.

The girl recited the bare facts, and Turner shook his head.

"That wont do, girl," he said. "You're holding something back on the old sheriff. What do you know that you're afraid will hurt Matt Caulkins' chances?"

"You too!" the girl said bitterly. "Everyone takes it for granted that Matt did it; and I know he didn't, even if all the facts point to him as they say. Matt didn't do a thing like that. He couldn't. Don't I know? An' I'm not going to say one thing you could use against him."

"Don't need a thing to use against Matt, Millie," Turner stated. "He's convicted twice over, just as matters stand. Don't you see I'm not trying to work up a case against the boy? The case is already built complete. A few more damaging facts can't make his present fix one bit worse than what it is right now—but there may be one out of the lot that'll uncover a new lead pointing somewhere else. What I'm trying to do now is to discover if there's a possibility that Matt *didn't* do it. Now you go ahead and tell me everything you know, no matter how slack it looks on the surface. Had Matt been round here earlier?"

"He rode up the lane ten minutes before—before it happened," she confessed. "At least, I heard a horse go through."

"And how did Gregory happen to go outside?" he asked.

The girl's head dropped wearily.

"An owl hooted from out in the yard," she said.

"An owl," the sheriff repeated. "Was that some sort of a signal Gregory knew about?"

She shook her head, then looked up at the sheriff and gripped his arm. "I'm going to tell you," she said. "That was a signal Matt used to call me from the house. Mr. Gregory learned about it a week or so back and warned Matt off the place. Don't you see that Matt wouldn't use that signal again?" She gave his arm a savage little shake. "He wouldn't; don't you see?" she insisted.

"It certainly does look as if Matt had set out to convict himself," the sheriff remarked. He turned the empty shell in his hand. "Never saw a more perfect set of evidence. He didn't leave out a thing—except maybe mailing in a written confession in advance; even that couldn't be any more conclusive. Anything else you can call to mind?"

"No, that's all," she returned. "Wait—there was another thing—a second shot. I'd forgotten. It was while I was going down the road maybe half an hour later." She pointed up toward the crest of the ridge. "I heard another shot that came from up there, near as I could tell."

Turner's eyes searched her face to determine if she were manufacturing a bit of evidence which might help Matt Caulkins. He decided she was telling what she believed to be the truth.

"Sure?" he asked. "Couldn't have been a stick popped or something?"

"No, it was a shot," she insisted.

"Well, I'll ride on up and see Matt and the Major," Turner said. "Try not to worry too much, girl. Maybe things will break all right for you and Matt."

HE instructed the deputy to remain until his return and rode on up the lane. Caulkins' cabin was unoccupied, and he assumed that Matt and the Major were off somewhere in the hills. He settled down to wait, but the hours passed without a sign of either man. Turner decided to remain throughout the night. It was near midnight when he heard a horse nicker from somewhere upcountry. Five minutes later Matt rode down through the meadow, leading a saddled horse and two pack-horses. The Major was nowhere to be seen.

It occurred to Turner that Matt might have disposed of the Major as well, lest his testimony should prove damaging. But what the Major could tell of the time of Matt's arrival could not possibly be so damaging as the tale of the neighbor from whose house he had departed just prior to the shooting, Turner reflected. Caulkins put up the horses and came to the house. Turner accosted him as he opened the door.

"Set your rifle down and strike a light, Matt," the sheriff said. "It's Turner. I've been sent up after you. Tell you about it soon as we get settled."

He watched the man outlined in the doorway as he deposited his rifle against the jamb and scratched a match.

"What's up—that you're wanting me?" Caulkins demanded as the match flared. He held it aloft and peered at the man inside to make sure it was the sheriff, then crossed to the lamp and lighted it.

"Where's the Major?" Turner asked as he motioned Caulkins to a chair.

"Home by now," Caulkins stated. "We gathered up his stuff this morning and packed out across the divide to the railroad. He caught a train at Crandall about six o'clock. That's what made me so late getting back. We didn't leave here till nearly noon. What is it you want me for? That Gregory business, likely. Jonas sick you onto me on account of our little fuss? I expect maybe it's a trespass case."

"It's about Gregory, right enough," Turner said. "But not about trespass. Jonas was called out of the house last night and shot. Folks think it was you."

Point by point Turner recited the evidence against Caulkins and the boy's face betrayed grave concern.

"It looks like I'm in a hole," he admitted. "But you know I didn't do it." He searched Turner's face hopefully. "Why, it looks like I'd planned to con-

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victim myself. I heard the shot when I was halfway home. I wish now I'd gone back."

"Did the Major hear the shot?" Turner queried.

The boy nodded.

"He'd gone to bed, but he heard it," Caulkins said. "Asked me what I was shooting at down the road. Say, this is pretty rotten," he observed as he realized the significance of his admission that the Major too had attributed the shot to him.

"It's almost too damned perfect," Turner said. "Try and think, now. Do you know anybody that held a grudge against Jonas?"

"Well, he was no friend of mine," Caulkins stated bluntly, "but I don't recall any man who had any grudge."

The boy's mind was plainly occupied with speculating as to how this thing would affect the girl. Would she believe in him in the face of all the evidence against him. It was not until his horse shied at a fluttering paper as they rode down the road the following morning, that he thought of a single point which might help him. The animal had acted strangely that night as he rode up the lane. He related this instance to Turner.

"Likely a bobcat or a coyote after one of Gregory's chickens," he said. "But at the time it occurred to me that maybe Jonas was out there watching to see if I'd call Millie outside. Then I saw him through the window and forgot about it until right now."

TURNER sent Matt to Marsten with the deputy while he himself remained at the Gregory house. Millie had gone to stay with a neighbor, and he had the place to himself. He searched the strip of brush on the far side of the lane and found the spot where some man had been concealed. There was not a doubt of it, for the brush was pressed back, and the ground was clear of fallen leaves. The restless shifting of the prowler had pressed down the soft earth, and the prints of his knees were quite evident.

"So much for that," Turner mused. "But by itself it don't amount to a straw. That owl's call, now; he must have been hanging round here pretty frequent, prowling near sometime when Matt called the girl outside, in order to have learned that call." He knelt in the brush and peered toward the window, taking in every other place of possible concealment which would still afford a view of the room in which Gregory was accustomed to read of evenings. In the small patch of bushes a few yards from the window he found ample evidence that it had been occupied by a heavy body; broken twigs and worn patches of earth testified to this. But the signs were old.

Turner climbed the spur to discover if possible the source of that second shot which Millie Trainor had heard. He angled along the slope and struck the crest a half-mile down-country from the house, but as he crossed it, he failed to discover a sign of any human having preceded him. As he moved slowly through the trees, he checked off every man in the valley. In order to be free to prowl the Gregory place night after night, a man must have some definite excuse for being absent from home. All the settlers were men with families. Their absences would be noted; and there was no single man living alone so that he could come and go without comment.

He reached the far edge of the spur and turned up along the rims. Aunty Hodges' cabin nestled far below him, and he could see Ross working with a team in the field. He came suddenly across an old game-trail that dipped down through a break in the rims, and he followed it back across the ridge toward the Gregory place.

When halfway across, Turner stopped to investigate a strange odor. There was ample proof that some one had been prowling round this particular point—numerous footprints within a certain limited space, a cut sapling with the limbs trimmed off. Turner decided that a trap had recently been set thereabouts for marten or bobcat; the strange scent sprinkled round to draw them to the spot indicated as much, though it was a little early for trapping. He noted three holes in a triangle some ten feet to one side of the trail, as if some one had jabbed the ground aimlessly with some pointed instrument, perhaps a trap-stake or a walking staff. He would ask Matt if he had set a trap there.

The trail led him out above the Gregory place, and he dropped down the slope to where he had left his horse tied in the yard. As he neared the house of the next neighbor below, Millie Trainor came out to the road to meet him.

"I've been waiting," she said. "Did you find out anything that will help him?"

"Nothing to speak of, Millie—nothing at all, you might say," was the reply. "But maybe something will turn up. Rest easy in your mind. We'll find out something for our side yet."

But the girl was not to be comforted by such evasive assurances.

"Oh, do something!" she begged. "Please! Promise me you'll find out who it was. Everbody is against Matt except me."

"Likely," Turner assented. "Everyone but you and me. Between us we'll give 'em all a big surprise. You just wait and see how the old sheriff will fool 'em when the time comes." He turned, leaving the girl leaning against the gate-post, watching him as he rode away.

"Now, that's just pure hell for a fact," Turner commented aloud. "She knows I didn't find out anything that could be used—and I'm the only hope she's got."

As he rode on around the point of the spur, his thoughts kept reverting to the old trail that led across it. Somehow it seemed a direct link between the Gregory place and Aunty Hodges' cabin. This idea was vaguely associated in his mind with something he had heard about Ross. What was it? The connection failed to rise to the surface of his consciousness, but just as he drew even with the mouth of the lane, he recalled that Ross had sinking spells, a fact well known to the whole countryside. He turned up the lane and dropped from his horse before the cabin.

"I'm three-fourths starved," he told Aunty Hodges. "No one has thought to offer me a bite all day. You couldn't fix an old friend up with a glass of milk and a slab of pie, now, could you?"

Aunty Hodges was volubly glad to entertain him and to discuss the Gregory affair. In parting, Turner inquired after Ross. Were his sinking spells worse these days? They discussed the symptoms at length, and Aunty Hodges gave it as her opinion that Ross would be taken off in one of them. It seemed the spells came on only in the evenings, apparently induced by hard work in the field—that any sound drove him mad, and that absolute quiet in the seclusion of his room seemed to afford the only relief. Then later he would wake her up to give him strong black coffee. The spells lasted nearly two hours as a rule; in the case of the last one, for instance—on the night of the shooting—Ross had called her at a quarter of ten, and the spell had come on at eight.

TURNER rode away, his mind besieged by fragmentary scraps of thought, disconnected yet pointing in one direction, and he endeavored to marshal these floating bits into one cohesive whole.

Presuming that another man, not Matt, had left the marks which indicated some persistent nightly prowler in the brush around the Gregory house, then that man must have a powerful motive to have urged him to plan so far ahead. These attacks that Ross suffered, provided they were faked, would afford an opportunity to prowl the countryside without the knowledge of another soul. The trail that led straight across the spur, and the signs of recent usage, that second shot which the girl believed she had heard from the ridge, what explained these? But the motive was absolutely lacking. It could not have been an attempted robbery, for Jonas never kept a trinket worth stealing.

Once the theory of robbery was dispensed with, it automatically eliminated the possibility that Gregory had discovered the man by accident and was shot down on that score. The thing had been timed too well, when the boy was halfway to his cabin; and there was the owl's hoot to draw Gregory from the house, and the shell of the same caliber as that used in Matt's rifle. There had never been a whisper of any enmity between Gregory and Ross; yet in order to follow Turner's present line of reasoning to a logical conclusion, he must concede a sustained and deadly hatred on the part of Ross.

"It seems too fantastic, sort of," Turner confessed aloud. "I couldn't even prove it to my own satisfaction, much less to a jury of twelve men. If he did do it, then it's the most perfectly planned thing to date, so perfect that one little slip would break it into bits: but where's the slip? This time, I guess, the drop-in is not going to operate."

The recollection of the girl's troubled eyes and her pleas that he should do something for the boy persisted in the background of his thoughts to trouble him. And suddenly he slapped the pommel of his saddle with such violence that the horse leaped ahead and broke into a lope.

"The Major!" he announced. "It's got to be the Major. Matt Caulkins setting spring-guns, the shot the girl heard on the ridge, those three little holes alongside the trail. That's it. The Major is the drop-in. He's got to be!"

AN hour later a car bore Turner swiftly toward the railroad and from that point a train carried him on toward the city a hundred miles distant, where the Major lived. It was nearly midnight when the Major roused from slumber and, attired in bathrobe and pajamas, blinked sleepily at the sheriff and listened to a half-dozen questions before attempting a reply, then answered them all in order.

"Yes, I had a set there. Took it up the morning before I left. It was sprung, right enough. Yes, makes considerable noise; I use a pistol with an open cartridge, and loose powder to fire 'em: makes it sure even on a damp night. Of course it's possible. I've picked up all sorts of odd trash at times, horses, cows and once even a tinkering goat. Great disappointment, that sort of thing, when you're expecting better game. Morning wont do? You want to get back tonight? Well, as long as it may help Matt— Didn't read the papers this evening so didn't know."

The Major retired to his dark-room, and the sheriff turned the leaves of an album filled with portraits of wild things photographed in their native haunts. Everything from beetles to bears stared back at him from the pages.

An hour passed. Then the Major returned and handed Turner a wet print.

"Got him," he announced. "Strange sort of affair, don't you think? Must have given him an awful start. Seems like he'd have stopped and smashed the machine otherwise. Good thing you came today. I always weed out all but the best and burn 'em up. No use keeping a lot of trash around. Likely this would have been a cinder by noon tomorrow. And they thought it was Matt, you say?"

The sheriff regarded the print in silence. A face glared at him from the paper. One foot was lifted as if to take a step, and a white line showed across the angle—the cord that had tripped the camera. A rifle showed clearly in the man's hand.

"The drop-in," Turner softly exulted. "The most perfectly planned crime I ever heard of—and the most rock-riveted, mortal certainty of conviction that ever came into my hands. The two extremes! Major, the drop-in operates."

ROSS lay awake in Aunty Hodges' cabin. His mind was at rest. Only one thing remained to be done. Even that was unnecessary, but no small point should be overlooked. He would burn the moccasins on the morrow. Shortly past noon of the following day he equipped himself with ax and saw, thrust the moccasins beneath his coat, and set off on foot up the wood-road that led into the gulch along the base of the spur. He cut a load of stove-wood, piling and burning the brush, and the moccasins were consigned to the flames. Ross shouldered his tools and headed for home in the early dusk, the last link of his scheme complete. Not one scrap remained to connect him with the killing, and no human agency could point to him now. He smiled a grim smile of self-congratulation over a thing so brilliantly conceived and carried to such a perfect conclusion. Then his grin faded into a stare of cold apprehension. For just ahead, seated on a log with his rifle across his knee, the sheriff waited at the bend of the lane.

FIRES OF AMBITION

(Continued from page 33)

shabby shoes had been discarded for a fashionable one-piece dress and well-turned walking pumps. The clothing was from the stockroom of the Hygrade Company, purchased at cost. Mr. Wittmaier had been mystified at her choice of the plainest yet most expensive articles of the Hygrade "line," for most girls of Mary Ryan's condition chose unerringly from among the goods in which one got the most in appearance for one's money. But when she came into the office the following morning, he went over her slender figure with an approving eye, for the change in his secretary was rather remarkable. He was forced to admit that she had chosen well, embellishing a garment that had been among the least successful of their spring line of goods and giving it a new value both commercial and artistic. But he said nothing to Mary beyond an approving comment upon her appearance, reserving his new opinions upon the dress itself for a meeting of the heads of the departments later in the morning.

This was one of the important conferences of the year, for one of their outside men, Mr. Al Crawley, had just come in from his Western tour, and the condition of the trade and the prospects for the summer and fall business were under discussion. Al Crawley was the best seller of medium-grade woman's wear in or out of New York, and his reputation as such was known in the trade from one coast to the other. He was what was called a "high-class" man, spending large sums annually in the entertainment of his friends the buyers in the popular department-stores, and reaping thereby a golden harvest in business done. It was not Al Crawley's way to go appealing to his customers. He merely suggested. He exhibited his goods on the prettiest models he could find, and the buyers came, saw and were conquered. His success, perhaps was due in part to the fact that most of his customers were women. He had a way with women, a way with each sort of woman, a skill in changing his manner as deftly as another man would change his cravat—altogether an interesting fellow with no conscience to speak of, but an abiding talent for making his way in the world.

IT was Al Crawley's comment on the failure of Number Twenty-six—a one-piece dress—which aroused the sudden reprobation of the senior member of the firm.

"Well," he said, "you know your business, Al. If it wont sell, it wont. We got to give the people what they want. But I've been thinking there's a market we haven't touched—a higher class of trade—the market I've always wanted to comb."

"Where?" asked Crawley with a shrug.

"Upper Fifth Avenue, Murray Hill, Newport, Narragansett—"

"Humpf!" There was more than a little contempt in the manner with which Mr. Crawley lighted his cigarette.

Wittmaier glanced at him and then touched a bell on the table. A boy appeared.

"Tell Miss Ryan to come in," he said.

Braun grinned as Mr. Berg, the vice-president of the Hygrade, nudged him in the ribs.

"I'll show you the possibilities of that number, gentlemen. If the numbers are wrong, I got to know it. If they're right, we got to push them."

Mary Ryan knocked and stood poised for a graceful instant in the doorway. The men turned in their chairs.

"Did you send for me, Mr. Wittmaier?" she asked.

"Yes. Come in, Miss Ryan. We've been talking about that Twenty-six model. I just wanted Mr. Crawley to see you in it. Miss Ryan, shake hands with Mr. Crawley—our head salesman. —My secretary, Al," he added with a sawing motion of his heavy hand.

Mr. Crawley had risen, and took her hand with his best manner. Mary saw that he had dark eyes with long lashes, and that he wore a diamond stick-pin.

"Pleased to meet you, Miss Ryan," said Mr. Crawley.

"Number Twenty-six," said Wittmaier with a horizontal sweep of upturned palm. "There it is, Al; look at it. This young lady picked it out because she liked it. There must have been a reason for that. Just walk around a little, Miss Ryan."

Mary showed her teeth in a smile, which included them all. She had had no experience as a model, but she extended her arms with natural grace and took a turn around the room, the lines of her slim figure accentuated as she moved.

"There, gentlemen," Wittmaier said as she paused. "There's the number Al Crawley can't sell. What do you think of it?"

"Swell," said Mr. Berg crisply.

"She's got the figure," muttered Braun.

"And everything else," said Crawley as he rose, addressing Mr. Wittmaier. "You're wasting this young lady's talents in the office. She ought to be a model."

"No," said Mary quietly.

"Why not?"

"It's not my business. —Is that all, Mr. Wittmaier?"

"One moment, please. Wont you tell these gentlemen why you picked that model out of our stock instead of others more—er—popular?"

Mary hesitated a moment; and then, "Sure, I don't know," she said slowly. "Maybe 'twas because everybody else in the office wasn't wearing it."

"Um—any other reason?"

"Yes," she replied frankly, "—because it doesn't try to be something it isn't—"

"Ah, I see."

"And because it doesn't look like the other Hygrade garments at all."

"Humpf! But that garment aint selling, Miss Ryan," said Mr. Berg.

"Then maybe it's because you're not showing it to the right kind of people."

"There!" exploded Mr. Wittmaier, bringing his fat hand down upon the table with a crash. "She said it. The right kind of people—the line for Lucille

Dunois, Limited, Madame Denise, and the Specialty Shops—"

"They wont touch the Hygrade," muttered Crawley peevishly.

"They got to," thundered Wittmaier. "We need that market—not for the money, but for the standing."

Crawley rose, and frowning, paced the floor, his gaze on Wittmaier's secretary.

"I'll try it if Miss Ryan will go with me," he said quickly.

Mary hesitated. This was not her work. But Mr. Wittmaier's eyes pleaded.

"Oh, very well," she said. "If there's anything that I can do to help—"

SHE left the office with a sense of having lost a little in pride and gained a little in confidence. She had meant to make herself indispensable to her employer, but she had not figured on the personal element in her relations with the firm.

But she had promised. The prospective visit to Madame Denise might be profitable. And when a little later Mr. Crawley came into the president's office where she sat alone, she met him with the appraising glance of one on the verge of a venture.

"You're a nice kid to do this for me," he said as he sat on Wittmaier's desk. "If I had a girl with your figure and face on the road with me, I'd beat the world. Where did you get that hair? I thought it was henna until I had a good look."

His whole attitude was personal, but she merely smiled. "I guess it's the Irish in me coming out at the top," she said.

"When did you drift into this dump, anyway?" he pursued. "How did I happen to miss you?"

His methods were rather breathless, but Mary still smiled.

"You were on the road when I came," she said.

He came down from the desk and took the chair beside her.

"Say, kid, you're a wonder to look at. I guess you know your way about, too. We'll tackle Denise in the afternoon, and then a bit of dinner and a theater afterward. What do you say?"

Mary examined the keyboard of her machine and wiped away a speck of dust. This man could help her, but a little waiting wouldn't hurt him.

"I'd say you're taking a good deal for granted," she said clearly.

He smiled easily. "Oh, I'm a fast worker when I get going," he said.

"Well, I'd rather you didn't work so fast," she put in dryly.

"Say! Is that a call-down?"

"Not unless you take it that way," she replied coolly.

Al Crawley glanced at her curiously. He had thought at first that he knew her type. Now he wasn't so sure. Most girls use this kind of verbal fencing to make their gifts the more desirable, but here, he felt, was a girl not to be so easily won. So he changed his demeanor and his tone at once.

"You're not cross, are you?" he asked. "Anything you say. If you wont go out with me tonight, maybe some other time."

"Madame Denise first," she said whimsically. "Don't be looking so far into the future, Mr. Crawley."

He glanced at her quickly and rose with a short laugh, crossing to the door. Perhaps he had not been mistaken.

"All right," he said. "Three o'clock. I'll have a taxi."

TO tell the truth, Mary Ryan was now intensely interested in the prospect of the adventure. There might be a chance to advance herself in some way. She had never dined at a fashionable restaurant, nor been to any theater except a movie. She wanted to go. She wasn't in the least afraid of Mr. Crawley, no more afraid of him than she had ever been of any other man. For all his airs of knowledge of the world, he hadn't intimidated her in the least. Moreover he would be useful to serve her ends. And as for the purely personal side of their relationship—she shrugged that aside. Mr. Crawley might contribute to her sentimental education.

The ride in the taxi was delicious if alarming, the visit to Madame Denise an indication of what might be accomplished elsewhere.

Her courage and confidence rose after the interview with Madame Denise. It was sheer luck that she had come. She found that Madame Denise was no Madame at all, but a dainty little man with a thin chest and a languid manner. She felt more assured at having to deal with a man than a woman, and walked around the room while Al Crawley talked, subduing the tones of his voice to comport with the rose-and-old-ivory interior and the delicate presence of the little man. She found out afterward that his name was Alan Wetherby. She saw his gaze following her with approval, and at last he told her to come to him.

"Very good. Very *svelte*," he purred. "I didn't know, Mr. Crawley, that the Hygrade Company proposed to extend its business to reach my kind of clientele."

"Oh, just one house of super-refinement in each large city, Mr. Wetherby. Of course we shall specialize. You can see for yourself—the materials, workmanship—only the best. We would like it to be your shop in New York; but of course you—" He broke off and shrugged carelessly. "It is only fair to you to say that Lucille Dunois hasn't seen this model yet."

The little man waved a hand. He had been gazing critically at the dress while Crawley had been talking.

"Wait a moment!" he said with miniature imperiousness. "Let me think. Oak-leaves. The cut is right. I could call it 'the Oak-leaf—' "

"Anything you please," said Crawley coolly.

There was a pause while "Madame Denise" stroked his well-groomed gray mustache, and Crawley was wisely silent.

"If you'll embroider me two brown oak-leaves in silk at the neck and on the hem of the skirt, design and shade to be selected by me, I'll put this garment in. This can be done at once, of course?"

Crawley nodded. "It's merely a matter of cost," he said.

"Oh, we'll make that right. But we'll have to hurry. Come in in the morning, and I'll have the designs ready."

He rose and bowed them to the door of the outer shop, where he touched Mary lightly on the shoulder.

"You are very pretty, my dear. If you would ever care to do any modeling for me here in the mornings, I shall be glad to see you—five dollars an hour. I think you would be useful."

"Thank you," said Mary. "I—I'll think about it."

MARY'S head swam a little as she went out into the sunlight of the avenue. Al Crawley was jubilant.

"We got him going, Miss Ryan," he said, "or *you* did. The old man has been trying to get Denise for years. I've got to phone him."

"Wait," she said, her brows puzzling. "If we get Lucille, it will be easier with the Specialty Shops, wont it?"

"Yes, of course."

A plan had come into her mind—a plan connected with a hat that she had seen; and so while he wondered what she was thinking of, she asked him to take another taxi and drive down to Fanchon's. She wouldn't tell him her plan until he saw her in a hat of grayish green decorated deftly with the pink bloom of heather. Then he understood.

"For Lucille," she whispered. "The 'heather-bloom' model?"

Crawley grinned from ear to ear as he stood off and admired the effect while the saleswoman wondered.

"You've got it, kid," he muttered excitedly. "Heather-bloom—daintier, even, than the oak-leaves."

"The embroidery can be done?"

"Surest thing you know. Let me manage it."

Crawley paid for the new hat, and then they went to Lucille Dunois. The cue given, the rest was easy to Mr. Crawley. He thought he had known all the tricks of selling goods, but Mary Ryan had shown him something. Lucille Dunois was no more French than Madame Denise, and appeared in the person of a tall, angular woman with a strong English accent. But she caught the idea at once—the "heather-bloom model." It sounded well. Crawley named a price which would net her twenty dollars profit on each garment, offering to embroider the patterns according to her own designs, and they left the shop with assurances that a good order would follow the completed articles. It was a fine afternoon's work.

At six o'clock that afternoon Joe Bass called at the office of the Hygrade Garment Company to walk home with Mary. But at that moment she was returning in a taxi from Halloway's Specialty Shop and on her way with Mr. Al Crawley to dine at an expensive restaurant.

Chapter Three

MR. Crawley was a good spender when there was something to be gained by his hospitality. The effective way in which this young girl had helped him to meet and master a difficult situation filled him with admiration which struggled in a curious way against the purely physical attractions of her beauty. Even before they sat down at the table, he was ready to revise his early estimate that her ingenuousness would contribute the losing hand in the game he meant to play.

It was only after a moment of well-considered hesitation that Mary Ryan had accompanied him to the hotel restaurant, and he did not know that she had long ago decided to accept his invitations if he repeated them. She was the more willing now because she thought that her contribution to the success of the day had served to minimize her obligation.

It was early when they entered the grill, but the theater crowds were already there. She followed the head waiter, trying her best not to seem self-conscious, noting the glances that followed them to their seats—cool, appraising looks from the women, stares from the men. She knew that she was not dressed as well as the other women in the room, nor as appropriately to the hour, but she had already reckoned on that. The deficiency was a small price to pay for her experience. She glanced about, copying as she could the indifference of the women while she fingered her napkin and took a preliminary sip from her glass of water as she got her bearings.

Mr. Crawley was in an excellent humor. She left the ordering to him. "That will be very good," or "Anything will do," she replied to his questions, phrases born of her own inexperience. Her companion understood and ordered skillfully—an art that he had learned from frequent practice in New York and elsewhere. Instinctively she refused the cocktail and the wine (for the Prohibition law had not yet gone upon the statute books) and turned to the clams which were first set before her. She chose the wrong fork, correcting her mistake quickly, but he caught the quick flush which ran from neck to brow.

"What? Oh, I see. Don't mind me, my dear. You've been frank enough. I might help teach you a lot of things. Always take the fork from the outside of the row. That's the way they put 'em."

HE shamed her a little. She had never liked to have anyone know more than she did.

"Thanks," she said, and then added quickly: "This is a very nice place, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," he returned. "That's why I brought you here. The best isn't any too good for you, my dear. You'll let me call you Mary, wont you?"

She laughed.

"And aren't you calling me it? Can I refuse you what you're doing already."

He grinned approvingly. "Wittmaier is paying for this—and the hat."

"Perhaps Mr. Wittmaier wont thank you for being so generous with his money."

"Just wait until I tell him what we've done. He'll eat out of my hand—and yours. Say, Mary, you and I make a good team. Wittmaier's got to loan you to me. He will if he knows a good thing."

"Thanks. Maybe it's because he knows a good thing that he wont."

She thought a good deal of herself. All the more credit, then, if he won her.

"That may be," he said jovially, "but you're too good to be a clerk for the Hygrade. I don't like the idea of your slaving away your beauty in an office, when you were made for something finer."

"What?" she asked him point-blank.

"This," he explained with a wave of his hand. "This is the sort of thing a girl

of your talents and beauty was intended for. Good food, pleasure, the theater, dancing, lovely clothes." He laughed. "I don't say you need 'em to make you prettier—you take the shine off any girl in this room; but—you're a woman. You know how to wear clothes. Denise saw it; so did Lucille. Didn't you feel as if you wanted to put on some of those silky things you saw today, feel their softness around you—"

"Sure, and who's going to buy them for me?" she shot at him. "You?"

The irony was so unexpected that it had the nature of an attack rather than a defense. Their glances met, and he saw a glint of the steel behind her humor. But he only laughed.

"I guess there are a good many men richer than I am who would be willing to do that," he temporized.

"Maybe," she said quickly, "but I'll not be thinking of marrying for a long while yet, Mr. Crawley."

Marriage! He grinned a little sheepishly. It was clear that none of the old formulæ of conquest would be successful with Mary Ryan.

He paid the check, and they went on to the theater. He wanted to take a taxi, but she preferred to walk. Perhaps something in Crawley's manner warned her of the imminence of sentiment.

At the theater they saw a "revue"—which has come to mean the seeing again of many things that have been seen before, legs, arms, and then legs again. But it was all new to Mary.

AFTER the theater he invited her into a cabaret. Mary was thoughtful for a moment, examining the electric sign which proclaimed the entertainment provided, and then consented. Her mind was avid now for new impressions. These were the nightly diversions of the multitude who dwelt above Thirty-fourth Street. This was life, not perhaps as Mr. Crawley had suggested, the life that she was meant for, but it was something that she had not yet experienced and without which her education could not be complete. She entered the cabaret, her eyes wide with curiosity. But closer at hand, the kind of dancing and singing which had seemed so lovely upon the stage, was less impressive. She saw the lines beneath the grease-paint, the shadows which no amount of artificial color could disguise—listened to a suggestive song which accompanied a rather brutal dance. She had a sense of uncleanliness in the air, without the saving grace of beauty. Her curiosity, which had been progressive to a certain point, now lapsed.

"Come," she said. "I don't like this place. Please take me out."

Mr. Crawley looked up in surprise but did not move. The performance was a good deal to his liking. Besides, he was just beginning his fourth high-ball.

"Oh, say—already? Why, it's just beginning to be good."

"I—I'm tired of it. I've had enough. Come, please."

He glanced at her once, reading the resolution in her eyes, and slowly rose.

"Oh, all right. Anything you say, m'dear—anything." He gulped down the high-ball, for which he had already paid, and they made their way toward the door.

The odor of perfumery, stale tobacco and alcohol sickened her, and she drew a deep breath as they reached the air of the street. She thought it curious that she found herself wondering if she might possibly meet Joe Bass outside.

"What did you take me there for?" she asked her companion. "You might have known I wouldn't like it."

"How could I know that?" he muttered. "Everybody goes to cabarets after theater."

She glanced at him uneasily. "I'm going home," she said quietly. "It's late."

He called a taxi.

"No, I'm going to walk."

"Oh, say, Mary! Twenty-ninth Street!"

"Come, please."

He stared at her diminishing back and then went after her, wondering rather hazily what had happened. But he could'nt let her get away from him—now.

They went down Broadway. He put a hand below her elbow but she moved away from him. They walked in silence.

"I'm sorry," he said at last. "Forgot you're not like other girls. You didn't like that last dance, did you?"

"It was beastly!" she muttered.

"Oh, say! Not beastly—"

And then as she made no further comment, "Not mad at me, are you, Mary?" he asked.

"No."

"Tried my best to make you have good time, didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Wouldn't make you angry for anything in world. Greatest little woman I ever met in my life. Honest! Never saw pretty girl had so much sense. Want be good friends. Do anything for you, Mary, if just kind to me. Anything."

HE rambled on while Mary walked sedately beside him, on her guard. She was not in the least alarmed—only annoyed that her eagerness had led her to allow these first mistakes to be made.

"Oh, I don't blame you, Mr. Crawley. You've been very kind," she said more gently.

The clock on the *Herald* Building had just struck the hour of one, and as they turned into the side-street, he chose to find something encouraging in her lowered tone.

"Say, little girl," he muttered, "I'm keen for you. I want you to let me be good to you. Couldn't you say you like me just a little?"

She endured the touch of his fingers on her arm.

"I like you better, Mr. Crawley, when you're talking business," she said quietly.

"Why, Mary?"

They had reached the steps of the boarding-house, and Mary stopped.

"Because then you know just what you're talking about. You don't now."

His short laugh mocked her. "You little devil! I'm crazy about you."

Before she knew it, he had her in his arms. His lips just brushed her cheek when she wrenched away from him, her free hand striking.

"Let me be, you fool," she gasped furiously, "or I'll hate you!"

He straightened, fingering his jaw, and was silent while Mary unlocked the door with a latchkey.

"Mary—" he muttered.

"Good night, Mr. Crawley." The door was shut in his face.

Mary Ryan crept up to her small room breathless at the unfortunate conclusion of her adventure. She touched her cheek with her handkerchief, and then looked into her mirror.

Fool! And she had thought him clever enough to realize the relationship that she had meant to establish between them. She had thought herself clever enough to make him understand the kind of a girl that she was and meant to be. Her mistake had been in going to the cabaret. She hadn't even realized that he had been losing control of his wits. And now perhaps she had made an enemy at the office, instead of a useful acquaintance. That was too bad.

She shrugged away the recollection of the unpleasant moment. She had never trusted herself to yield too strongly to impulse. Even with Joe Bass, she did not say everything she thought. She had no temperament, really. She was cold—cold as ice, when she thought of the things that she meant to accomplish. Joe Bass understood. Joe was clever.

But Al Crawley! She had made the mistake of thinking that this bright business man was clever enough to understand the kind of creature she was. She had learned something.

AS she lay in her bed, her eyes wide open, staring at the square of gray where her window was, she went over analytically the events of the day. She liked "Madame Denise." She liked his gentleness. There was something wrong with the people in the restaurant at the hotel, something wrong with the people who sat near her at the cabaret, and something wrong—something definitely wrong—with Mr. Al Crawley.

He had said that she had been meant for that sort of life—music, dancing, theaters, gayety. She wasn't quite so sure now. There must be something finer in the life she sought than what she had been a part of tonight—a gayety more restrained, more elegant. There would be men, too, whose laughter wasn't so loud as Mr. Crawley's, forceful men, but quiet, with restrained gestures. And women. There was a girl at the theater whose voice she had heard, a girl very simply dressed in a gown low at the neck, upon which she wore a pearl necklace—real pearls, which must have cost a fortune. Mary had strained to catch this girl's phrases in the pauses of Al Crawley's vivid comments upon the stage people. The girl spoke in accents different from any that Mary had been taught, a different language almost, it seemed.

Those were the thoughts that remained topsy-turvy in Mary Ryan's mind, all poisoned with the thought of the mistake with the clam-fork. Why, even Al Crawley knew more about "things" than she did. Al Crawley! Her last thought before she went to sleep was a book on etiquette that a girl at Schuler's had shown her. A book on etiquette—tomorrow.

Next month Mr. Gibbs takes you into the inner circle of smart New York society in this remarkable novel of a young girl struggling to gain success. Don't miss this fine installment—in our forthcoming February issue.

If You Were Dying To-night

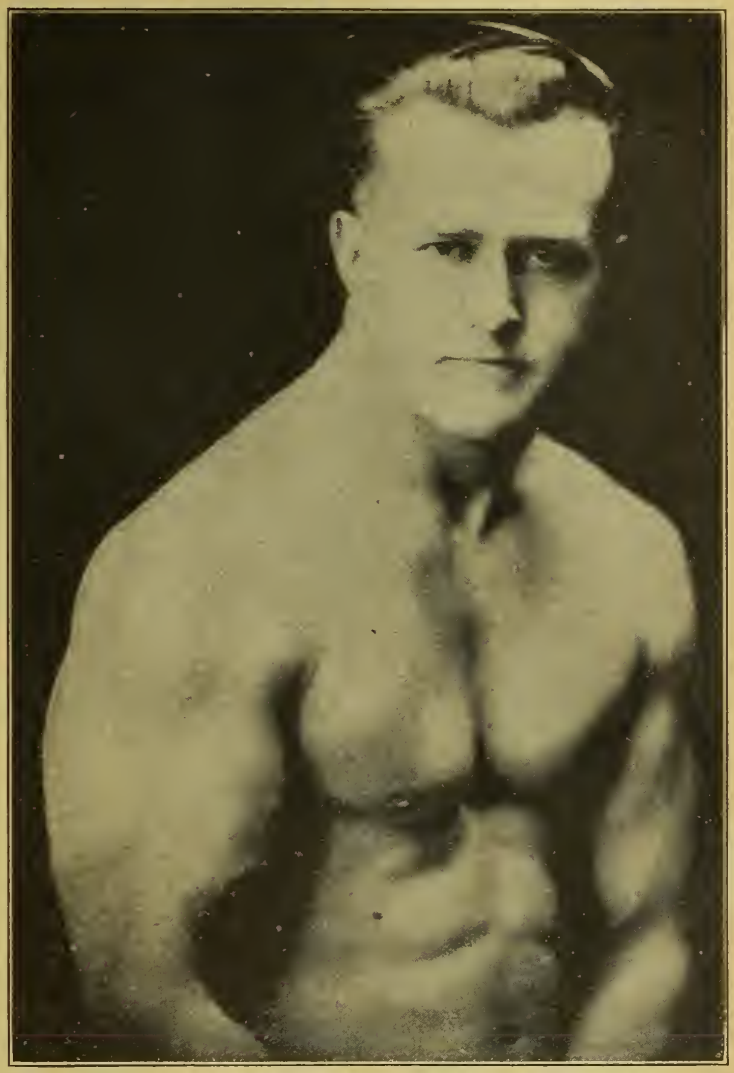
and I offered you something that would give you ten years more to live, would you take it? You'd grab it. Well fellows, I've got it, but don't wait till you're dying or it won't do you a bit of good. It will then be too late. Right now is the time. To-morrow or any day, some disease will get you and if you have not equipped yourself to fight it off, you're gone. I dont claim to cure disease. I am not a medical doctor, but I'll put you in such condition that the doctor will starve to death waiting for you to take sick. Can you imagine a mosquito trying to bite a brick wall? A fine chance.

A Re-built Man

I like to get the weak ones. I delight in getting hold of a man who has been turned down as hopeless by others. It's easy enough to finish a task that's more than half done. But give me the weak, sickly chap and watch him grow stronger. That's what I like. It's fun to me because I know I can do it and I like to give the other fellow the laugh. I don't just give you a veneer of muscle that looks good to others. I work on you both inside and out. I not only put big, massive arms and legs on you, but I build up those inner muscles that surround your vital organs. The kind that give you real pep and energy, the kind that fire you with ambition and the courage to tackle anything set before you.

All I Ask Is Ninety Days

Who says it takes years to get in shape? Show me the man who makes any such claims and I'll make him eat his words. I'll put one full inch on yourarm in just 30 days. Yes, and two full inches on your chest in the same length of time. Meanwhile, I'm putting life and pep into your old back-bone. And from then on, just watch 'em grow. At the end of thirty days you won't know yourself. Your whole body will take on an entirely different appearance. But you've only started. Now comes the real works. I've only built my foundation. I want just 60 days more (90 in all) and you'll make those friends of yours who think they're strong look like something the cat dragged in.



Earle E. Liederman as he is to-day

A Real Man

When I'm through with you, you're a real man. The kind that can prove it. You will be able to do things that you had thought impossible. And the beauty of it is you keep on going. Your deep full chest breathes in rich pure air, stimulating your blood and making you just bubble over with vim and vitality. Your huge, square shoulders and your massive muscular arms have that craving for the exercise of a regular he man. You have the flash to your eye and the pep to your step that will make you admired and sought after in both the business and social world.

This is no idle prattle, fellows. If you doubt me, make me prove it. Go ahead. I like it. I have already done this for thousands of others and my records are unchallenged. What I have done for them, I will do for you. Come then, for time flies and every day counts. Let this very day be the beginning of new life to you.

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HINDS WEEK-END BOX

makes a very useful gift and costs only 50c postpaid, or at your dealer's. It contains those essentials for the comfort and attractiveness of the face and hands. Trial size, Hinds Honey and Almond Cream, Cold and Disappearing Cream, Soap, Talc and Face Powder.

As you hike along the windy street
Facing the blast of icy sleet
Chapped faces, hands and ankles too
And windburned skin may trouble you.

Then pause a bit upon your way
And take the Cre-Maids' tip today,
Just use Hinds Honey and Almond Cream
And meet the weather with joy supreme.

Frostbites, chilblains and kindred ills
Hinds quickly comforts, heals and stills.
Chapping and windburn pass away,
Soft lovely skin just comes to stay.

When the winds are raw and the cold extreme
You need Hinds Honey and Almond Cream.

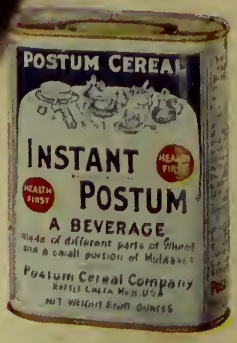
WONDERFUL BASE FOR FACE POWDER. Hinds Honey and Almond Cream is now used for this purpose with marvelous success. Moisten the skin slightly with the cream, let it nearly dry, then dust on the powder. It will adhere to perfection.

AS A MANICURING AID THIS CREAM softens the cuticle, prevents soreness and preserves the lustre of the nails.

All druggists and department stores sell Hinds Honey and Almond Cream. We will mail you a small sample for 2c or trial bottle for 6c.

Ask your dealer for Hinds Superior Toilet Requisites, but if not obtainable, order of us. We send postpaid in the United States.

A. S. HINDS CO.
Dept. 29 PORTLAND, MAINE



When bedtime comes around

are you certain of a good night's sleep?

YOU must often envy the children their wonderful way of dropping off to sleep—almost the instant their heads touch the pillow.

Are you as sure of a good night's sleep as they are? Or is coffee making trouble for you—keeping you awake at night and making you grow old too soon by continuous over-stimulation from the caffeine it contains?

If you want to enjoy sound, restful sleep and freedom from "nerves," stop coffee and tea, and drink healthful Postum instead.

Postum is a delicious and satisfying hot drink that tastes much like coffee. But as Postum is made from wheat and contains no caffeine whatever it is absolutely harmless for young or old at any time of day or night.

Order Postum from your grocer today. Serve it as your mealtime beverage instead of coffee or tea, and see how much better you will sleep, and how much better you w[illegible]

Postum comes in two [illegible] stant Postum (in tins) prepared instantly [illegible] up by the addition of boiling water. [illegible] Cereal (in packages) for those who pr[illegible] make the drink while the meal is being [illegible] made by boiling fully 20 minutes.

POSTUM *for* Satisfaction *and* Health

"There's a Reason"

Made by Postum Cereal Company, Inc., B[illegible]eek, Michigan