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March 1923

THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE



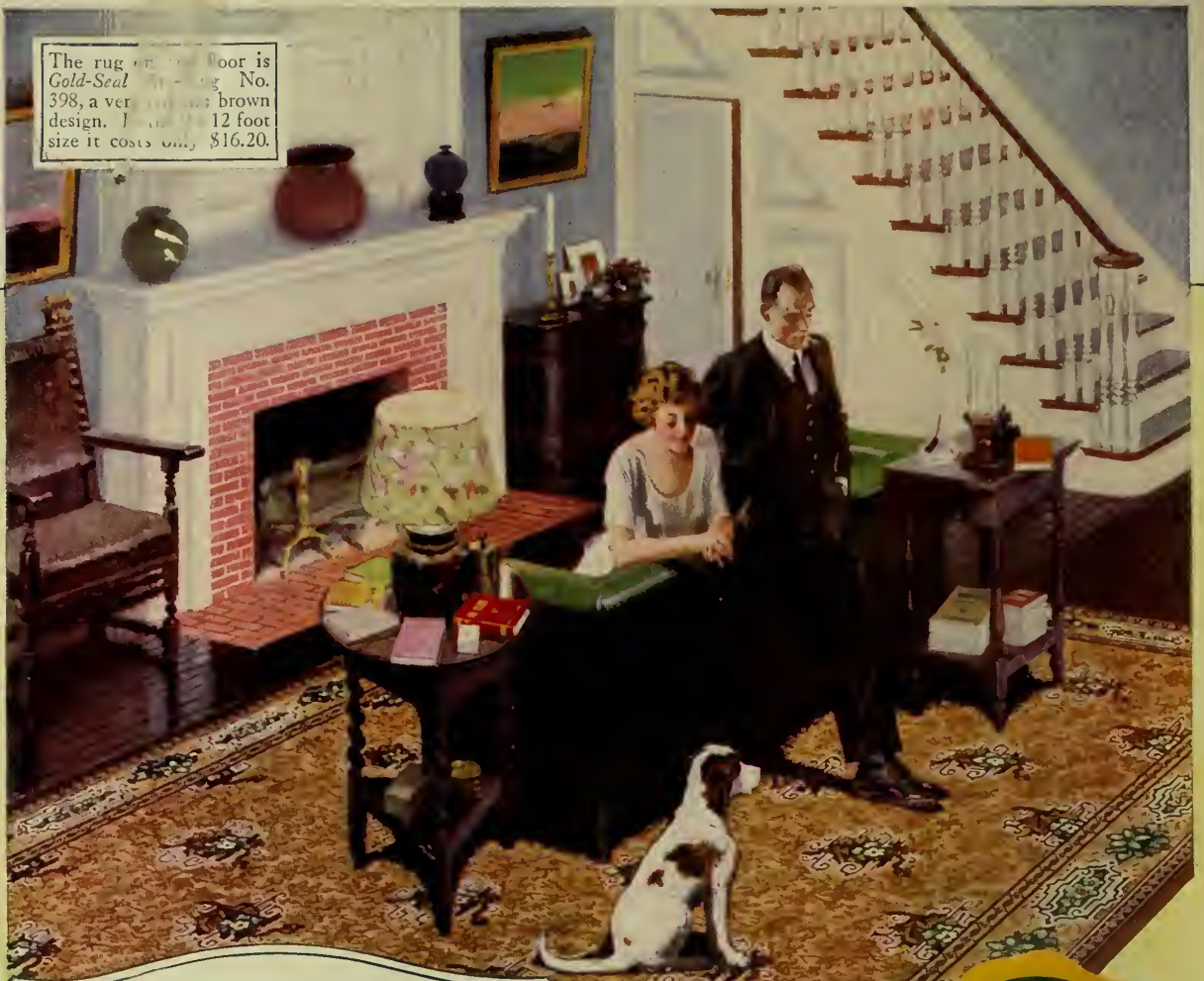
Haskell Collins

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Glad Beaumont, Georgy Kibbe Turner

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Samuel Hopkins Adams and others

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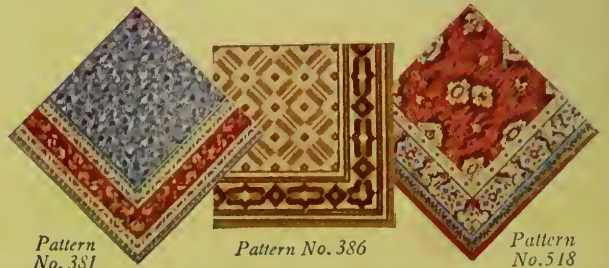
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A Yale graduate, who is a general manager, hires a Yale graduate as an assistant. Why? Not merely because the younger man is a Yale man, but because the general manager believes that *training will tell.*



From a drawing by J. Henry

IN Cincinnati the Board of Directors of a financial institution was considering several men for the position of Vice President and General Manager. The successful applicant—the man who now holds that coveted position—has written an account of his interview with the Board of Directors.

“I stated my experience,” he writes, “and added that I had completed the Modern Business Course of the Alexander Hamilton Institute.

“I then learned that several members of the Board were subscribers to the Institute. They evidently knew that the knowledge obtained from the Course and Service gives a man a thoro grasp of the controlling forces of business, and fits him to hold a responsible executive position. At any rate, I was selected . . .”

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This does not mean that every man who completes the Institute Course is “taken care of” in business. Business does not “take care of” anybody. It does mean, however, that with the knowledge and self-confidence that this training gives, you have an added asset—a

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PROBABLY few women realize how much their looks really matter to their husbands. If he sometimes hides silently behind his morning newspaper at breakfast, or forgets his wedding anniversary, a woman is apt to be deceived into thinking that he is no longer interested in her loveliness as he was during their courtship.

But, make no mistake, there are two times at least when you can be sure that he does notice your hair—if it is beautiful or if some condition appears which will eventually destroy its beauty.

If you are troubled with dandruff, the most common of scalp ailments; or if your hair is too dry, brittle and breaks off; or if it is oily, sticky and lifeless; take care. These are conditions which cause the hair to lose its attractiveness.

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Vol. XL, No. 5

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

MARCH
1923



WALLACE IRWIN

may always be depended upon to tell a good story in a distinctly Irwin manner. For instance, in

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he takes the same ingredients that have been used from the beginning of stories—a very rich man, a son of wealth and a "poor girl" and—but the result is something utterly unlike any story you've ever read before. Do not miss it in the next—the April—issue.

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Subscription price: \$3.00 a year in advance. Canadian postage 50c per year. Foreign postage \$1.00 per year.

Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publisher. IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe for THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally. Remittance must be made by Post Office or Express Money Order, by Registered Letter or by Postage Stamps of 2-cent denomination, and not by check or draft, because of exchange charges against the latter.

ADVERTISING FORMS close on the 14th of the second preceding month (May forms close March 14th). Advertising rates on application.

THE CONSOLIDATED MAGAZINES CORPORATION, Publisher, *The Red Book Magazine*, 36 S. State Street, Chicago, Ill.

CHARLES M. RICHTER
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Office of the Advertising Director, 33 West 42nd Street, New York
R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 80 Boylston Street, Boston. LONDON OFFICES, 6 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W. C.
Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879

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An Open Letter To Parents

Camping — Its Serious Aspects

By J. WILFORD ALLEN, M. D.

President, National Association of Directors of Girls' Camps

Do you realize that in considering a summer in camp for your daughter, you are planning not two months of just recreation and good times but adding definitely to her training for success in her future contact with life? The object of this letter is to direct the attention of parents to the serious importance of the training obtained in summer camps as it bears upon the development of the girl's personality and her future usefulness and happiness. There has been, perhaps, too much emphasis on the lighter side of camping, the fun side, so that the camp's more serious import has been lost sight of and parents have not realized the intrinsic value in the education of their daughters of a Summer in a well conducted camp for girls.

Do you know that the work of camp directors and councillors is now considered a profession like teaching and that the Camping Idea is so favorably believed in by our leading educators, that universities including Columbia and Boston University have instituted courses for training leaders in this field and that recently, Harvard University conferred the doctor's degree for a thesis on camping?

One of the outstanding aids to education in the present day is the unremitting care and sane training which the girl obtains in a Summer Camp, with a group of selected girls, under the care of an experienced Director and well-balanced college men and women, in the simple and inspiring environment of The Great Outdoors.

Just give this careful consideration—that much of a boy's and girl's education is gained *outside* of school; that *character is developed more through play than by study* and that in nine weeks of camping, a Director has the camper under his constant supervision more hours than the School teacher has in the entire school year. Food for thought? Yes indeed, for the parent who cares.

I could paint for you true word pictures of the joys of the Summer Camp; the hikes, the swimming, canoeing and water sports, the camping trips and outdoor cooking, the athletics, the riding, the Council Ring, the nature lore and the many lasting friendships made, all of them adding to the health, happiness and education of the camper, (and we want our children to have all these things, for they are essential) but beyond these may I point out the potent influences which the atmosphere, government and companionship of a well conducted camp is bound to exert on the formation of the character of every boy and girl in the camp. *I know for I've seen it over and over.* Timid and bashful boys and girls, quickly learn a greater measure of self-confidence; the backward soon develop initiative; the self-centered and selfish soon change by reason of the steady pressure of public opinion, exerted by the members of the camp.

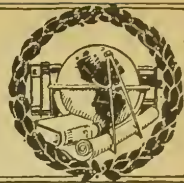
One of my Councillors after speaking of camp athletics and the general good times says "There is another side to camp life which is more fundamental and that is the side which is not made by the exertion of the body but by the needs of the mind—a gentleness, a 'home-making' feeling, kindness, interest in others' well being, a kindly service with and for others, and a consciousness of personal responsibility in and for the welfare of all, which constitutes spiritual force and power." This is the fundamental side of life at camp, and it should have special emphasis from every Director.

There is no other way that you can definitely add so much to the real education of your daughter in so short a time as you can in giving her a summer in a properly conducted camp.

J. Wilford Allen, M.D.



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Some time ago, an analysis of the relation of education to earning power—made by one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the country—demonstrated the fact that the average adult gets back in increased earnings the sum of thirty dollars for every hour spent in well directed study.

That certainly throws a new light on study habits, doesn't it? But read what follows.

This university trains men in their spare hours at home for specialized activities in the higher fields of business. Its resources of over seven and a half million dollars make possible the maintenance of staffs comprising many of the leading business specialists in the country.

It conducts its training by the LaSalle Problem Method—distinctive with this university—whereby the student gains not "book learning" but actual practice and experience, at every stage of his progress. He learns to do by *doing*. To all intents, from the moment he begins he is actually performing the work of the position he is training to fill.

Naturally you would expect the rewards to be higher for the man who trains this way than for the man who follows a less intensive—a less practical method.

The facts show that the gains *are* greater.

It is a matter of record—established by the facts in our files—files built out of the experience of the four hundred thousand men who have enrolled with LaSalle—that the time invested in the study of any highly specialized LaSalle course by the average member who *completes* that training, returns him in increased earnings not less than \$50 an hour.

Indeed, we have many reports showing that spare hours spent at home with LaSalle training have resulted in increased earnings which—when

apportioned over the ordinary period of a man's business activity—would show a return in excess of \$100 an hour.

Such reports are by no means unusual.

But it is safe for *any* man to expect—and with every prospect of realization—that with diligence and sincerity he can make the time he devotes to acquiring LaSalle training yield him returns at the rate of \$50 for each hour so invested.

LaSalle has no magic formula—no marvelous cure-all.

All that it does—as witnessed by the progress-records of 400,000 men—is to provide an effective way to help men help themselves.—Which is all the right man *needs*.

But that, as we see it, is a mighty big, a vitally important task and we feel and realize the full necessity of living up to the tremendous obligation it carries—because it is our job as it is our privilege to serve one of the most sacred things in human life—ambition.

To the man who "doesn't care," LaSalle means nothing.

But to the man who is looking for "the way," this institution has a message.

J. Shepley
President
LaSalle Extension University

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The Secret of the Sampler

is in the background of eighty years—three generations of fine ideals in candymaking.

The success of the *Sampler* is due not only to the quality of the chocolates and confections inside, but to the happy choice of the ten kinds in the seventeen ounce package, called by courtesy a "pound."

It is the continent-covering candy, sold in all those selected stores (usually the best drug stores in every community), that are agents for the sale of Whitman's Chocolates.

The *Sampler* is a liberal education in quality-sweets. It points the way to equally individual and meritorious assortments, made, packed, sealed and guaranteed by Whitman's.

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WANDA HAWLEY
Film Star
Photograph by Sykes, Chicago



BELLE BENNETT
in "Lawful Larceny"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



REGINA QUINN
Film Star
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe, New York



GRACE MOORE
in "Up in the Clouds"
Photo by Edward Thayer Mouree, New York



ANN FORREST

Film Star

Photograph by Nickolas Muray, New York





BILLY DOVE

Film Star

Photo by Alfred Cheney Johnston, New York



The Same Old Truth

By ANGELO PATRI

Decoration by JOHN SCOTT WILLIAMS

"No, I don't put much stock in religion," said the old business man to the lawyer as they strolled to the first tee. "Haven't been inside a church since I was married."

"Nor I. Get along just as well without it. Can't swallow all the things the preacher says. Don't jibe with life."

"No. Not much use drilling rules into your head Sundays, only to find they don't hold on week days."

"Exactly. There goes Snathe. Glad we missed him. Seems to have difficulty counting his score."

"Perhaps he never learned to count beyond three when he was a kid. What you learn as a kid, sticks to you all through life, they say."

"Doesn't it? When I was a little fellow, my mother used to pound that into me. Play your game straight or quit, she'd say. She hated cheating. I'm a bit superstitious about it myself. Can't get by with it somehow."

"If I found myself playing with a chap who forgot a stroke or two, I'd be tempted to do the same thing, I'm afraid. I'd argue that it was a legitimate handicap, and all that. But as sure as I should do it once, I'd dub the next hole. Couldn't fail. I'd be afraid to do it a second time, because I know it would spoil my game. Superstitious."



"You know, I'm a bit superstitious like that myself," his friend replied. "In other ways! I know what you mean, all right. When I go down to the office in the morning, lots of times I'm not feeling just right. Awful grouch on, until about ten o'clock.

"Well sir, I want to tell you that if I say or do a mean thing to any of the boys in the office, or snap at the stenographer, something goes wrong straight off. Fact! Got so I don't dare to be mean. Pay for it every time. Guess everybody has *some* superstition."

They walked on together for a time, thoughtfully silent. Then the lawyer chuckled and said: "Just struck me. What we are calling 'superstition' is what our mothers used to call religion."

"Come to think of it, maybe it is," agreed the old business man.

Though we wander from the church edifice on Sunday mornings farther than we ought, we never get very far from what we learned from our mothers when we were little. They called it religion, and we call it "ethics" or "morality" or "good business" or even "superstition." But it is the same old truth, whatever name we give it.

For deep down in the heart of every one of us, is the love of cleanliness and decency and right living that we were started out with, and that soon or late rises to meet our need. We are not so godless—not so bereft of spiritual vision—as we sometimes think we are.





The Old School Gang

By GERALD BEAUMONT

Decoration by ANGUS MACDONALL

THERE are times at night when the low lamplight
Plays tricks with my tired eyes,
That I see once more through a distant door
The dreams that the day denies.
How the hot tears start, and my harrowed heart
Is pierced with a poignant pang,
As I backward gaze on my boyhood days,
And I dream of the old school gang!

There were Joe and me, and Stumpy and Lee
And Freddy and freckled Bill,
A feller named Dick that I wanted to lick—
I'm longin' to lick him still!
Oh, the pranks we played, and the plots we laid,
In our new-discovered slang!
And the time we smoked till we coughed and choked
In the cave of the old school gang.

In the cave at night where, pale with fright,
We planned under pirate sails,
That we'd drop our dead till the waves ran red—
For dead men tell no tales!
Yet the tales we told while our blood ran cold,
And the artless songs we sang!
And the bamboo poles by the fishin'-holes
Where I sat with the old school gang!
And the tryst I kept where the willows wept,
And I sued for my sweetheart's kiss;
But me and my pup had to give her up
'Cause the fellers called me "Sis!"
Ah, lads that I knew! You were tried and true,
And I mind how your glad cries rang;
But your lips are dumb, and the words wont come—
For gone is the old school gang!

Could my eyes behold, and my arms enfold
Those childhood chums of mine,
I would give my all, and I'd call it small,
As pay for such joy divine;
But those chums have flown; so I muse alone
Where Mem'ry's portraits hang;
And I'd sell my soul if my lips could roll
A call to the old school gang!

Nature's Own Color

The soft, rich, green color of Palmolive Soap is the natural color of the rich oils from which it is blended.

Nature put the color in these oils, just as she does in grass and foliage.

It might as well be said that flowers, trees and grass are artificially colored as to say it of the green of Palmolive.

Palm and Olive oils not only impart their color to Palmolive Soap—they also give it their own soothing mildness. The rich, creamy Palmolive lather is lotion-like in its effect on the skin. It is ideal facial soap.



The Springtime of Life

—How to keep that youthful bloom throughout the years

**Palm and Olive Oils—
nothing else—give
nature's green color
to Palmolive Soap.**

THE joyous time—the time of youth and blooming, when every young girl should charm the world with her flower-like freshness.

This greatest of all attractions is girlhood's rightful heritage as well as the most admired beauty of later years. The pretty girl will mature into the beautiful woman if she keeps that school-girl complexion.

Don't let it fade

All too often this alluring school-girl complexion is allowed to vanish with school-girl days. Yet simple treatment following school-days will retain it as the greatest attraction of mature years.

Be careful how you cleanse your skin—don't let harsh methods rob it of its natural delicate texture. Or, just as dangerous to complexion health, don't omit the daily washing with soap and water for fear that its action is too harsh.

Instead, choose the facial soap which you know is so mild and soothing that it keeps the most sensitive skin smooth and soft.

This soap is Palmolive, as millions of women already know. It is blended from Palm and Olive oils, known since the days of ancient Egypt as nature's beautifying cleansers.

These two rare oriental oils, by whose aid Cleopatra kept her youth, impart their mildness to the smooth creamy lather of Palmolive. It cleanses thoroughly, removing every trace of the oil, dirt and perspiration which otherwise clogs the skin pores. It leaves your skin soft and glowing with a delightful sensation of freshness.

Used regularly, every day, Palmolive keeps your complexion fine of texture and free from blackheads and blotches. Yet it never robs the skin of its own beautifying oil provided by nature to keep it smooth.

Apply a touch of cold cream after gently drying your face with a soft fine towel. Normally oily skins won't need it except possibly when the weather is very cold.

A low-priced luxury

If you imagine that Palmolive, because of its superfine qualities, must be very expensive, you are wrong. While in Cleopatra's days Palm and Olive oil was the luxury of the rich, modern manufacturing methods combined with world-wide popularity makes Palmolive a low-priced soap.

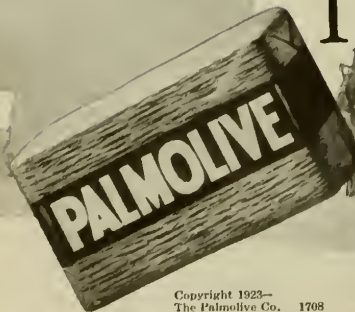
We import these rare oils in enormous quantities and the Palmolive factories work day and night to supply the demand. Palmolive is only 10c a cake—a price which puts it within the reach of all for general toilet use.

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THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY, Milwaukee, U. S. A.

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A Common-sense Editorial by Bruce Barton

There Are No Little Things

A BUSINESS friend told me this story:

"At the hotel where I spent my vacation there was a young chap who complained of insomnia," he said. "He looked so well that the rest of us thought his trouble must be largely imaginary. We ridiculed him mildly.

"He and I happened to ride back to New York on the same train. He made some attempt at conversation, but I was preoccupied and paid little attention. Two days later I picked up the newspaper and saw his name in the headlines. He had committed suicide."

My friend paused, and his voice became very earnest.

"I can't help feeling that if I had taken the trouble to be just a little more gracious to that chap, I might have helped him over the hill," he said. "It makes you gasp a bit, doesn't it, when you stop to think how unconsciously we influence the lives of other people, just by little things."

Years ago in Springfield, Mass., a simple mechanic stepped up to a drunken man, tapped him on the shoulder and spoke a few words. I do not know the name of the mechanic, but the drunken man became an orator of international reputation and left a great impress on his generation. His name

was John B. Gough; the change in his life started from that moment.

Theodore Cuyler, in relating the incident, remarked: "When I heard the thunders of applause that greeted Gough's oratory, I said: 'That is but the echo of the tapping of that mechanic's friendly hand upon the drunkard's shoulder.'"

A poor, unlettered boy named John Burns dropped a penny on the newsstand and picked up a cheap paper-bound copy of Voltaire's "Life of Charles the Twelfth."

Years later he testified that the book had given his life a wholly new impulse. At the time when he made that confession, he was a member of Parliament and a power in English public life.

There is a homely old hymn which assures us that "Kind words can never die."

The hymn is not so much sung in these days; it has become rather the habit to sneer at such old-fashioned tunes, and the philosophy which they represent. But sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things—a chance word, or a tap on the shoulder, or a penny dropped on the newsstand—I am tempted to think that *nothing* dies—
—and that there are no little things.

Skin-beauty—the result of simple cleansing

A normal complexion has both beauty and remarkable powers of resistance—if properly cared for.

But *proper* care is a *simple* matter.

Don't rely upon soap for any purely medical purpose. Use soap to keep the skin *clean*—to clean is

soap's only duty, and cleanliness is the only desirable result of its use.

In supplying Ivory Soap for the gentle cleansing of the skin, we are supported, not only by medical authority, but by the results of 44 years of experience in the manufacture of this pure, mild soap, which has

been the *safe* beauty soap of millions of women.

Ivory Soap has but one purpose—to *cleanse safely*. It promises no magic except the magic of healthful, refreshing cleanliness. And cost what it may, soap can provide nothing more desirable.

PROCTER & GAMBLE

IVORY SOAP

99 44/100 % PURE IT FLOATS



In his wanderings with Ulysses, Bobby spied a cake of Ivory Soap just under the last paragraph of the text above. Knowing that his mother used Ivory for everything, he got a ladder. Ulysses, meanwhile, took a notion to scratch his back on the ladder, with the painful result pictured here.

We can't wait to see how Bobby gets down, but he's pretty sure to keep the Ivory Soap.



"You wouldn't have used that soap on your face, would you?" Mrs. Jollyco is asking.

Now, what a question! Mrs. Jollyco knows very well that Mrs. Folderol would not use on her face a soap that has ruined that beautiful silk blouse of hers.

But wait!—Perhaps Mrs. Jollyco has a purpose!

"Of course not!" replies Mrs. F., indignantly. "It's *much* too strong for that!"

"Well," declares Mrs. Jollyco, "silks as delicate as that always seem to me as sensitive to soap as my skin. I wouldn't think of using anything but Ivory Flakes for a blouse like that, my dear, because I've used Ivory on my face for years, and Ivory Flakes is just Ivory Soap—*flaked*."

We said awhile ago that Mr. Jollyco intended to reason with his daughter, Sally, about what he calls her "comic opera soap"—that gorgeous soap she insists upon using. (Our picture shows him *doing* it!)

"Daddy, darling," says Sally, "please don't be mad with me! I must be beautiful!"

"Sally," Mr. Jollyco is going to say when he gets the chance, "I'm *not* mad with you—I just hoped that *my* girl would have more common-sense than to think that color and perfume could help *any* soap to make her beautiful. I had a sweetheart who was more beautiful—yes, even than *you*, Sally. She used Ivory Soap, because she knew it was *pure*. I still see her use Ivory every day, and she is still beautiful!"

How we wish Mrs. Jollyco could be eavesdropping!



THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

MARCH 1923. VOL. XL. NUMBER 5

KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN, *Editor*



The Pom and the Parrot

SHE awoke—with her stateroom windows open; and the whole place was full of the fragrance of orange blossoms. She jumped up and dressed—just threw herself into her clothes, and rushed out on the deck with Pompom, her darling little Pomeranian, under her arm. And it was all that she had ever dreamed.

She couldn't see Messina yet. They were stealing along—smooth and still and peaceful—the way a steamer does when it comes near the land. And the hills that wonderful gray green, and the blooming orange trees, and the white houses shining out in that first light from the sun against the eastern shore! And all against that wonderful morning sky, blue as the eyes of a waking baby! And everywhere the faint fragrance of those orange flowers! “We're going out to one of those places, where

By
**GEORGE
KIBBE
TURNER**

The astonishing adventure of a young American girl alone in Sicily, chronicled most fetchingly by the celebrated author of “White Shoulders,” “Moonlight” and numerous other memorable novels.

*Illustrated by
George Wright*

A most terrible expression came into his face. She thought she'd join the procession, but he moved between her and the others, and she had to stop. "This wont do, Pompom," she said under her breath.

those orange trees are, Pompom," she said, "—when Growley comes,—or my name isn't Spinks Beaufort!"

And the Pom looked up, warm and brown and sleepy—and yawned with its tiny mouth.

"And there's Messina," she said to him, seeing it now for the first time on the steep side hill—like a city on a drop-curtain in a theater.

"Oh! Isn't it wonderful—wonderful—wonderful!" she said—laughing aloud, for just the love of it; and then leaning over Pompom and tickling his little nose with her short henna curls, till she made him sneeze. Then she set him down on the deck, and he pranced around her, taking his feet up with funny quickness when they struck the cool, damp deck.

"I'm certainly going to do that," his mistress was saying to herself, watching the shore where the orange trees were, "—when Growley comes."

That had been her name for her father—Growley—when she was a little kid in the nursery. They had kept it going ever since.

And so she came into that heavenly soft bright place with the queer shops, and the weird old-fashioned carriages, and the horses with bells and scarlet on their harnesses; and they clattered on up to the hotel—Spinks Beaufort turning her head here and there, almost twisting it off, watching the bright skirts and scarves and shawls on the women, and the brigands of men in the doorways, and the wonderful colored things for sale—cloths and flowers and fruit and copper kettles, and even bright birds in cages.

"Stop!" she said finally, reaching over and pulling at the driver—that smiling pirate ahead of her on the high seat in front. "Stop here! I've just got to buy that parrot."

For it was the most wonderful thing she had ever seen—all green and red, and in a funny lovely shaped white wicker cage. And she'd always sworn she would have a parrot sometime.

So finally he stopped, and she showed him what she wanted, and they went over to the brown-faced woman in the black waist and red skirt and bought it. Snatched it! For she'd never seen anything so bright and wonderful, and the cage was so strange and old—like one from an old love-story out of Provence.

"I'm going to call you Saladin!" she said to the parrot, when she had him in her lap in the old victoria. For he sat up so straight and defiant and looked back at her so sort of proud and leathen. And Pompom, beside her on the seat under her left arm, barked, his nose out of joint already.

So she went on to the hotel, where the Americans go—where she was to meet her father; and there was a dispatch from him, saying he wouldn't be there from Rome for two days yet.

"All right, then! We're just going over ourselves," she said to Pompom. "Out to that orange-blossom country—till he comes!"

And she asked the clerk, who talked English perfectly, about where there was a place she could go, where those orange blossoms were, where it would be safe and all that!



For she had been accustomed all her life—since her mother died—to going anywhere she wanted, alone.

And he said, in that Italian way: "Safe—yes! Safe as the shrine of the Madonna!" But would she like it in that rough poor country hotel?

And she said yes—she would just adore it! And so that very afternoon she left nearly all her baggage there, and went out to this town—in one of those old carriages. She could have had an old motor, but she preferred the carriage. And so she rattled out over the cobblestones, and into the country—taking Pompom, of course, as she did everywhere. And of course the parrot Saladin too! For she couldn't leave him behind very well; and while it was a little awkward, still, she thought how perfectly wonderful he would look, hanging in a room in a country inn, in one of those strange gorgeous towns.

"He'll complain, probably," said Spinks Beaufort to Pompom, speaking of her father, "when he finds it out. But he wont mind when he hears what a gorgeous time we are having, will he?"

For she nearly always did just what she wanted, and told him about it afterward.



Then she offered the Pom one of those wonderful candied fruits she'd bought, and when he turned up his nose at it, gave it to Saladin—who was crazy for it.

And then she settled down and enjoyed herself—as she never thought she could in this world—taking it all in. It was blissful—simply blissful. She saw and smelled orange trees till she was saturated with the fragrance. And she saw the old olive trees, with their lovely green tops, like little gnarled apple trees all over the hillside. And then there were children turning cartwheels for a penny or whatever the little coin was. She had a regular procession of them—after she had thrown out money to one—coming turning cartwheels after her down the road.

And so she poked along and poked along in that old ark of a carriage, until it was almost evening, and the goats were coming home along the gray-white roads, and the people were sitting outside their doors eating. And finally they came rattling into this little town—with its houses of soft cream and gray and lemon-color and faint blue—wonderful soft pastel colors. And the weirdest smells you ever smelled, especially after the perfume of orange blossoms on the road! And there were already shadows

between the buildings and in the different colored alleyways when she finally came to the center of the town with cobblestones set around in circles and patterns in its little square. On one side, was the white church, and on the other that small hotel—*albergo*, they called it—that the hotel clerk in Messina had recommended to her. And then they stopped outside the door, where all the men sat around on the walk, drinking wine and talking.

Dark, swarthy little men, they were—with brown, leathery faces and glittering eyes, and red neckties or scarves, and some of them with little earrings, like the old-time brigands must have worn. And all of them had rough, coarse clothes, except one, who was dressed, she thought, almost like an American. And they all sat perfectly still and watched her, in a kind of sinister silence, while she went in, looking as dignified as she could, with Pompom under one arm and Saladin in his cage under the other—and the driver coming after her with her hand-baggage.

But just after she got out of the carriage and was starting in, the one man who was better dressed than the rest sprang up and bowed very low, and she thought at first he was going to speak. But she squelched him with a glance, and walked on in—and he

stood there with his hat over his heart in his right hand, and his left hand out, bowing to her like a picture on the theater-program. She wondered then who he was. He was so different from the rest. And as handsome as the villain in a movie, with a most wonderful white smile!

NOBODY else spoke or moved. They all sat staring with their glittering eyes, as if they'd never seen anything like her in their lives; and she went on with her Pom and her parrot, feeling terribly conspicuous, until she got inside the doorway, and they spoke again—she thought she heard some one say something like, "*Signorina Americana.*" And all at once they started chattering like excited birds.

"I wonder what he'll say," she said to Pompom, alluding to her father, after she had sent away the driver, and the woman in the hotel had gone down, and they were all alone in their room upstairs, "when he hears of this latest one!"

For she felt just a little bit shaky, now night was coming on, remembering all those still leathery faces, with their earrings and bright neck-scarves, and their rough clothes—like brigands, staring at her with their glittering eyes through the twilight. All strange and kind of sinister except that one man, who was so different! He was more polished—you could see that—and had more money. She thought probably he might be the wealthy man of the place—some local landowner or prince or noble, or whatever they have in such places.

"But what do we care," she said to Pompom, talking more and more and a little louder now, "for all of them? After all we've seen together!"

For of course they'd traveled everywhere, and had just come across from New York together, all alone, to meet her father—and go down the Mediterranean with him.

Yet just the same she had the woman bring up her supper to her room, and ate there, so as not to have to go down among those brigands again. And she had her bring up two or three more candles, for it was a dark room, anyway, and terribly gloomy with just the two candles they had at first. She had a wonderfully good plain supper, with the new candles on the little rough table the woman brought up—and Pompom in her lap, and Saladin, the new parrot, hanging from a nail she had found in a beam overhead.

"Just like Robinson Crusoe in his cave!" she said to Pompom. For the room was terribly low and dark.

THEN the woman came and took away the things, smiling and gesturing, but not able to speak a word of English. In fact, she heard no English spoken anywhere—which made her feel good and isolated! And when the woman left her and went out, she bent over her again, and kissed her hand—for she was terribly effusive! And when she did that, it seemed for a minute as if she was looking at the American girl's rings. For Spinks Beaufort had wonderful rings—diamonds and some splendid pearls—everything that had been her mother's, and a lot more that her father had bought her for herself. She was crazy about rings.

"I don't suppose it's anything, to you!" she said to Pompom when the woman had gone and left them alone, in that low room with the big beams overhead, and the dark rough furniture, and those ghastly pictures there on the walls, in the candle-light! And the sound of the brigands chattering and singing and shouting underneath!

"I wonder if we were silly, tackling this?" she said to Pompom, looking around. For the room seemed more and more creepy to her, in a way—lonely and dark, with dark furniture and deep, deep windows in the stone walls, like the windows in a dungeon. And on the bare wall those terribly bright-colored pictures of pain and suffering, shining in the candle-light right opposite the foot of the bed. And the bed had a bright red spread on it, and there were red curtains in the windows.

"My, what a lot of red there is in this room!" she said, looking away from the picture of a torn and wounded heart. "But we don't care, do we, Pompom? They can't scare us—can they, after all the places we've been together?" she said to the Pom, hugging him. And he looked up a little quick and restless, for he didn't care, either, for those men talking and making all that noise underneath.

And then she got up and tried to talk to Saladin, the parrot. But he sat and sulked and wouldn't be sociable at all. He was no company whatever—not like Pompom—probably, she thought, because he couldn't talk English. So she gave up finally, and let him sulk and went over with Pompom, and stood at one side of

the deep window over the street, behind the red curtain, and peered down at the brigands on the sidewalk around their little tables, playing cards and drinking—and talking, talking, talking! They chattered more than talked, really. They creaked and squealed and chattered, exactly like a flock of blackbirds.

Now and then they seemed to get loud and quarrelsome; and while she watched, two of them jumped up from a table and stood opposite each other, and chattered more shrilly. And she caught her breath, for she saw them both flash out great knives—and stand crouching. One was a little man and the other a taller one with a strange wide mouth, who looked as if he were always laughing.

And then quick as a flash the man that had bowed to her—this man who seemed so superior to all the rest—came over and spoke to them sharply, and they sat right down again—as if he were some person of consequence.

She could see them and him quite clearly. They were underneath some sort of a plain common kerosene lamp that shone down on them from a kind of iron bracket on the front of the house. She could see this leader, or whatever he was, very plainly—with his clothes so much better than the others, and his manner so assured and confident. She noticed that he paid no attention to the one man of the two he had separated, who seemed to be angry and muttering about his silencing them—the man with the strange mouth.

She wondered still more just what this good-looking one was, and whether he was really any kind of a noble or local potentate or anything. And as she watched him from behind the red curtain, she saw him go back to where he started from and begin to talk again. And now she saw to whom he was talking. It was the woman who had come up into her room—the woman of the hotel. She wondered then if they could be talking about her—and maybe her rings—which she felt sure the woman had stared at when she was leaving. Now and then they seemed to look in her general direction. Then she was sure of it—she certainly saw them look directly up from below at the window, and the woman point; and she shrank back—for though she was behind the curtain and the candle-light was almost nothing, she didn't want them to catch her watching them. Besides, the Pom was getting a little nervous and shivery in the strange place.

"Nonsense, Pompom," she said, talking as much to steady herself as him. "Nonsense! Even if they were talking about us, it wouldn't be anything wrong. He's got a nice, kind, aristocratic face. He wouldn't steal our rings—or anything like that! If anything happened, he'd be the first one who'd help us. I know it—just from his looks."

And she went back then into the room, and looked all around under everything. For it seemed terribly spooky now, in the candle-light—all that red, and the dark furniture. And she went to the door and tried it. And the lock just barely caught, and that was all. She could see it with the candle.

"I don't like that!" she said out loud. "Anybody could give that just one push and come right in."

But she couldn't say anything much—that would make things worse, if anything. If there was any danger—to tell them that you suspected them! Even if you could make them understand you by signs!

So finally she put two chairs against the door, and got ready and went to bed—wearing all her rings, of course. And the last thing she saw was that terrible bleeding heart when she blew out the last candle.

Then she climbed into bed, between those lovely coarse cool linen sheets, and lay there with Pompom under her left arm, seeing the dark curtains against the blue, blue sky outside, blow in with a little soft floppy noise, and back again—and smelling the night-smells from outside—anything but orange blossoms! And listening to those brigands at the tables underneath, chattering and singing and threatening to murder one another, probably!

"I wonder if we were crazy," she whispered to the Pom, "this time! I wonder if there is any danger. I don't believe so, do you?" she said, getting sleepy in spite of herself, for she'd had quite an active day.

And she had scarcely said it before she gave a little sigh and was fast asleep—and the Pom asleep beside her.

IT was hardly a minute—or so it seemed—before she woke up, with a jump—with Pompom whimpering and licking her face. It wasn't quite dark, and it wasn't quite light. And there was this terrible, terrible groaning—like nothing she had ever heard. And then, just after that, and with it, the shrieks of women, a



"Stop! Stop!" she was screaming. "Or I'll kill you!" She prayed and—fired!

lot of women, down underneath her—all over! And she sat straight up in bed, staring, for she thought she must still be asleep!

She thought so still more now; for staring ahead, she saw the bare wall, where there was a crack in it, open and shut as if it were making faces at her. And then the picture of the red heart with the knife-wound swung around and turned and went down bang on the floor. And the willow cage with Saladin in it started swinging like a censer, with Saladin screaming. And the black sort of bureau started sliding out along the floor. And then she knew what that terrible groaning was. It was the house itself grinding and writhing and stretching.

Then all at once there were hurrying steps upon the stairs and a banging on the door, and some one cried:

"Fretta—fretta! Corri—corri!"

And she asked "What?" not yet quite sure she was not crazy. And the voice called back again—the voice of the fat woman of the hotel that she had seen the night before:

"Corri—corri! Per la Madonna! Terremuoto! Terremuoto!"

Spinks Beaufort just leaped to her feet. She had her negligee there all ready for use if anything happened in the night—the loveliest thing, ivory satin, with a great gold dragon with its mouth open, and a Nile green lining. She had got it at Atlantic City, where she was when her father had telegraphed her to get ready for the steamer-trip. And she slipped on those little red slippers she'd bought at Algiers when they touched there. And then she gathered up Pompom in one arm and Saladin in the other, and just airplaned down the stairs into the square.

For she knew now what it was they (*Continued on page 142*)



Red with shame, I could only stammer: "I'm sorry, Mrs. Cannon." "Sorry," she repeated. "I can't pay my rent with sorrow."

This strange episode, wherein hunger converts a high-minded gentleman into a robber of thieves, is the first of a remarkable series by the noted author of "Ransom," "The Day of Faith" and "Lot."

*Illustrated by
Robert W. Stewart*

Legerdemain

By ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE

HAVE you ever been hungry? Oh, I do not mean the lusty appetite that exercise brings, nor do I mean the faint sensation of discomfort that comes when dinner is delayed. I mean *hungry!* Not for an hour, not for a day, not for a week; but for a month, two months, three months! I mean a hunger that is a slow starvation, that is not content to melt the flesh and shrink the muscles, but works a fatal alchemy upon the heart and mind.

Perhaps you do not believe in such an alchemy. Nevertheless you will concede that the mind possesses great dominion over the body. And mistreated slaves overturn their harsh masters. Why should not the body, then, mistreated, destroy the mind that, ruling, has made no success of its reign? I say that it can and does. I say that no famished man will observe, after he has conquered fear, the laws that men with full stomachs have enacted.

And if you do not agree with me, starve yourself for months and learn what conscience you have left.

Conscience, and the words it conjured up before my mind! Honor, fidelity, duty! Well, I had won honor on a certain bloody meadow between two hills in France. Fidelity? For thirty years I had held the faith implanted in me in childhood. Duty? Well, in my pocket was a paper proving that I had been honorably discharged from the army of—does it matter which army? Does it matter where I was born, who were my parents, what had been, before the war, my station in life, my education?

Let it be enough that I called myself a gentleman, that I still

call myself a gentleman, and that scores, even hundreds, of your so-called best people, term me such. But I was a very hungry gentleman that night, not so long ago, when I returned to the shabby, even filthy lodging-house on Thompson Street, that I called home.

My landlady was seated on a chair in the ill-smelling hall. She met my entrance with a frown. Even had I been the kind that likes to shirk an issue, I could not have avoided this one. For she rose from the rocking-chair at the rear of the hall. For a moment she would remove her watchful eye from the brood of half-grown children who played in the kitchen. Sorry as I was for myself, I was sorrier for her. Life had been harsh to me, but I had had my moments.

It was hard to believe that she had had hers. Looking at her, as she shuffled her carpet-slipped feet over the torn and stained oilcloth of the hall, one found it hard to believe that she had ever had youth, beauty and happiness. One seemed to know that she had stepped from girlhood into middle age, and that the step had not been the bounding stride of confidence, but a frightened, unplanned leap compelled by fate.

Even the flesh that shook upon her as she waddled toward me was not the firm fat of the well-fed, but the gross flesh of those who live indoors, who work too hard, and who replenish their wasted tissues with food of the wrong nutrition value. Perhaps, too, she had some malady; I know that her ankles were swollen

hideously. But at the moment, weak with hunger, I attributed everything unpleasant to the lack of food.

Without a word she held out her hand to me. I could feel myself coloring, and marveled that there was enough red blood in my anemic system to furnish my cheeks with a blush.

There is no humiliation more painful to a gentleman than his inability to pay his debts to persons dependent for their livelihood upon his financial integrity. Red with shame, I could only stammer: "I'm sorry, Mrs. Gannon."

I suppose that years before poverty and worry and disease had left their indelible marks upon her body and character, her mouth may have been pleasant, even inviting. It must have been kissable, for although I had never seen Mr. Gannon, and vaguely understood that he had vanished from my landlady's ken a few years ago, the presence of so many young Gannons argued the bestowal of caresses upon my landlady's lips.

But now her mouth was thin and sharp, in violent contrast to the overhanging cheeks and the double chin. Years of contact with impecunious lodgers had made a sneer of what might once have been a smile.

"Sorry?" she repeated, and her shrill voice cut my very soul. "I can't pay my rent with sorrow. Not even with my own sorrow, much less a secondhand sorrow that I get from you." Her own witticism amused her, but I could see that it did not soften her. She still held out her hand.

From the room at the end of the hall one of the brood saw me. He raced toward us, stopping breathlessly.

"Make a penny disappear, Mr. Ainsley!" he cried.

"Let him make a dollar appear," suggested his mother. "If he had a penny, I'd make it disappear into my pocket," she added.

"Aint you got a penny, Mr. Ainsley?" asked the child.

I suppose that my shame appealed to Mrs. Gannon. Anyway, she pushed the child away, harshly ordering him to go back to the kitchen. But pity for my humiliation could not make her forget her own needs.

"The rent of your room was due yesterday, Mr. Ainsley," she said. "I'm always willing to give anyone a fair chance, but with plenty of people waiting for rooms, people as is able to pay for them, you can't expect me to let you have the room free."

She told the simple truth. Even this grimy house had become attractive to me, because it afforded me shelter from the elements, because, for all its degradation, it was better than the hard benches of the park. Mrs. Gannon would have no difficulty in letting the room which I occupied, the rent of which was only a dollar a week, and yet a rental beyond my power to pay.

"Well, what you got to say?" she demanded. "It's a wonder to me that a good big strong man like you wouldn't get some kind of a job if you wanted to."

I could not debate the question with her. How make her understand that a wound, followed by illness, and the latter succeeded by eighteen months of malnutrition culminating in what promised to be actual starvation, unfitted a man for manual labor? Oh, I could work like a giant for ten minutes, but after that brief time I became as weak as a newborn kitten. But these were matters that pride kept me from divulging to Mrs. Gannon. Had pride

"Wait, son," he commanded. "You want to be careful. You might kill yourself overeating. Come along with me and I'll fix you up."



not done so, her own lack of interest would have kept me silent. She had troubles of her own; mine did not concern her.

"Well, there aint nothing more for me to say. If you can't pay me, you'll have to go. That's all there is to that." She put her hands on her hips and stared at me.

I had never in all my life done a thing which the world calls dishonorable. I should have been able to look anyone in the eye. The consciousness of virtue should have sustained my glance. Instead, it fell before her truculent glare. Then I made up my mind.

"All right, Mrs. Gannon; I'll pay you tonight," I told her.

"It's tonight now," she reminded me suspiciously.

"I mean in an hour," I explained.

She eyed me unbelievably. Then, reluctantly, she said: "Don't think you can put anything over on me. I get my dollar in advance, like it's due, or out you go."

I nodded to her apologetically, humbly. She pursed her lips, started to say something, changed her mind and let her words become an indistinguishable murmur, turned and waddled down the hall.

I mounted the stairs. I say mounted, but I mean that I climbed them by the most desperate effort. Silver zig-zag lines appeared and vanished before my eyes; tiny points of light grew into great molten moons and then faded suddenly into darkness.

Nausea attacked me, and I conquered it only by a miracle of effort.

At last I reached my room on the top floor. It was hardly more than a cupboard, and the bed on which I had slept for the last several weeks was narrow, hard and unclean. There was no window: a skylight gave what light and ventilation there were. There was no chair in the room, nor any carpet. The walls had once been papered, but now there remained

only a few strips; grimy, cracked plaster, met the eye on every side.

Yet even this refuge was to be denied me unless I found means wherewith to meet the debt that living in these quarters incurred. I had come to this room, stifling my contempt with difficulty. Now it was as desirable as an apartment in a palace.

Dizzily I clutched at the wall and worked my way around to the bed and sat down upon it. I was shaking and perspiring. It was bad enough to be hungry, but to be homeless also, was

endurable. Well, I would do the thing that I had sworn never to do: I would pawn the miniature, painted upon ivory, of my mother. For the oath that I had made to myself, as my other possessions passed into the hands of the pawnbroker, that I would die before I parted with the last reminder of different days, was no longer binding. My duty to Mrs. Gannon was paramount.

I had a shabby, worn-out suitcase in the room. I had thought when I came here that I owned the irreducible minimum of clothing possible to cover one's nakedness; but I had seen vanish, one by one, the articles of clothing and of the toilet that I had thought indispensable, not to luxury but to life. Now, save for a shirt, an extra pair of socks and a collar or two, the suitcase was empty—save, of course, for the ivory miniature to which I have referred.

MY dizziness passed after a moment, and I opened the case and took out the miniature. I had no idea what a pawnbroker would consider the thing worth, but I knew that it was worth millions to me; for when I should part with it, I would also part with hope.

Looking at it, my eyes blurred, not with the tears of weakness, but with the tears of grief. I seemed to see my whole life pass before me, even as they say it passes before the eyes of a drowning man. Well, I was a drowning man, sinking in the waters of failure and despair.

I saw myself as a child, winning my mother's smile by some playful prank. I saw myself at a fashionable prep' school, at college, in Paris playing the part of a wealthy young dilettante. I could neither paint nor write nor compose, but I flattered myself that I had a cultured taste for all of these. Then I saw myself reduced to sudden poverty by the failure of a trust company to which the care of the estate left me by my father had been confided. I remembered the blank bewilderment that had overcome me as I faced poverty, a bewilderment soon succeeded by confidence in my own latent abilities.

I saw myself, before I had opportunity to prove those undeveloped gifts, entering the French hospital service at the outbreak of the great war. I saw myself, a little later, transferring to the army, which later decorated me for valor. And then I saw the months that followed the war. Wounded in the last battle before the Armistice, I was discharged, as cured, six months later. Illness developed, and the last of my father's estate went to pay my hospital bills.

I saw myself seeking work. I remembered the sudden horror that swept over me when I discovered that I was incompetent. I was a dilettante and the world refuses to pay the amateur. I knew no trade, no profession. The only thing that I could do better than most people was the performance of certain tricks in sleight-of-hand. That was because few people practiced parlor magic. Even the clumsiest of professional magicians was far ahead of me in deftness and in variety.

I had in me a streak of stubbornness, that I called pride, that forbade me to trade upon my father's friendships. Like all youths who have been brought up with the idea that there will always be enough money available for their wants, I was conceited. I thought that success was an easy matter.

I will not recount all the visions that passed before me as I looked at the miniature. Suffice it, that with times hard, I got no work. And when finally I had swallowed my pride and was willing to work as a common manual laborer, illness and privation had sapped my strength. I had moved from the best hotel in New York to as shabby a rooming-house as the city held. And now my landlady threatened me with eviction.

WELL, I could at least assure myself another week of shelter. After that—I refused to contemplate what would follow after the proceeds of my proposed transaction with the pawnbroker were gone.

I had not eaten a mouthful for forty-eight hours. Before that I had eaten scantily, not more than once a day, for six months. As a sandwich man, as an errand man when I could get a job, as guardian of motorcars parked on the city streets, I had managed to pick up enough, added to the results of frequent trips to the pawnshop, to pay my small rental, and buy myself an occasional meal. But for the last two days I had earned nothing. And I was too proud to beg. Today I was starving.

I recognized that fact at last. Starvation! That, unless I yielded to the impulse of self-destruction, was my inevitable end. The battle was over, even though I might postpone surrender for a few hours longer. I, born and bred in luxury, educated in the best university in America, a connoisseur of the fine arts, would die in blackest poverty. And probably the only person to mourn my

passing would be little Peter Gannon, the landlady's son, whom I had frequently amused with tricks of legerdemain.

At least, though, I would die owing nothing. So I rose, putting the miniature in my pocket, and unsteadily descended the stairs to the street. I walked uptown to Washington Square, then crossed to Sixth Avenue.

The oily gentleman with hard black eyes, with whom I had had so many little transactions in the past, looked up as the bell on the door jangled at my entrance. It was an unflourishing establishment that he ran, and one of the reasons why I patronized him was that his shop was never thronged with customers. I never was compelled to meet curious eyes.

But this evening he was engaged. He leaned across the counter whispering to a client who also looked up at my arrival. He looked away again swiftly, but not before I had time to gain an impression of shrewd eyes, a rat-trap mouth, a diamond shirt-stud, a rich fur collar and a general atmosphere of money. I wondered vaguely why one so apparently prosperous should be dickering with a pawnbroker.

And as I waited for my friend Weinberg to finish with the other man and attend to me, I somehow seemed to sense that, whatever had been the subject of their conversation before my entrance, their talk now concerned me. The fur-collared gentleman glanced over his shoulder at me, not once but two or three times, and seemed to be putting questions to my friend the pawnbroker. It seemed to me, also, that Weinberg looked at me before answering these questions.

Then Weinberg's visitor, turning his collar up so that his flashy shirt-stud was hidden, nodded abruptly to the proprietor and walked out of the shop. His hard eyes searched my face as he passed, as though he was studying me. However, he did not pause, and I promptly forgot him under stress of my negotiations with Weinberg.

I had done too much business with the pawnbroker for him to believe that there was any remote chance of my redeeming the goods which I pledged with him. I had every reason to believe that he took advantage of my poverty; yet I was too proud to open negotiations elsewhere. It was bad enough that one pawnbroker should know my extremity. I would hide it from others.

I did not haggle. I asked for ten dollars; the ivory alone was worth more than that, I believed; the silver frame in which the portrait was set must also have been worth at least ten dollars. Intrinsically, the thing, as a work of art, was worth hundreds. Sentimentally, it was priceless. But the need of Mrs. Gannon was beyond anything else. I took the five dollars that Weinberg offered, tucked the bills and the ticket in my pocket, and went out.

THE midwinter air had grown chillier with the later hours. I shuddered as I stepped from the close atmosphere of the pawnshop upon the sidewalk.

I had promised Mrs. Gannon her money within an hour. I could keep my promise and still have time, before paying her, in which to satisfy my anguished stomach. As rapidly as I could, I walked up Sixth Avenue toward a mean little restaurant where I could dine cheaply.

I was as near to an animal as it is possible for man to be. My whole being was concentrated on the effort to conserve my energies so that I would not collapse before reaching the restaurant. So, when a man laid a hand on my shoulder, halting my feeble progress, I turned on him with a snarl. I was at the door of the place where I planned to satisfy my hunger, and a delay, even of a second, maddened me.

"Let go!" I cried.

I recognized my gentleman of the fur collar at once. He stepped slightly back, then smiled ingratiatingly.

"Take it easy, son," he said. "I want to talk to you."

I shook my head; the effort of speech was too much; I moved again toward the restaurant door. He stopped me once more.

"Wait, son," he commanded. "You want to be careful; you might kill yourself overeating. Come along with me, and I'll fix you up."

It was bad enough that Mrs. Gannon and the pawnbroker should know my abject poverty; it was shameful enough that I myself should know of my starvation; but it was worse that a man whom I had never seen, until twenty minutes ago, should accost me thus and venture impertinent solicitude. For no matter how kindly he may have meant it, I considered it an unwarranted intrusion into affairs that were strictly my own. Moreover, he had struck at more than my pride; he was interfering with the gratification



I don't think that ever in my life I had seen so much actual cash. "Understand those?" He pointed to the wad of bills.

of my appetite. As I have said, I had become animal-like. Reason had completely departed from me; I was governed by my belly, not by my mind. So, like any animal balked of his food, I struck at him.

Had I not known how weak privation had made me, I would have learned it then. For he avoided my blow with ease. Indeed, exhausted by my effort, I pitched forward and would have fallen to the ground had he not caught me. The next few minutes were blurred. I dimly saw that he signaled the driver of a closed motorcar. I felt myself being assisted into the machine; I made no effort to resist. In fact, I think that I must have fallen into a stupor, for the next thing that I remembered I found myself sitting in a huge armchair. Some one was holding a spoon to my lips, and I was drinking greedily of a hot soup.

A few spoonfuls must have revived me. I sat up, pushed the spoon away and reached for the bowl from which the fur-collared gentleman—he had doffed his overcoat now—was feeding me. He did not resist, and I lifted the bowl to my mouth. It revived me, yet merely sharpened my craving for solid food.

My benefactor—at the moment I considered him such—smiled.

There was neither mirth nor kindness possible to those thin lips, but there was a certain bleak friendliness.

"Feel better?" he asked.

He knew my condition and I did not pretend to hide it.

"I want more," I said.

He smiled again. "Wait a minute; let that soup get settled; then we'll see what you can do to a chop."

I tried to return his smile. "I'll do more things to it than you can guess," I told him.

He glanced over his shoulder at the opened door leading to the next room. He called a question, and a manservant, correctly dressed, appeared. He announced, without the slightest shade of expression, that dinner was served. His immobile countenance betrayed no trace that anything out of the usual had happened.

My host looked at me. "Can you make it?" he asked.

"Watch me," I replied.

I rose unsteadily and walked with him into the dining-room. The soup had helped me mentally as well as physically. My mind felt clarified; I was able to exercise a self-control that had been lacking in me. I did not heed his warning that I must eat sparingly.

But after his warning he tried to put me at my ease. I was surprised that the owner of such a face could possess so much tact. And as I ate, I tried to take stock of my host and his surroundings.

The man unquestionably was not a gentleman. His clothing was too garish, his jewelry too blatant. His speech, too, was coarse and sloven, and he used phrases that betokened an unfamiliarity with polite speech. His apartment, moreover, was furnished badly. The pictures on the walls clashed violently with the furnishings. I would have set him down immediately as a parvenu, possibly one of the recent species of profiteers, but for a certain furtiveness of manner. Moreover, I had first seen him in a pawnshop.

Why had he followed me? What was he? Well, I could wait for the answer. And so, forcing myself to be slow, to chew each morsel carefully, I waited for him to direct the conversation to a personal turn. As a matter of fact, there was no conversation, for I said practically nothing. He delivered a monologue, based for the most part on places he had visited, events, mostly of a sporting nature, which he had witnessed. I began to think that he was probably a gambler, perhaps a follower of the race-track.

Then, having decided that I had eaten all that it was well for me to take at this time, I followed his example and walked with him into the next room. I noted idly that he closed and locked the dining-room door.

"Smoke?" he asked.

Perhaps I had suffered almost as much through the abstinence from tobacco as through the lack of food. Certainly his question aroused memories of sufferings that had seemed unbearable. With the first dizzying

inhalation of the cigarette he gave me, I felt my own man once more. I had been the sport of circumstance, an inconsiderable bit of flotsam on the city's tide. Suddenly I felt master of my own destiny.

"Drink? Cocktail? Highball? Champagne?" he asked.

I shook my head. "Never touch it," I said. "And I thought in these days no one but millionaires had such a variety."

"Who said I aint a millionaire?" he demanded.

"I beg your pardon," said I, marveling at the queer vanity of him.

"It's all right," he said. "I suppose, having seen me talking to Weinberg, you thought I was busted."

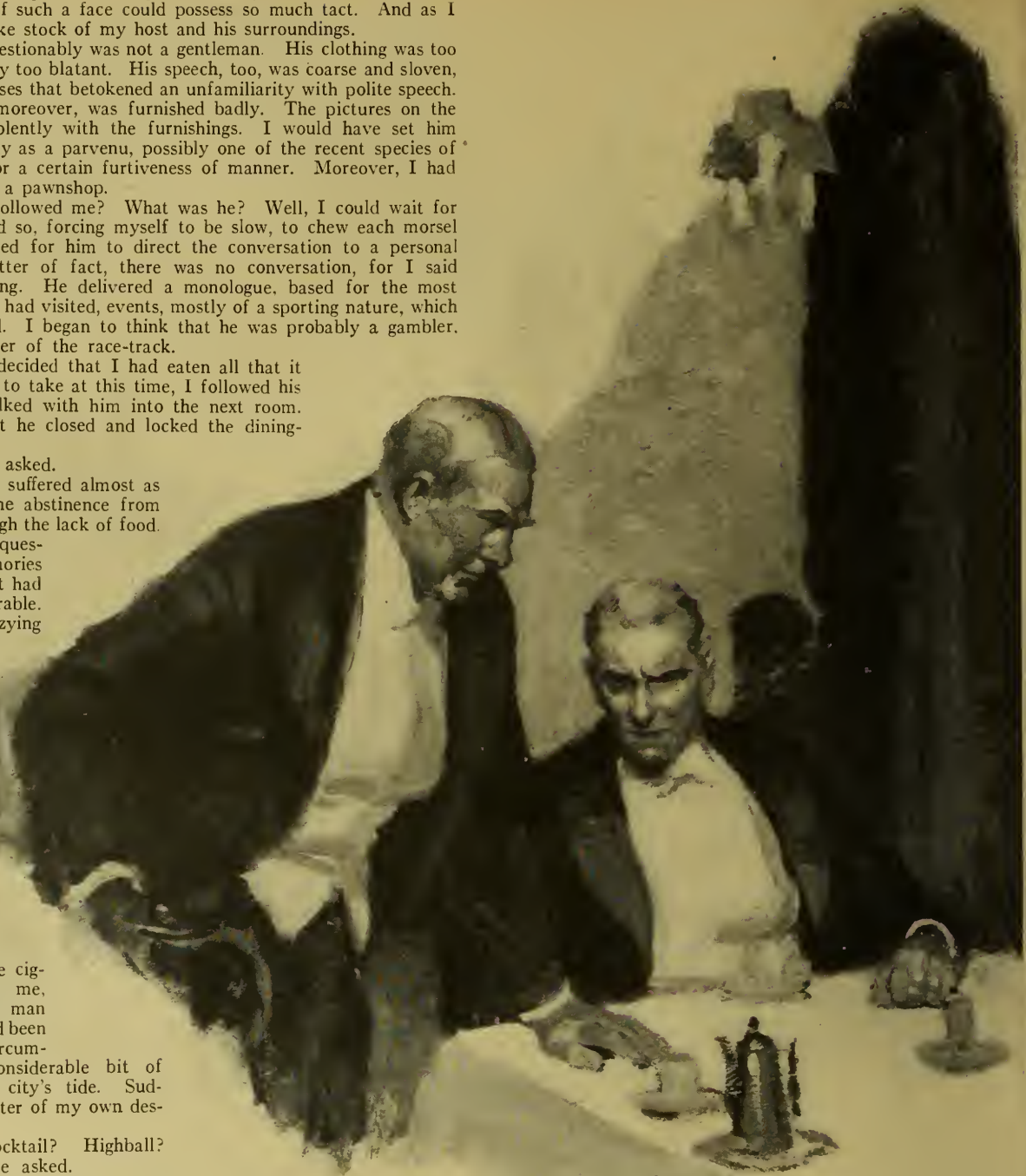
"I didn't think anything about it," I replied.

He laughed in a peculiarly harsh, joyless tone. "I guess you were beyond thinking about anything. I took a look at you, and says I to myself: 'This baby's about due for the morgue.'"

I felt myself color. "I do look pretty badly," I admitted. "And on top of what Weinberg had been telling you about me, it was easy to guess that I wasn't a millionaire."

His eyes, hard blue, narrowed. "You see things, don't you? Tumbled right off to Weinberg wising me up about you, eh? Well, I knew right off that you were no boob. I *thought* you were the lad I needed; now I know it. Like a little dough?"

I laughed. Odd, how a few ounces of food change the whole world. "What do you think?" I countered.



"I'd say that you were ready to do anything to make a stake," he said.

"Almost anything," I amended.

"Fussy?" he asked.

"I'm a gentleman," I told him. The words sounded grandiloquent, absurd, as soon as I uttered them.

"Yes, I suspected as much," said my host. "Starvation hurts a gentleman's insides just like it does an ordinary roughneck's, don't it? Are you proud?"

"Suppose you explain," I suggested.

"Make it snappy, eh? All right, I will. I take if you have no friends in particular. You wouldn't be starving if you had. Am I right?"

"Go on," I said.

"If you got a chance to make money, real money, important money, you'd jump at it. Am I right?"

"Go on some more. You interest me," I smiled.

"There's a lot of money lying around this town waiting for a good man to pick it up," he said.

"Show it to me," I suggested.

"Suppose I do? Have you got nerve enough to grab it?" he demanded.

I reached for another cigarette, then drew back my hand empty. The conversation had taken a turn that mystified me. I was not sure that I wished to place myself under further obligation to my host.

"I don't think I understand," I told him.

He put his hand into a pocket and withdrew it. I don't think that ever in my life I had seen so much actual cash as he placed on a table beside him. Certainly there must have been fifteen or twenty thousand-dollar bills, and as many more of lesser denominations ranging from fifty to five hundred.

"Understand those?" He pointed to the wad of bills.

I managed to lift my eyes from the money and looked at him.

"Go on," I said again.

"I'm in business," he said slowly. "It's a new business, and there's lots of money in it. People don't lose their thirsts simply because other people pass a law."

"Bootlegging?" I suggested.

"Bright boy," he said. "Other things, too."

"Such as—" I paused.

His eyes were almost hidden between their lids now; yet I knew that their pupils studied me intently.

"How far would you travel with a man who could toss you a bunch like that on the table?" He pointed at the wad of bills. "I need a man like you, a man that can look and talk and act like a gentleman. I got ideas, but I aint always able to put them over. You see, I know my own limits. It doesn't matter how much of a front I wear; it don't fool the people that I want to fool. And while I can pick the best guns in the business, most of them, all of them, have the same limits as myself."

I understood him. "My face is my fortune. Is that it?" I laughed.

He nodded. "You can make it your fortune. It hasn't made much of a one for you yet. Anyone can tell that you have been educated, and used to good things and all that, but where's it got you?"

"Here in your apartment, accepting charity," I replied.

He waved a disclaiming hand. "Not charity—business," he corrected me.

"Thank you," said I. "I'm glad you put it on a business basis. How much do you think the food I ate was worth?"

"What you mean?" he asked.

"I mean what I told you awhile ago: I'm a gentleman," I said, "—not a bootlegger or a crook."

His thin lips curled in a sneer. "I suppose it's better to be a gentleman and starve than a wise guy and get rich."

"I think so," I told him simply.

"There's still other ways of making money," he said. "For instance, you could run to the police, give them my address, and tell them what I've told you."

"You know that I won't," I replied. "Will this cover the cost of what I ate?"

I admit that it was ungracious, even to a confessed criminal. But after all, he had insulted me. I placed two dollars upon the table—how pitiful the amount was when laid beside his huge wad of bills—picked up my hat from the chair on which it had been dropped at my entrance, nodded to him and started for the door.

"Wait a minute," he said. "When you think this over, you'll change your mind. You'll want to find me. I won't be here. This place is rented for the night. Just (Continued on page 114)

"You dropped something on the floor," I said. I spoke to Daragon, but I looked squarely at the girl. If she had the quick wit of her kind, I could save her.

"A devil is driving me," confesses the protagonist of this extraordinary novel by the eminent author of "Mamselle Chérie." But after all, was it not some guardian angel that kept Mary's ambitious feet from many matrimonial pitfalls?

Fires of Ambition

Written and Illustrated by

GEORGE GIBBS

IT was as a child in the steerage, that Mary Ryan had come to America; and she had grown up in a poverty-stricken household; but she had a bountiful dower of beauty and of intelligence, and she was determined to win better—far better—things for herself. Somehow she managed a course in business college; and this enabled her to obtain a position as stenographer with the Hygrade Company, dealers in women's dresses.

Mary prospered with the Hygrade; she took advantage of the employees' discount to buy one of their dresses; and when the president Mr. Wittmaier and the head salesman Al Crawley saw how well she wore it, a chance for quicker achievement—at greater peril—was offered her. She was asked to help Crawley sell the Hygrade dresses by wearing them while accompanying him to certain exclusive shops that had hitherto declined to carry the Hygrade "line." She consented—and succeeded, remarkably. Both Lucille Dunois and "Madame Denise" (who was in reality a man named Alan Wetherby) agreed to put a dress in stock; and Mary's value to the Hygrade Company was now unquestioned.

Al Crawley asked Mary to dine with him in celebration. She thought of Joe Bass, whom she had known a long time and liked well, who was saving from the meager profits of a news-stand to put himself through law-school—and who was to have called for her at the Hygrade's closing time. Joe would have to wait and to forgive her. This was important to her future.

She dined with Crawley—her first visit to a fashionable restaurant. Afterward he took her to other novel experiences—a theater and a cabaret, at which he drank too much. And on the way home, she had some crude love-making to repulse.

It was this sort of thing, indeed, that drove her from the Hygrade. For presently she found herself expected to entertain out-of-town buyers, men who felt themselves privileged to make love to her. In desperation she went to Alan Wetherby, asked for a position—and got it.

Mary's duties with "Madame Denise" were manifold—book-keeper, dress model, saleswoman, and in all of them she was successful. And here, as at the Hygrade, she had need of her intelligence to avoid the difficulties her beauty provoked. Reginald Cheever, a wealthy young man of high social standing, came into the shop with Mrs. Despard, and was much taken with Mary. Thereafter he paid ardent court to her, and Mrs. Despard was not at all pleased—though her husband was. (*The story continues in detail.*)



MARY'S brief experience with men of the world—except that with her employer—had done little to give her confidence either in their integrity or in their friendship. Perhaps she had persisted through the summer in her hopes of Mr. Cheever because she liked him well enough to think that he might in the end prove different from other men, perhaps because she had enjoyed his society, and perhaps (by far the most plausible reason of all) because she had known that he was contributing liberally to the education in social usage which she needed. But the sprightly figure of Mrs. Despard always loomed unpleasantly in the background—for Alan Wetherby was not one to make unnecessary gossip. There was an assurance in Cheever's manner which indicated a long experience in the ways of women; and she knew that he was by no means an ideal companion for a girl of her age and condition, but it was this very air of experience which stimulated her interest in the game they played—a game of hazard and, accordingly, not without its attractions.

Mary left Cheever dangling all summer. The autumn came again. They sat at a table in a restaurant patronized by the wealthy and the correct. Mr. Cheever nodded to some acquaintances—Mr. and Mrs. Blacklock, he told her. Mary had never taken supper at this restaurant, had not meant to do so until she was able to afford the frock which she now wore. Alan Wetherby had chosen it for her himself at her request, and had sold it to her for the mere cost of labor and materials. It was a demi-toilet of greenish-blue, her color, subdued in tone and with a hat to match. Mr. Cheever reminded her that it was of the same hue as the one she had worn when he had first seen her almost a year ago, and told her that she took the "shine" off every other girl in the room, a remark which reminded her of one Mr. Al Crawley had made. But there was a difference now. It may be

"I do care for you, Joe," she said, "but I can't marry you. It isn't marriage that would be best for either of us. You've a career. I've made the venture out into the world."



said that in all things Mary lived up to the sophistication of her costume. The book of etiquette which she consulted frequently had done much; observation had done more. Forks and knives were no longer an enigma, and the upraised little finger of extreme delicacy she had long ago discarded as spurious. She was progressing—progressing in her knowledge of the things to do, and in her knowledge of the things *not* to do.

Tonight Mary was again troubled by certain qualms of conscience at accepting hospitalities not in her power to return. These qualms of conscience had been more acute when Mr. Cheever had tried to kiss her, and less acute again when he had told her how sorry he was. But while she knew that she would

miss the things that he was giving her, she was sure that her obligations had now assumed proportions which threatened her independence. This could not be. Perhaps it was in her mind to tell him so unpleasant a thing when she had dressed for the evening in her new and consummate evening frock—to make herself both lovely and intricate, to fascinate and frustrate in the same gesture.

Mr. Cheever was quite repaid by the mere fact of her presence for the obligations which bothered her. To him she had never seemed more bewitching, and he told her so.

"If you had lived in Salem, the women would have had you burned," he observed.

"The women! Why?"

"Because you would have bewitched all their husbands and lovers."

"It's easy for you to say pretty things."

"That's because you're so pretty to say them to."

"You say them so easily, Mr. Cheever, that it makes me think you've had a good deal of practice."

"Why do you still call me Mr. Cheever? Everybody else calls me Reggie. Why shouldn't you?"

"Maybe because everybody else calls you it."

"Don't you think you know me well enough now?"

"Maybe if I knew you well enough, I might still be calling you Mr. Cheever."

"You mean that you still have doubts of me?"

"I think I was born doubtful."

She was silent for a moment, fingering her coffee-cup as she thought of a way to put her case to him. It was typical of her to choose the most direct way.

"If you think as I do, Mr. Cheever, it may have struck you that your being seen with me so much may have caused unpleasant talk among your friends or mine."

Cheever frowned at his cigar-ash. At Mrs. Despard's he had had an unpleasant demonstration of that difficulty. But he laughed away the recollection.

"Nonsense!" he said cheerfully.

"No, it isn't nonsense," she replied quietly, as the thought became clearer in her mind. "Maybe you don't care what people are thinking. It doesn't make much difference to a man. But it does to me. A man of your position and money can't be taking dress models out to

supper without people thinking the worst of them—"

"Oh, I say—"

"Just let me finish, please. I've got to tell you. I ought to tell you—I owe it to you. It's a sort of confession I've got to make. I'm afraid you won't like it. I've been coming out with you, because—because—well, first because I knew that you were a gentleman, and I thought that I might trust you; and because I liked you. . . . Wait a moment. But it was mostly because you meant something more than all that to me, something I'd never had before. Opportunity—you were my chance to see and do the things I'd always wanted." He would have spoken but she motioned him to silence and went on with a rush. "I don't know what you've thought—perhaps you've thought something else. I don't want you to think anything else. I *do*

want you to be my friend—and—and—that's all," she finished breathlessly.

His face was a puzzle to her, brows frowning, lips twisted in a sort of smile. She was curious to see which expression would triumph. It was the frown.

"Hang it all, Mary," he protested, "you mustn't talk like that."

"I have to," she said firmly. "I ought to have told you before, Mr. Cheever—but I *have* liked it all so. Are you angry?"

"N—no," he said dubiously.

"You are. I was afraid you might be."

"I'm not," he insisted, "—just a little hurt that you should be able to say such things. Opportunity! Is that all I am?"

"No—not all that you are. You're Mr. Reginald Cheever."

She glanced across the room at the Blacklocks, who had been looking at her from time to time with deep interest. "Your friends," she said quietly, "like those people over there—don't you suppose I know what they think? They think I'm not their class." A hard little look came at her mouth—a look that he remembered later. "They have a perfect right to think anything they like about me. I know it's my fault. I've acknowledged it. But I don't want people thinking things that aren't true."

"I don't give a damn what they think," he growled.

"And doesn't that just show how little what they think of me matters to you?"

"Oh, hang it all! What's come over you?"

"Self-respect, maybe. I don't know what else."

SHE saw him studying her intently, but she met his gaze, and it was he who first turned his eyes away.

"Why should you think that people are talking about you?" he said. "Just forget it, Mary. Wont you? What's the use?"

She was conscious of him studying her again while he spoke. His face wore the quizzical expression of one seeking out a motive. But he wasn't quite clever enough to realize that Mary hadn't any. She meant precisely what she said. She thought it necessary to make her meaning more clear.

"I can't be going out with you any more," she went on firmly, "to places like this at all. You've done too much for me already."

"I wont listen to that," he said with a laugh. "What have I done that I haven't done with a dozen others—the theater, dinner, supper? It's not unusual, you know. I'd like to do a good deal more for you."

She was silent, and he wondered whether he hadn't hit the proper key. "It gives me pleasure to see you have a good time," he went on quickly. "You enjoy things so much. You seem to belong to the things I've given you. You ought always to have had them. I wish I could make it possible for you to have pretty things to wear so that you wouldn't have to deny yourself other things to get them. I've wanted to help. I want to help now, but I haven't dared suggest—"

"What?" asked Mary.

"To help you get started, for instance, in a business of your own," he said after a moment.

"What business?"

"A shop like Denise. You could run it like a breeze."

She glanced at him swiftly. "And where would you come in?" she asked.

It was the same sort of question she had once shot at Mr. Al Crawley—an attack rather than a defense, an accusation rather than a question.

"Me? Where would I come in?" He laughed easily. "Oh, I'd just be your good angel, you know—your backer—silent partner."

She regarded him steadily. Was he joking? In any event she knew that what he suggested was impossible. The inference was obvious—a partnership which implied further obligations. Better take it as a joke.

"You've already been angel enough," she said lightly. "I've been trying to tell you so all evening. Come!" She gathered up her gloves and handkerchief. "You don't have to work in the morning. I do."

"Not yet, please. There's something I want to say. I'm not going to let you give me the cold shoulder. It isn't fair to me. You do like me a little, don't you?"

"Yes. But I can't owe you so much. I can't. Don't you see?"

"No, I don't; I don't see."

Mary's motion of pushing back her chair seemed to arouse him. He laughed and followed her to the door.

"If you think I'm going to give you up as easily as this," he whispered as he helped her into her modest evening wrap, "you don't know me."

She wondered what he meant, realizing that perhaps after all he had done for her, she hadn't been any too gentle. And so in the taxi she told him how sorry she was, and that she hoped he would try to understand her position. He was smiling at her now, and she had to admit to herself that he had been very kind. It was not until after he had been talking for a while that she noticed the taxicab had passed the cross-street in which she lived and was bowling merrily northward. But when she called his attention to the fact, he turned toward her soberly.

"I told him to drive through the Park. We've got to have this out, you and I."

For a moment she had an uncomfortable sensation of being imprisoned. She had never liked the idea of being told that she

had "got" to do anything. She searched his face as they passed an arc-light. He wasn't in the least alarming, and so when he took her fingers in his, she let them remain for a moment. He had done this before. It seemed to entertain him.

"Do you think you're giving me a square deal, Mary?"

She considered for a moment. "Isn't it just because I want to be square that I've told you—"

"If you cared enough, you wouldn't think of what I can do for you as an obligation. Why should you make me suffer just because I have more money than you have? You're too sensitive to what people say."

"No," she said quietly, "—too proud to be happy when I know what they're saying. They *are* saying it. I know they are—just as though I could hear it myself."

She tried to take her fingers away but he held them more firmly.

"You are so cold, Mary—cold as ice. I thought I might be able to make you care for me. Wont you tell me that you do—just a little? I'd do anything in the world that I could to make you happy—anything—give you anything that I could buy."

She glanced at the hand he held, and at his face. Then she laughed whimsically.

"Is it that you're asking me to marry you, Mr. Cheever?" she questioned coolly.

He was so startled at her impudence that he relaxed his fingers, and she moved away, laughing softly at his discomfiture.

"Mary—"

"Oh, don't worry, Mr. Cheever. I've no mind to be married yet awhile. Will you please tell the chauffeur that it's long past my bed-time?"

"Yes. I'd marry you," he said tensely.

But she only laughed at him again.

"Thanks. It's the least I could expect from your attentions. It clears your conscience and does me no harm."

He sat very quiet in his corner—a silence that she mistook for defeat.

"Wont you please tell the chauffeur to take me home?"

"No, I wont." He had his arms around her in a moment, and she couldn't struggle away. She heard him muttering: "You think you can play fast and loose with me like this, because I've done whatever you wanted. I tell you that I'm mad about you. I'll marry you, if that's what you want—I will—"

"It takes two for that bargain. Let me go."

"Don't turn your head away from me, Mary."

"You're ruining my new hat."

"Kiss me!"

"Will you let me go?"

"No."

She had found a pin and jabbed him in the leg with it.

It hurt a great deal, and it startled him so that he straightened quickly.

"It's only a pin. I've got a larger one in my hat. Will you let me loose?"

He glared at her, raging inwardly, but after a moment of silent recrimination, he did as she asked him.

"Thanks," she said, composedly patting at her frock.

THE turning of the cab homeward put a new aspect upon the encounter. The more he raged, the more composed she was. Before they reached Fifty-seventh Street, she was biting her lips to keep from laughing.

"Did I stick you too hard, Mr. Cheever?" she asked gently. "I'm sorry. Wont you forgive me?"

"No."

At that moment he was wondering how he had ever let the girl make such a fool of him. He was angry at her, but still angrier at himself. And yet even in his quiet fury he was aware of the perfume of her hair, the warmth of her body beside him, and in another moment heard the gurgle of her soft laughter.

"If you knew how funny you look!" she said. "I hadn't any idea I jabbed you so hard."

He stared straight ahead, saying nothing.

"Does it still hurt? It couldn't hurt all this time. The point of a pin! Maybe it's just your dignity."

"You've made a fool of me."

"That's too bad—when I only wanted to make you wise." She laid her fingers upon his arm, her tone beguiling. "And now you're not going to love me any more at all? Would you let a little thing like the point of a pin come between us?"

"You little devil!" he said savagely, but she saw a smile trying to break.

"I am—a little devil. I know it. That's why we'd never get



"Joseph Bass, Esquire," read Martin jocularly. "Pale heliotrope envelope, Joe—"

along, with you an angel—and all. I've got a frightful bad temper when I'm roused. But I'm sorry. Let's say good night as friends. Wont—wont you—er—Reggie?"

He turned toward her, his frown slowly relaxing. It was the first time she had called him that. He took her hand and put it to his lips. "Mary," he said, "—forgive me."

"That's better. And you wont be thinking ill of me just because I've got a little pride of my own?"

"Mary, I—I made a mistake. I thought you were—different."

The cab had stopped at her door. She laughed.

"Now I'm sure we're going to be friends—better friends than ever," she said quietly.

He got down, helped her out and went up the steps with her.

"You'll forget that I was rough with you?" he asked.

"If you'll forget the little matter of the pin," she said.

"I'm not so sure about that," he said ruefully as he turned away.

"Good night—Reggie," she said from the half-closed door as Mr. Cheever went down the steps—rubbing his thigh.

Thus it was that by so trifling a matter as the point of a pin Mary Ryan established herself in the high esteem of Mr. Reginald Cheever.

Chapter Eight

IT was with a sigh that Mary Ryan hung the new frock in her closet as she prepared for bed. The expression of her face was sober, but once or twice she giggled nervously as the incident of the pin recurred to her. How foolish he had looked, and how easily she had daunted him! She had even managed to soothe his injured pride before they had parted. She had always had the faculty of emerging unscathed from unpleasant situations.

To tell the truth, Mary was now quite prepared to close her account with Mr. Cheever, offsetting her slight loss in self-esteem with the educational profit she had derived from his acquaintance. She was already too wise to accept with any seriousness his expressed intention to marry her, and she was quite sure that when he awoke in the morning, he would consider her in very different terms.

She couldn't exactly understand the motive that impelled her, but the next day she sent a note to Joe Bass asking him to come around to see her that night. She hadn't seen Joe for a long time, and when they had last met, they had not been atune. In the beginning, more than a year ago, Joe hadn't approved of her

"Reggie, you're a fearfully canny person—and just a trifle selfish, keeping Miss Ryan all to yourself."

taking the job at the fashionable dress-shop, but had become reconciled when he knew Alan Wetherby better. He told her that she needn't be expecting him to be hanging around a place like that watching for a glimpse of her. The shop still embarrassed him. In one conversation he had told Mary with rather brutal frankness that she was getting "stuck up" and full of airs. She had told him that the airs and graces to which he objected were a part of the business of salesmanship in a shop of that kind, and he had replied that if she couldn't be herself, genuine and plain-spoken as she had always been, she had better get out of it and go back to the Hygrade. She had laughed at him in her new superior way, and they had quarreled.

He could see which way the wind was blowing and knew about the attentions of Cheever, of whom Mary spoke one night rather mischievously in terms of familiarity. That had been too much for Joe, whose ire broke loose in words of one syllable. Angry herself then, she had let him go.

Joe was working hard in preparation for some examinations when Mary's note reached him in his little bedroom over on the East Side. It was brought up to him from the hall table by a fellow-student at the Temple, a young man from Virginia named Martin Daingerfield, who occupied the adjoining bedroom. Daingerfield came of an old family very much run down at the heel, and like Joe Bass was greatly in earnest in his efforts to succeed. These two, the ex-newsboy and the scion of a first family of Virginia, were already fast friends bound together by a common motive.

"Joseph Bass, Esquire," read Martin jocularly from the doorway. "Pale heliotrope envelope, Joe, smellin' of unutterable things—mostly feminine."

Joe raised his dark eyes from his books, and passed a hand across his brow as though to brush away the fog of thought.

"For me? Thanks," he said with an abstracted air.

"For you," said the jocular one; "and I might add that if you're too busy to accept the lady's invitation, I will gladly go as your substitute." He looked at himself in Joe's cracked mirror. "A lady? And beautiful. I could never forgive myself if she was disappointed."

"Beat it, Martin," growled Joe, tossing the black mane from his forehead and relaxing in his chair, for he had now recognized the handwriting.

The incipient lawyer grinned. "Heliotrope," he observed again. "Shades of Lothario and Don Juan! And you posin' around here for Timon and Diogenes all rolled into one!" He shrugged and went out.

But Joe was already reading the note.

"Dear Joe," it ran.

"Don't you think you've neglected me long enough?" (Like her, to put it up to him!) "I really want very much to see you. I think I need you once in a while, Joe, to keep me thinking straight, because though we don't always agree, you're so sound, so sane, such a rock to tie to." (Blarney!) "I'm so lonely in the evenings, Joe, and so tired of being on exhibition and always on my good behavior. Wont you come around and take me out to the movies or something? I'll be at home Friday evening and expecting you. Please don't disappoint me! I miss your scolding me—because I've found out that you're right some of the time." (What the devil did she mean by that?) "I'll promise to be good and let you lecture me all you please—but do come! Wont you?—Mary."

He read the note through twice and then turned the envelope over, sniffing at it, contemplative. He frowned, then smiled. He had told her that she would have to send for him, and this was what she was doing. Well—he'd go, of course. He turned his copy of "Cooley's Constitutional Limitations" face downward and put his feet up on his table while he filled his pipe. She knew that if she only whistled for him, he'd come running.

He smoked for a few moments, then put his pipe and the heliotrope letter aside, and resumed his study of Cooley. There were many things in the world to vex a man.



That night he called. It took her less than two minutes to effect a reconciliation. It was good to see him again. There was an earnestness and a sincerity about Joe. He was handsome too, in a rugged sort of way. Of course, the fit of his clothing was abominable; but then, baggy at the knees and wrinkled at the shoulders as it was, she liked it better than the "nobby" suit of Mr. Al Crawley. And it was undeniably comforting to have Joe sitting beside her again in the dim light of the theater. Her hand went over his large one, and he turned his palm upward to clasp her fingers. There was no need to talk, no chance of talking here even if they would. And she hadn't proposed telling him anything about Reginald Cheever, especially about the taxi and the episode of the pin, which might have led to difficulties. Joe was so strong!

When he left her, she made him promise to take her on the following afternoon, which was Saturday, to the Metropolitan to see the pictures. There was studying that Joe could have done, but he agreed. It had been a long while since he and Mary had been together like this. She was so much like herself, like the Mary that he had always known and cared for. At the gallery she told him of Alan Wetherby's pictures, and of the thrill that had come to her at the sight of his beautiful collections. Joe grunted with the cynicism of one born to a consideration of the practical. And then Mary launched herself into a dissertation on esthetics, and the uses, especially to the man that he was going to



be, of a broader culture. She rather took his breath away with the new terminology of art which she had been absorbing from the books that Alan Wetherby had lent her. When the round of the galleries was finished and both were somewhat exhausted, Mary with talking and Joe with looking and listening, they found a bench in a deserted room, face to face with that most important topic of all—themselves.

She thought him thinner and quieter, and told him that he needed a hair-cut; but she admitted that she liked his new air of sobriety.

"You look more and more like the picture of Daniel Webster, Joe," she said with a laugh. "But then, there must have been times when even Daniel had his joyous moments."

"There were," he said composedly; "but Daniel couldn't have been any happier than I am."

She puckered her brows and smiled with her lips. "Sure, I don't believe you've missed me a bit, Joe Bass."

"I have," he said quietly, "—when I've had the time to."

The pucker disappeared, and the smile relaxed. The usual feminine artifices seemed out of place in the face of this sort of honesty.

"Tell me what you've been learning, what you've been doing—tell me everything, Joe."

That was rather a large order for Joe, but he attempted it. He spoke of the words of commendation from his instructors, of Martin Daingerfield, and of the prospects that he had for the immediate future. It seemed that Joe had been selling papers for several years to an old fellow with gray side-whiskers who stopped at the news-stand every night for his *Evening Post*. Joe had never known who he was, but one night after Joe had left the corner, the old man had missed him and learned that Joe had sold out the news-stand and was studying law uptown. So he had looked Joe up at the Temple Law-school. This was Mr. Ivan Simpson, of the firm of Simpson, Hall and Blackwell, corporation lawyers with offices in Broad Street. His interest rather took Joe aback, as did his proposition that when Joe had successfully passed his bar examinations, he would be given a small place experimentally in his law-office.

"That's why I'm working overtime lately," Joe explained. "It's a fine office—corporations and big bugs—the first opportunity—the only opportunity I might say I've ever had in my life. You can bet I won't let it slip by."

Joe's industry and ambition had always seemed applied to a purpose which held its rewards very far in the future. Now they attained a definite significance.

"How splendid!" she said approvingly, aware that her dissertation on esthetics

seemed somehow less important than she had thought it was.

"Yes, splendid. That's the word," he finished emphatically.

"And I'll make good there. I've got to make good."

"You will," she added confidently. "I just know you will. You've got that sort of mind."

He laughed. "What sort of mind?"

"Oh, you always could see through a thing—around a thing, so that there wasn't any use in anyone's thinking differently from you."

"Anyone, you mean," he put in with a twinkle, "except you."

She laughed. "Well, Joe, dear, maybe it would have made you too conceited if I'd thought the same way that you did all the time. You've a fine mind, but we'd have had little to talk about if I'd always been agreeing with you."

"But then, if I've been right, surely you must have been wrong," he returned with a grin.

She was thoughtful for a moment; and then, "If I have been," she said gently, "you're the one creature in the world I'd ever admit it to."

He put his hand over hers and studied (*Continued on page 136*)

The gang's all here—the Information Kid, Henry the Rat—all those lovable characters that make the gifted Mr. Beaumont's stories so engaging. And this new one, the Fiddlin' Doll, you will find to be one girl in ten thousand.

Illustrated by
E. F. Wara



The Fiddlin' Doll

By GERALD
BEAUMONT

"The only sure bet on the card is that Trixie's fell for him. She comes up to pose every afternoon."

"Painting pictures! What'll that bring him? You're the guy that was to hand the Doll a good thing!"

"LUKE LE BLANC against the field!"
"You're crazy! I say she marries Montana Sullivan—he'll walk in!"

"Aw, g'wan home!"

They were at it again: the Information Kid and Henry the Rat, perched on a rail by the quarter-pole at Jefferson Park, and arguing over the destiny of their beloved Fiddlin' Doll. The argument had begun in Kentucky, and progressed to Saratoga; this was New Orleans. The morning sunshine illumined shrewd young faces, and cast upon the tan turf the shadows of two knights of the stop-watch. Opposite them a class of two-year-olds was being schooled at the barrier to the accompaniment of pianissimo pleadings from apprentice riders, and a crescendo of profanity from an assistant starter.

"Well," said the Rat, "I'll admit it looks like a tough race to pick. Truth is, that little doll's got too much class for any of us. I'd like to see some guy come along with a lot of jack and grab her off—an outsider that knew a good thing when he saw it."

The Information Kid nodded soberly.

"Boy, that's the only sensible statement you ever made in your life. Losing that kid would be like having some one tear out my right eye—"

"Me too," echoed the Rat.

"Yet marriage is the natural thing for Janes—"

"Oh, sure! But the guys that are settin' the pace right now are sellin' platters. Luke's a bookmaker; Montana's a tin-horn—"

"What about Frenchy Bonville?"

The Rat laughed long and scornfully.

"Frenchy's a hustler. He aint no better than us, is he? Well, wot t'ell?"

The mantle of responsibility pressed heavily on their shoulders. They sighed dolefully.

"Henry," said the Kid, "you and me ought to pick a real honest-to-God winner for Trixie."

"I'd like to pick an honest-to-God winner for myself," said the Rat. "A thousand bucks on his lily-white nose, and a hundred to one tied to his tail—sweet lady!"

The Kid grinned. "Dream on, boy. If you ever got him, I'd be on him too. Yea, bo—and I'll tel the cockeyed world, I'd beat you to Trixie's house!"

"She wouldn't have either of us," lamented the Rat. "It's just because we're deuce hustlers that she lets us peg along. That's the way I figure it."

"Once more you ring the bell, Henry. We're all right in the mud, but the Fiddlin' Doll is entitled to a fast track. Some day I'm going to steer her against a live one."

"Well, don't make no mistakes," warned Henry. "Any time you think you've got a winner, better let the gang look him over in the paddock before you go sending him to the post. If he figures, we'll all play him."

"It's a go!" said the Kid.

The barrier shot up with a whirl. Sweater-clad stable-boys whooped, spread their elbows and drummed with their heels upon the flanks of the equine "babies." The wall of horseflesh surged forward. Fifty yards—and two half-sisters from the Bluefield barn winged their way to the front and began to fight it out. Something clicked in the hands of the two hustlers. The pair

If you're wise on the subject of horses,
And can tell who the winners will be,—
Prices and such,—you may know as much
As hustlers like Henry and me;
But if you can figure a woman,
(Henry and me never could),
If you can explain the ways of a Jane,
Believe me, brother—you're good!
—*Songs of the Information Kid.*

of bay fillies, running like a team, skimmed along the far rail. At the three-quarter pole one of them drew clear, and the test ended. The Information Kid and Henry the Rat compared watches. The Kid drew a deep breath.

"By the God whom I worship," he marveled, "three furlongs in thirty-four and one-fifth. I'll tell the cockeyed world, that's steppin' on it!"

There being no further workouts in sight, the Information Kid and his confrère returned to the subject at hand: the case of Miss Beatrice Carroll, who played the races in the afternoon, and in the evening the violin at Henri's Petite Place, which is on Iberville Street, and is a rendezvous for the racing world.

It is well, perhaps, that you know a few things about Miss Carroll, who was born with a fiddle in one hand and a racing program in the other.

Trixie's father was Handsome Jack Carroll, the bookmaker, and her mother was Tita Reyni, the gypsy violinist. Their romance was one of the pretty stories of the turf, but came to an abrupt end one afternoon when the car in which they were returning from the track, overturned and killed both. Trixie was then fifteen—a queer little thing: elfish face with dark eyes that showed the Romany influence, bobbed curls, an impudent mouth, and arms and legs that were always swaying like the stalks on a windflower.

Great dreams had been entertained by Trixie's parents concerning the education and training of their daughter, for the child inherited her mother's talent, and her father intended to lavish upon her his wealth. But this much should be borne in mind about a gambler: even when he is worth a hundred thousand dollars, he is only removed from bankruptcy by the margin of a single bet. An examination of Jack Carroll's affairs showed that on the day he died he had gone ten thousand dollars in the hole!

There were, however, insurance policies, and one or two bits of property that netted a small stake, and with this Trixie undertook to carry out the future that had been planned for her. But the path to stardom on the concert stage is a slow track. Paladini, the great New York maestro, rendered the final disheartening verdict:

"Little one, thou art but an ear-tickler, possessing nimble fingers and a bag of tricks. When you have learned love and passion and despair, come back to Paladini, and perhaps he will kneel at your feet. But until then you will go through life with a camp wagon, a fiddle and a dancing bear. Paladini has said it!"

The celebrated instructor had the right hunch. The little girl concerning whom her parents had held such hopes, became a "Fiddlin' Doll," earning her money as best she could in the cafés and roof gardens of the larger cities. Here her early convent training stood her in good stead. She withstood all temptations except one. Gradually she yielded to her instinct for the sport in which her father had been such a picturesque figure.

The races became to Trixie Carroll what the theater and the motion-picture screen are to many other girls. The excitement, the colorful atmosphere, the bustle and confusion, the camaraderie that makes of the racing world a single fraternity—these were the things to which her pulse quickened. When the season closed in one place, she moved on, and thus became a member of the regular bang-tail caravan, a marionette of his majesty the horse. And because the gypsy Wanderlust was part of her inheritance, the trail of the thoroughbreds from city to city became the highway of the world along which she laughed and fiddled.

"Beat 'em today, Mister?"

That was her friendly greeting whenever she saw a familiar face as she wandered between the tables at the Golden Lamb in Saratoga, or at Ryan's Grill in New York, or Henri's at New Orleans.

"Beat 'em today, Mister?"—always with a smile and a flourish of the bow. She seemed able to adapt the melody to whatever mood she encountered, playing "Mammy Blues" that rainy Christmas night in the Crescent City when the bunch was far from home, and the rollicking "Roll 'em High!" when everybody had Lady Lilian at Havre de Grace, and that gallant little mare, after being almost left at the post, went all around her field and got up in the last stride to win by a whisker!

NOW, the racing world is divided into thirteen tribes, the most picturesque of which is represented by the "hustlers" who are the gypsies of the race-track. They are always long on dreams and short on accomplishments, and they toil not, neither do they spin; but Solomon in all his glory was never so wise as they. It was to this tribe that the Fiddlin' Doll became in time a sort of daughter of the regiment. Truth to tell, Trixie was afraid of white-collared "sports." Among the ragged, care-free children of the paddock, the knights of the free lance, the last place the stranger would have looked for chivalry, Trixie found a maximum of friendship with a minimum of risk.

There were a few misunderstandings before they learned just how she desired to be accepted. But after Trixie had slapped a few faces, kissed a few "rough-necks," nursed Henry the Rat

There were a few misunderstandings before they learned just how she desired to be accepted.



when he was taken down with pneumonia, and lent them all money when they were broke, the classification was established by Frenchy Bon-

ville, who had served under Joffre.

"She's a *vivandière*," said Frenchy.

"A *what*?" demanded the Information Kid.

"Say, I'll bust you one on the snoot—"

"That shows just how ignorant you are," jeered Frenchy. "I didn't say nothin' against her. A *vivandière* is a little Jane that goes to war with the soldiers, and wont marry any of them because she loves 'em all. Aint you never heard me sing 'Madelon'? Course it takes ten thousand guys marchin' along at night, ankle-deep in mud, and headin' for sure death, to put it over right—"

"Well, we'll scratch the mud and the soldiers," said the Kid. "Go on and pull it."

So, standing in the paddock at Jefferson Park that morning,

Frenchy sang, first in his native tongue and then in English, the song that sustained the morale of the Fleur-de-lis:

*"La Madelon pour nous n'est pas sève,
Quand on lui prend la taille ou le menton.
Elle rit c'est tout le mal qu'elle sait faire,
Madelon, Madelon, Madelon!"*

He sang it very badly, but they caught the idea, and presently they were all chanting the English version, and marching around in a circle to the detriment of a perfectly good crap-game.

"But Madelon, she takes it all in fun.
She laughs and says: 'You see it can't be done;
I would like to, but how can I consent,
And be true to the whole regiment?'"

That night they went down to Henri's, and asked Trixie to play the new tribal anthem, giving Frenchy Bonville full credit for the inspiration.

"Sure I will," said Trixie, who was immensely tickled with the idea. "But some of you boys will have to sing the chorus."

"Good night!" said the Information Kid. "Well, take the Frog—he worked out pretty good this morning. Go ahead, Frenchy—we'll hook up with you when you swing into the stretch. Tell the folks at home we died game. Women and children will move quietly toward the nearest exit."

But there was no panic among the diners at Henri's; they were accustomed to novelties. "Madelon" went over big. Trixie played the air with all the vivacity and *esprit* that made her popular. The Information Kid's high tenor encouraged the others. And Henri himself, fat and ferociously mustached, beat time on the counter and bellowed lustily in the name of France!

Thus was the Fiddlin' Doll publicly enshrined as the Madelon of the Hustlers, and curiously enough it happened in the "young-moon town" by the southern gulf, where once the French ruled, and Dominic You, the pirate, was to have brought the Little Corporal after stealing him from St. Helena. Romance, you see, blooms naturally in New Orleans.

The Information Kid and Henry the Rat talked it over that night when they stretched their blankets in Jimmy Whiskers' tackle-room.

"Great stuff, but I still think the day will come when we'll have to give her up," said the Kid. "First good thing comes along, I'm going to tell the Doll to go get it."

"I give her one tonight," confided the Rat. "Star Raven in the first race tomorrow. The Frawley crowd have cooked up the prettiest killing you ever see. Ten to one, and her month's salary back—that's what I told her."

The Kid was perturbed. "I don't think Star Raven likes the going. You shouldn't have let her risk all that dough—"

"Mud's his dish," countered the Rat drowsily. "I got it from Goat-eye, who seen him run in Tijuana. Any time they turn that thing loose in the mud with a price against him, he says: 'Good-by, gang. Hello, Judge!'"

A chuckle came from under the Kid's blankets, followed a moment later by a gentle snore. They slept the sleep of the innocent.

The next afternoon they discovered they had ten dollars between them, and decided to risk half of it on Henry's selection. Like most good things on a race-track, this one went wrong. Star Raven ran out of the money. . . .

After the Kid and Henry had fought it out under the grandstand, they cooled down sufficiently to discuss the matter.

"I thought you said that dog liked mud," complained the Kid. "That's it, pal," mourned Henry. "He must have liked it so he stopped to eat it. And to think I give it to Trixie as a three-star special! Aint that awful?"

"Awful is right! Better redeem yourself, Rat. Go scout through the ring, and I'll take a walk up by the stands; we got to grab ourselves a meal-ticket."

"Leave it to me," Henry assured. "Diggin' up suckers is where I shine. Boy, that's muh long pants!"

It will always be a subject of argument between them as to which one saw him first. When the time comes for Henry the Rat to answer the final call to post, he will most certainly lean over to the Information Kid and with his dying breath rasp out: "Remember, now—it was me that spotted the Boy Plunger. I dug him up!"

To which the Kid will just as surely reply:

"Henry, you're goofy! I seen him the minute I come down the stairs, and I says to myself: 'There's a young go-to-heller out of a good stable. Welcome to our midst!' And I was headin' for him when you and me tollide."

The truth is they saw Larry Beveridge of Philadelphia at the same instant—a youth in a tan overcoat, with the face of a dreamer, the soul of an artist, and—as it turned out later—the remnants of a once-fat bank-roll. He was trying hard to look like a seasoned sport, but to the trained eyes of the Information Kid and Henry the Rat, the youth with the finely chiseled features and the soft dark eyes had "good thing" written all over him. The hustlers exchanged nods and went to work. The Information Kid became "Mr. Wilson of Kentucky," a close-lipped betting commissioner who had just won five thousand on the first race and was plunging on the second. Henry the Rat became a young rancher from up-State, just down for the day "lookin' 'em over." In the language of the track, they "picked up" their prey, induced him to put a hundred dollars on Captain Adams at five to one, and then flew the "hands off" signal for the benefit of all other hustlers.

There is no accounting for some of the things that happen on a race-track. What occurred that afternoon can only be attributed to hustler's luck. Captain Adams came rolling home all by himself.

The Information Kid cashed the tickets, holding out a hundred dollars—as he explained—to take care of the other jocks.

Thereafter he clung to the Boy Plunger like a woman to a telephone, pyramiding the winnings with every bet; and by all the freaks of fortune, he did just what he had always dreamed of doing: he picked the winner of every race on the card!

It was too much for the Rat! Henry went out and got drunk after the third race, and knew no more until the next day.

But the Information Kid kept a cool head on his shoulders. As for the youth with the dreamy eyes, he had the look of one into whose hand the gods have suddenly thrust, for no reason in the world, the wand of Midas. The Kid picked 'em; young Beveridge did the rest. Between them they shook seventeen thousand dollars out of the machines in the last race, and then headed for Henri's Petite Place on Iberville Street. The world was theirs!

That was the night the Information Kid, operating under the same divine hunch that had guided him all day, introduced the Boy Plunger to the Fiddlin' Doll. May God forgive him for the lies he told! Remember that the Kid was a hustler, born and bred to the trade. When he rose to the height of his art, he could sell an ice-wagon to the devil. His manual of



Henry the Rat got the tip from the negro Goat-eye, who said that the horse was sulking.

arms was the leather-covered dope-book that contained the past performances of every horse in training; but the volume that fired his imagination, shaped his philosophy, and wove his web of dreams was a dog-eared copy of "The Arabian Nights," whose fanciful legends he knew by heart. Always, in the great moments of his life, he turned to these beloved tales for his inspiration.

You know now why Trixie Carroll played so wonderfully that night, and later listened with such absorption to the words that fell from the lips of Beveridge of Philadelphia. You can also guess why the Boy Plunger asked her to play again that plaintive little gypsy melody which she herself composed and labeled "Romany Rose"—and why he then sent up by a waiter a fifty-dollar bill and a menu-card on the back of which he had swiftly penciled an impression of the Fiddlin' Doll.

The Information Kid caught a glimpse of the sketch, and drew a deep breath.

"Allah be upon my head!" he muttered. "I'll tell the cockeyed world we're off wingin'. Yea, bo, 'at's the old oil in the can! This lad is the cat's me-ow!"

Three hectic days followed, days in which the Information Kid, playing in the luck that comes but once in a lifetime, piloted the Boy Plunger through the channels of chance, and the dark-eyed youth from Philadelphia became the sensation of the betting ring. Nighttimes, they made merry at Henri's; and while Trixie played "Roll 'em High," smiling all the while at the Boy Plunger, the Information Kid kindled the fires of romance in the hearts of both.

To the Fiddlin' Doll, the Boy Plunger was pictured as a proved hero; the Kid credited past performances to Trixie Carroll that would have made the Angel Gabriel put a bet on her. And in his enthusiasm, the student of "The Arabian Nights" was blind to the breakers ahead, which is the inevitable way with those who navigate on Fortuna's seas.

Their undoing was absurdly simple. The Information Kid planned a killing on the surest thing he had ever encountered in his experience on a race-track. It was to be the supreme *coup* that would put diamonds on the fingers of Henry the Rat, send the Kid back to the home he had not seen in years, and wrap the Fiddlin' Doll and the Boy Plunger in a golden mantle. . . .

Lord Roberts in the last race! The Information Kid studied that plunge from every angle, and he could see no chance of losing. The new owner of the horse was "leveling;" the track and distance were made to order; Jockey Sutherland had been imported from Kentucky especially for the race. The only two



When the Fiddlin' Doll opened her eyes, the Information Kid and the Boy Plunger were at her side.

horses that figured as serious contenders were given into the charge of stable-boys. In plain terms, the race was a "gift" to the horse that carried old man Shelby's colors.

The Kid planned all the details, wiring the money away to pool-rooms all over the country at track odds, and betting on another horse at the track itself, so that attention was diverted and the price on Lord Roberts was not affected. In excess of caution he even hedged with their last thousand, playing the Shelby horse to finish second, and even third. Then they sat back breathlessly and waited for the grand finale.

"Oh, boy!" enthused the Kid. "Aint this a wonderful game!" The quiet youth from Philadelphia looked dreamily at the field of thoroughbreds parading to the post, and then off in the direction of home. His face was softly illumined.

"A wonderful game," he agreed, "but there's a better one, Kid. Some day you'll be proud of me." (Continued on page 107)

The Long, Long Day

By
BEATRICE
GRIMSHAW

Illustrated by
Frederic Dorr Steele

WHEN Winans was young, stray words, gleaned from one book or another, used to lay thrall upon his boyish mind. *Trader* was such a word. It seemed to him to be full of ocean breezes, the rustle of palms, beat of surf upon coral shores. He could see fierce faces, devil-may-care, showing under huge shade-hats; there would be a cigar in the teeth; the man's mustaches would sweep halfway to his shoulder. One could hear orders shouted to a dusky crew. Somewhere there would be a lonely island, a house with balconies, and long cane chairs, upon which the trader—still fiercely hatted, mustached and cigarred—would recline, gorgeous, defiant, drinking brandy.

It was clear that nobody could interfere with a trader; no one could give him orders, claim to know better than he did about every confounded little thing. Winans was quite sure—in those nineteenth-century days—that his people were wrong in keeping him at school, and marking him out, later on, for a profession. Who wanted to mend broken legs, or keep murderers from being hanged, when the Pacific Ocean covered—as one was credibly assured—one-third of the earth's whole surface (or maybe it was one-seventh), and was simply crying out for traders?

Be careful—always be careful—lest you wish for a thing too often and too long. It is possible you may get it. . . .

In nineteen hundred and very little, I was wandering down the western beaches of Papua. On an evening I came to the trading-station of Kaluna, and as I knew that no white man other than the trader was to be found within fifty miles, I went to the store to ask for a night's lodging. I had my boys and my outfit; I was not the roving beachcomber you (perhaps) have pictured me. But I will not tell you why I was there. We of the western Pacific do not tell our stories to everyone. Make no mistake about it, we have them—no white man (or woman) lives beyond the hundred and seventieth parallel in the red sunset land of the Solomons, New Hebrides and New Guinea, without a shadow in his heart for company. I do not speak of the passing folk, in stores, on plantations, who are here today, and gone next mosquito-season. I speak of Ourselves, the settlers, survivors of a ten-years "long ago"—if you will have it, of the pioneers. And no one was, or is, a pioneer in the cruelly beautiful, malarial, man-eating West of the island world, for any light reason.

Let that pass. I went down the coast from Maiwa, and I went alone with my boys. And I came, in the dusk, slack-green evening of a Gulf hot-season day, to Kaluna. It is a village, or a collection of villages, numbering many hundred natives, and no whites; it lies strung out along the shore for a couple of miles, showing, in its curious cannibal architecture like a collection of upended boats cut in two. You are here on the famous, infamous, black-sand beach of the West, which runs unbroken for more than a hundred miles—and traversing which, you may go mad, die, break your legs and neck, commit murder, raise the dead, without attracting any particular notice or interference. White men, marooned in far

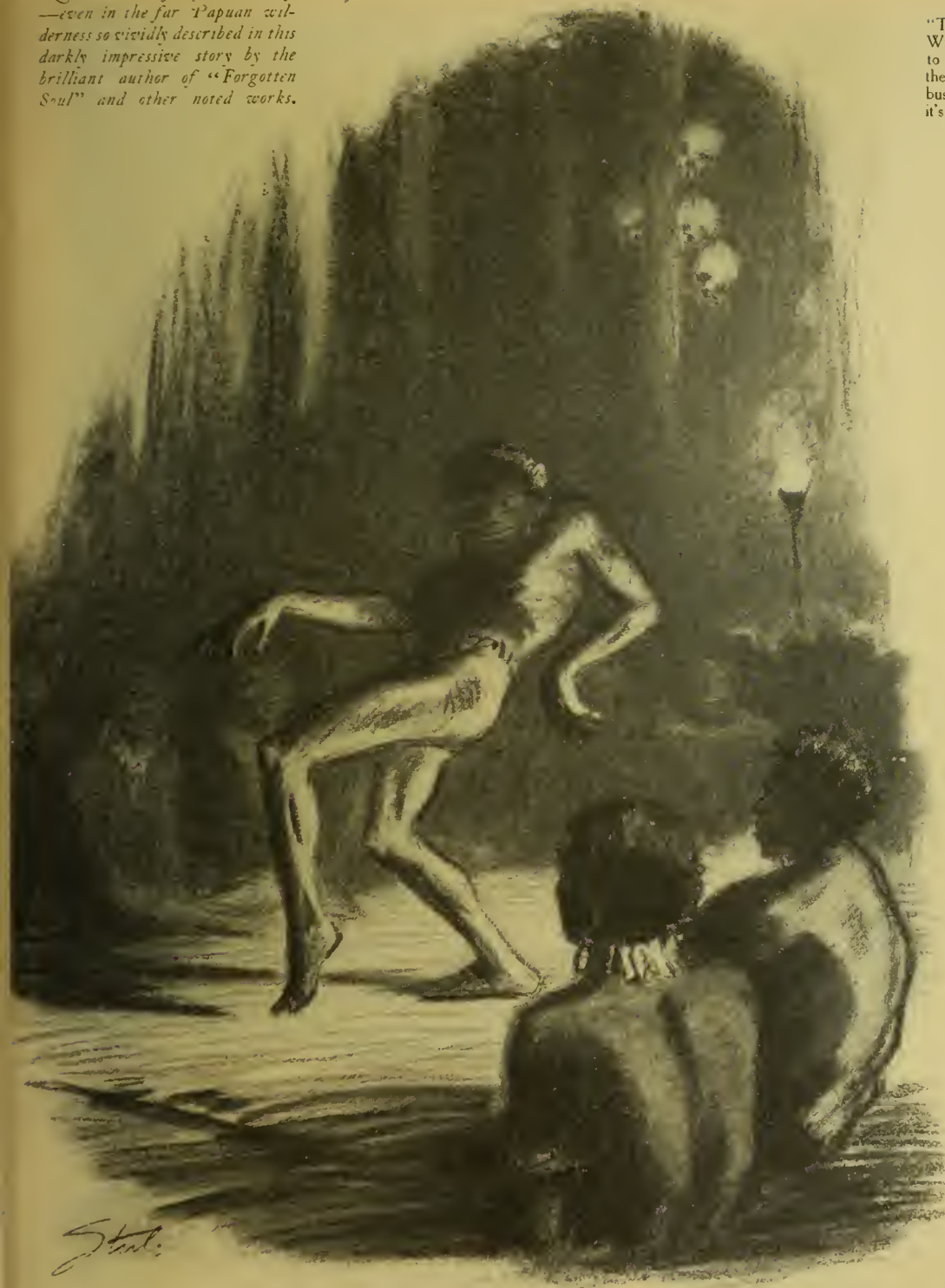


stations westward, have tried to reach the settlements, in emergency, by this same cursed black beach, and have fallen sick and died upon the way, or have turned back, just not too late. White women—but that story is too new, and too true to tell.

The store of Kaluna stands perched upon high piles, like a squat heron fishing on the beach. Black sand blows about its steps; underneath, where the fierce sun strikes lightly or not at all, beach creepers, succulent, of a deadly green, twist themselves about like snakes. Before it the short, wicked waves of the Gulf of Papua break in dirty foam; behind, a belt of ruffling palm trees hides marshes and lowlands. There is the wind, and the crashing of hot seas on a hotter beach; there is the whimpering of the

No exile can flee from himself—even in the far Papuan wilderness so vividly described in this darkly impressive story by the brilliant author of "Forgotten Soul" and other noted works.

"That's enough," said Winans. And he added to me: "He's scared them; this dance has a business tang to it, though it's only a private show."



Moresby, or Thursday Island. But it was Kaluna, and we were alone. And that evening, when we had eaten the inevitable tinned curry and yam, and drunk the inevitable beer; when we were sitting on the shore veranda, watching, through the dusk, the gray sea battering the black sloping shore; when, farther down, the bucks of Kaluna were beginning to lift up a hideous singsong from their pointed temple-house, and the pig that was to make the evening's feast was joining his voice of dismay to all the clotted noise—then Winans spoke out.

I may say I liked him. He was the sort of man that men do like, even to look at, which is not to say that he was handsome—he had a long-nosed, currant-eyed, plain-enough face. But he was a strong fellow, with a big reach, and he didn't slump in his chair. And he kept his nails as an old public-school boy should keep them. (Yes, I was, but it is no business of yours.) Also he had a good laugh, a very good laugh. You can tell a lot about a man from his laugh.

I have been too long in the Gulf; I talk too much, and do not keep to the point. You must pardon me. We all do it. Why, when one does meet another white man, one may speak without a pause all afternoon—one often does—without hitting on the thing which

grasses, and the fitful hand-beating of the palms; there is the smell of mud and fish, and the reek, twice daily, of native cooking-fires; there is the empty, paint-gray sea to look at, and the brown, naked Western men, with their gauds of shells and seeds, and the grass-crinolined women, ugly, sullen, tramping under burdens of yams and fuel. There is not, there never has been and never will be, anything else.

Yet because of the palm trees and the copra that is made from them, it pays to trade at Kaluna. There was a trader, and his name was Winans.

I suppose he would not have told me how he came to be buried alive in Kaluna, had we met when he was on holiday, in Port

... It was about Winans, was it not?

Winans told me of his boyish dreams, and how his people, thinking he ought at least to have an outdoor occupation, made him a civil engineer. And he did well. And so some one—I cannot remember who; we have no memory, in the Gulf—gave him the Loch Gordon bridge to build.

"Oh!" you say. You remember *that*. You know that it will never be forgotten—even when every relation of the two hundred and fifteen souls who were dashed to death through the failure of the bridge, is as dead and gone as they.

So you will understand why Winans—who really was not much to blame, though nobody could be got to understand that—ran

away. Ran away from his profession, from his country and his home, and also from his wedding, which was to have taken place a week after the day of the bridge disaster!

At this point he got up, went into the house and returned with a photograph in a frame. Out of his bedroom, it must have been; I had not seen it when we were in the hot little iron parlor, eating our curry.

I turned up the lamp, and stared at the little picture. "Lord!" I said. "She is what the Americans call a 'looker.'"

SHE was. The lips were the most beautiful I had ever seen, not excepting those of any picture or statue in the world. You could hardly see beyond that perfect mouth at first, but presently you noticed the depth and the shine of the eyes, and the crop of naturally curling hair that waved over forehead and ears—like the hair of Reynolds' bodiless little angels, whom everybody knows. The picture showed head and neck only, but the noble round of the throat could have gone with none but a perfect figure. I liked the expression; it had nothing of the pretty-girl grin, and she did not seem to be thinking of herself and her pose; she looked simply and naturally out of the picture, apparently watching and thinking of you. And there was something curiously noble—I can find no other word—in the face. A good woman, one said, at once.

In answer to my comment, Winans said, without glancing at the photograph: "She was very lovely."

"Is she—" I hesitated—it is strange how one does hesitate—at the word, though not at the meaning.

"She's dead," answered Winans. He reached for my glass, and poured me some more beer. Away down the beach, the natives were singing louder; a horrid brassy sound had crept into their song. "They're going to spear the pig now," said Winans. "Some years ago, it used to be a man, but the Government got at them, so they had to use something else. They're all cannibals, and they have the richest brand of sorcery there is in Papua."

"Did she die suddenly?" I asked him.

"She died in hospital, from the effects of a dock accident."

"Dock? How—"

"Fell off the gangway as she was going aboard. She was going to follow me—to South Africa."

"And you never saw her again?"

Winans opened a pouch, and filled his pipe. "I did," he said. "I came back from the Cape at once, and she lived six days after my return. She died on the morning of the eighth of May, at two in the morning. Our wedding day had been fixed for the seventh of May. I was with her."

I sat unable to say anything. I was not surprised—I knew the hideous turns that Fate can play a man. If you *don't* know, you could not believe. Why, in Apemama, in eighteen. . . . I beg your pardon; it is the effect of living here. I will go on.

"So I came out to the Islands, and by and by struck here," concluded Winans, selecting a match. "South Africa seemed too crowded—public, you know. One met people there, or one thought one might. It isn't crowded here."

"No," I said, listening to the crash of the black waves on the black shore. "No." Then it occurred to me to ask—God knows why: "Did you go to the funeral?"

"I left the damned place five minutes after she died," answered Winans unemotionally. "I sailed that night."

Neither of us said anything for a minute, and then Winans asked me: "Seen any of the Gulf dances?"

I said I hadn't.

The screams of the pig, which had punctuated everything Winans said during some minutes, had now sunk into snorts, and choked themselves out. Winans told me there might be a chance of seeing a dance at the *dubu*—a sort of clubhouse; and, more to escape from the emotional tension of the moment than anything else,—so it seemed,—he proposed to walk down the beach.

THERE was no moon, and the stars looked thick and dull, but we had plenty of light for our walk; native cooking-fires were going everywhere, and bucks were running up and down the beach, yelling, and waving great torches of coconut that threw showers of sparks about. I hadn't been long in the Gulf and the West, at that time; it amused me to see the brown, shaven-headed married women bending double, like huge mushrooms in figure, over the round clay pots that held a bubbling purée of sweet-potato, which they were thickening with handfuls of crumbled forest sago—to watch a girl, full-figured, painted oily red to her bare waist, swiftly shelling prawns into a bowl, and pouring thick white coconut cream upon them.

They fed well, these folk. They lodged well—their cool thatched homes were far more healthy and comfortable than the ugly, stifling houses of corrugated iron in Port Moresby. They had any amount of sport, fishing, pig-hunting, canoeing; they had social amusements—no white folk get a chance to sleep down West, when the native dancing-season is under way. They did some work, but not very much; and no one, on the whole, worked longer than he wanted to, or went without a holiday when he felt like having one. Life, for them, one felt, must be very long and full. Is not even a single day incredibly long, when you find time in it for everything that you want to do? It seemed to me that, in leaving the world of the white man, Winans and I had come into a place that one best might name the Land of the Long, Long Day.

And yet, you know, one dreads to let that world take hold of one. One feels the drag of it—like an undertow. One resists; why?

"They haven't any souls," I said to myself as we plodded through the sand. "They haven't any art, and life without art—"

I wonder were you, by any chance, at Barbizon in the latter years of last century? You'd have met me there, working hard. I didn't get into the Salon; I said I didn't want to, but all the same. . . . The Gulf habit again; I ask your pardon.

WINANS went to the first and biggest of the *dubus*; I think it was about eighty feet high, to the top of its extraordinary upended-boat-shaped frontage, and maybe three hundred feet long, right back to where it tapered down to a mere ten feet or so of height. We climbed up the ladder, and went in. There were a couple of score men there, sitting each in his proper place on his own side of the *dubu*, and there was a good deal of light from torches, and from fires outside. And hanging to the roof, dangling all over the walls, projecting from long pegs, set upon the floor in heaps and rows, was—Art.

You may leave it to me; I know. Plenty of people see nothing in the dancing masks and shields of the West, but sheer comicality; they look at the amazing beast-faces modeled on them, at the grinning snouts that stick out, and the goggling eyes and the queer, half-fishy, half-human expressions that these odd devils of natives contrive to get into the things; and they roar with laughter. But there's more in the stuff than that. There's color—pinks and reds and grays and yellows, and the divine right touch of black, cut and painted in designs of interwoven curves that I'd give an eye to have invented. Line? These half-cannibals could teach it to all Paris. Color? They take the sunset—the strange, secondary-color sunset of the black-sand country—and spin it into their skeins of twisted pattern, hue for hue. I saw in about ten seconds that I had been very far wrong indeed, when I told myself they didn't have art.

"Well, they haven't any real intellect," I thought. (Artists may pardon me; or not, as they like; but I'm one, and I know.) "It's the intellectual pleasures that are wanting. —Who is the big-bug in the corner, Winans?"

I was looking at an oldish man, not clothed at all, you might say, but very much painted, and heavily jeweled with shells and long dogs'-teeth.

"Most important sorcerer along the Coast," said Winans. To my surprise, the undressed gentleman nodded gravely, and answered:

"Yes, all right, I very big sorterer, sir. I was once Government interpreter in Daru; I have had salary two poun' a mont'. I have been mission teacher; damme, I very good teacher, sir, but they have frown me out because I have three wive'. Now I am sorterer, I have eleven wive', I think, or maybe ten, and I have fourteen big pig."

There was a certain grave courtesy about the man; he had the way that one notices in what is known as good society. I suppose it comes from being the biggest person about, and is much the same thing whether you are Lord Lieutenant of an English county, or the sorcerer par excellence of the Black-sand Coast.

"Koki, this gentleman doesn't know the dances. Can you show him one?" asked Winans, handing the sorcerer a stick of tobacco.

"There not be any dance tonight, sir. The people, they eat pig by and by, and then they sleep, sir. But I dance a dance for you myself, suppose you like."

"Yes, we'd like it very much."

Koki got up from the floor, and took his stand in the narrow aisle that ran down the middle of the *dubu*. The whole place had a curiously churchlike effect; its brown, old coloring, high nave, long aisle, and pendant garments of *tappa*, like captured battle-flags, made one think vaguely of old cathedrals visited on Continental wanderings. And the immobile dusky figures seated each



The girl may have seen me, or may not. She began walking about, seemingly looking for somebody or something.

in his own place, and the smell, musty and mildewy, was just like the smell of old churches.

Koki began to dance.

I noticed at first how wonderfully light-footed he was. A big-gish man, and well muscled, he yet touched the floor as lightly as a frolicking kitten. I will swear you could not even hear his bare feet. I don't know what the steps were, but there was advancing and retreating in them, stalking too, swift stalking like that of a panther nearly on its prey, and once a sudden, velvet spring that almost made me jump backward. All the time he danced—still perfectly without sound—a sinister, poisonous-sweet smile was steadily growing on his face; and his body kept sinking into itself and lowering down; soon he was dancing with the upper part from the waist so completely foreshortened that the horrible saccharine smile grinned up at you from a face apparently set on the top of a pair of twinkling legs and a couple of swaying arms. Then the arms began to winnow back and forth, gathering, catching! The grinning face sank lower; the soundless feet flew like shadows; the arms were drawing in things, invisible things, as the clutching fingers of the deep-sea polypus draws in the little fish that swim within its reach. I heard the nearest man of the sitting rows fall back against his neighbor, and catch his breath with a grunt of fear.

"That's enough," said Winans rather quickly. And he added to me, aside: "He's scared them; this dance has a business tang to it, though it's only a private show. What the devil is the matter with you?"

"I'm giddy," I said. I had to sit down. Koki, not looking at me at all, slid to the floor in his own particular corner. I do not know how I became aware that he was somehow, covertly, watching.

I put my hands before my eyes; there seemed to be things—thoughts, visions—that I wanted to brush away. Hypnotism? No, not that. I haven't the word. There isn't one in English, I tell you. The black West is full of things that have no names in European languages.

I turned my back on Koki, and looked at the dancing torches on the shore, at the stars, seen palely through drifts of smoke, at the gray glimmer of foam a long way off, where the tide was coming in. I tried to think of Gulf geography—of the day of the month, of anything commonplace, anything rooted to the ordinary earth. But all through, I felt Koki's steady, sly eyes; they were looking straight through my shoulder-blades and my spine. And I remembered. I dreamed.

"Like to go home?" It was Winans' voice, beside me. I did not make any answer, but I got up, heavily, as if something were

holding me—perhaps something was—and went down the steps of the *dubu* in the milk-warm wind of night, without looking back.

WHEN we had reached the store, and turned up the lamp, Winans, looking at me squarely, with his long legs stretched out in front of his chair, asked: "What did he do to you?"

I wanted to say that Koki had done nothing at all, but instead—my mind being not quite out of the queer, gelatinous state into which it had fallen—I answered truthfully:

"He made me see people who are dead."

Winans fell to twisting his dark mustache, till you would have thought he would pull it out by the roots. He did not ask me what people. He was not a bit more interested in me than you are; and yet, if I told you my story—if I could make you understand it and realize it—

I have one bit of wisdom left. I never try.

I stayed a day or two at Kaluna, and it struck me that Winans, too,—although I had thought him different from others,—was falling little by little under the spell of the Long, Long Day. He had got the habit of staring—staring for half an hour at a time, silent, out across the gray unlovely sea, where no ships rode. He used to wait quite a long while, sometimes, before he answered what you asked—and he never knew that he had done so. He read less, I thought; he smoked all the time. Drink had not got him yet. It would come.

A good deal of time, for no reason that I could find, he used to spend in the native *dubu*. I thought he talked to Koki. Just about then, Koki began to decorate himself with expensive gauds out of the store—red shell-money belts, curved boar-tusks, which cost a lot, and even a couple of those thick white armlets carved by native ingenuity out of the inner side of the giant clam, which are just the same as jewelry to a Papuan. Every store keeps them; they pass as coin—and a good deal of coin, too—among the natives.

I didn't know of any equivalent that Koki had given, and I could not have missed seeing it, if ordinary trade had been done, for there was the value of a ton of copra at least in the stuff that he had got. I never went near the *dubu* again myself. Some people may like—may even seek out—the sort of experience that had been thrown at me. I am not one of them.

But I rather thought, one day when I met Winans coming back to his house with a small, cornery photograph-frame visibly distending his trouser pocket, that I had secured the key of the mystery.

I had not. I had only touched the fringes of it—no more.

Next day Winans, who was looking extraordinarily well—bright-eyed, erect and almost with a color—told me that his health seemed to be breaking, and that he wanted to get away to Sydney by the Thursday Island boat, which would be due a score or two miles down the coast, in a day or so.

"I can pick her up in the whaleboat, and the boys will bring it back," he said. "I want to know if you'll take on the store while I'm away."

We had become rather friendly, I might say. Winans was a little bored with me—most people are; but he seemed to like me all the same. I liked him very well, and I liked the job better. Things were not going prosperously with me just then. I took it on without much discussion. I may say the terms were all right. Winans left next morning at daylight; he told me he might be away three months, and might be six. "If anything should happen to me," he said, "look up the papers in the small tin box. But I don't think anything will. I think my run of bad luck has ended."

I could not think why he should say that, with his professional name still in the gutter; his home still on a black-sand beach, among cannibal natives; and his girl, who must have been far too good for him, dead. But the only thing that concerned me just then was the fact that I had struck on something that suited me very well. I unpacked my stuff in Winans' room, from which the photograph had disappeared; and I set to work to take proper stock of everything in the store, and make out a system of my own for keeping things in order.

And though I say it who shouldn't, Kaluna trading-store was no loser by the change. In a week I had worked the business up to a point beyond any ever reached by Winans. I had a method of cumulative payments, intended to encourage the bringing in of copra on a larger scale; I had a system of credit with all the influence of the *dubu* behind it to hurry up defaulters, that would be worth your own while to learn, if ever you thought of going trading down the coasts of Papua, which of course you will not.

Only two things troubled me. One was Koki. He could not get over Winans' abrupt departure, which I may say, he had done his best to prevent, by dismal prophecies as to loss of good will and lessened or vanished trade. And he never ceased worrying me about the matter, and begging from me. He would want a string of beads today, tomorrow a couple of new tomahawks, then six sticks of tobacco and a packet of matches; after that he would have the cheek to loaf in, painted black, white and red up to the eyes, and want to take a new three-legged iron cooking-pot away with him to his house. I had to put a stop to the thing. I knew that Winans had given him unlimited credit, and in his way he was valuable to trade, but a fair thing's a fair thing, in my opinion, and Koki had gone beyond what was fair. I told him flat out he would have to pay cash—that is, copra—for every bead or match he got from the store, in future. He looked at me out of his sullen, black-fiery eyes, and went away, humming the cannibal death-song. I knew what he meant, but I did not care two pins, because the Government steamer was overdue along the coast, and I had made up my mind that Koki should get what was coming to him, as soon as the Southern Cross flag should flutter in the roadstead. It was a matter of nine murders, two more or less ritual, four concerned with jealousy of his numerous wives, and the rest spite, revenge and cruelty, or maybe desire of power.

The Government authorities wanted to know why he hadn't been given up before. I said that so far as I could make out, it was because he was good for trade; but I dare say, if I had tried very hard, which I did not, I could have made out a little farther, and perhaps a little differently.

Anyhow, Koki was taken off in irons, and I knew he would be hanged. They don't hang a native in Papua for a stray (native) murder or so, but when it comes to slaughter by wholesale, the Government loses patience. So that was one trouble removed.

The other, it seemed, nothing would remove. I had not felt any bad effects from Koki's games with me on the evening of my arrival—because, I suppose, I was not looking for that sort of thing, or wanting it; but after Winans left, from the very first, queer things began happening to me, and the annoying part of it was, that they were not my things—if I make myself clear—but *his*. Whatever subjects for remorse my past may hold,—whatever sorrows have gone plowsharing through my heart,—they are not concerned with the building and the breaking of bridges, or with faces of people tumbling down in a smash of broken railway carriages into a foaming stream. I do not think I ought to have been bothered with these things, especially when I was wide awake and trying to read a novel in Winans' long planter chair, with the work of the day behind me, and a pleasant air creeping up from the breeze-cooled sands, in the quiet hour before one goes to bed.

But there it was, and the going-away of Koki made no difference at all, as I had rather hoped it might. On the contrary, things got worse. It was not only drowning, smashed people, and engines plunging horribly down through the air (you cannot think how sinister, how alive and dying at the same time, a railway engine can look, unless you have seen a thing like that); it was things a great deal more unpleasant.

One does not mind the ghosts—the spirits, the—it would be no good giving you the native word, but that is what I really mean—of people, all together; at least, one does not mind very much. But when it is one person, alone, and all the time, one does mind.

FOR it came to be one person, and as I have said, not anyone connected with my history—nothing so remarkable! It was simply Winans' girl, the dead one. Rosemarie (he had told me that was her name, Rosemarie Ibister) kept showing me her face, of nights, between my book and my eyes, and I did not want her to do anything of the kind. She was pretty, but she wasn't my girl, and dead or alive, a man does not take much interest in a woman who is crazily in love with some one else. One could not mistake the face; it was so distinctive in style, and the hair was so unusually lovely. But I cannot remember that I liked it as well as I had liked the photograph. I thought it was because the thing bothered me so. I may be of another opinion now.

Well, the face kept coming, as I have said, and now and again the suiciding railway engine, that looked so horridly alive, came too. And once—it was a curious thing—I was looking through some of Winans' books—picture books they were, and very good ones, reproductions of famous paintings, scenes on the Continent, and so on. And I came across one picture, among others, that seemed to me extraordinarily lifelike. It was in a set of photographic reproductions: somebody's great picture, "The Death of Mary Queen of Scots;" somebody else's "Spirit of the Summit"—a girl wrapped in a sort of sheet, (Continued on page 98)



Illustrated by
Gustavus C. Widney

"Don't you know," cried Mrs. Podmarsh, "that smoking is poisonous and injurious to health?"

Rollo Podmarsh Comes To

By

P. G. WODEHOUSE

DOWN on the new bowling-green behind the clubhouse some sort of competition was in progress. The seats about the smooth strip of turf were crowded, and the weak-minded yapping of the patients made itself plainly audible to the Oldest Member as he sat in his favorite chair in the smoking-room. He shifted restlessly, and a frown marred the placidity of his venerable brow. To the Oldest Member a golf-club was a golf-club, and he resented the introduction of any alien element. He had opposed the institution of tennis-courts; and the suggestion of a bowling-green had stirred him to his depths.

A young man in spectacles came into the smoking-room. His high forehead was aglow, and he lapped up a ginger-ale with the air of one who considers that he has earned it.

"Capital exercise!" he said, beaming upon the Oldest Member. The Oldest Member laid down his "Vardon on Casual

Did Admiral Drake or Rollo Podmarsh show the greater valor? Think it over, when you've read this joyful saga of a gallant golfer — by the whimsical author of "A Very Shy Gentleman" and of "The Plus Fours."

Water," and peered suspiciously at his companion. "What did you go round in?" he asked.

"Oh, I wasn't playing golf," said the young man. "Bowls."

"A nauseous pursuit!" said the Oldest Member coldly and resumed his reading.

The young man seemed nettled.

"I don't know why you should say that," he retorted. "It's a splendid game."

"I rank it," said the Oldest Member, "with the juvenile pastime of marbles."

The young man pondered for some moments.

"Well, anyway," he said at length, "it was good enough for Drake."

"As I have not the pleasure of the acquaintance of your friend Drake, I am unable to estimate the value of his endorsement."

"The Drake. The Spanish Armada Drake. He was playing

bowls on Plymouth Hoe when they told him that the Armada was in sight. "There is time to finish the game," he replied. That's what Drake thought of bowls."

"If he had been a golfer, he would have ignored the Armada altogether."

"It's easy enough to say that," said the young man with spirit, "but can the history of golf show a parallel case?"

"A million, I should imagine."

"But you've forgotten them, eh?" said the young man satirically.

"On the contrary," said the Oldest Member. "As a typical instance, neither more nor less remarkable than a hundred others, I will select the story of Rollo Podmarsh." He settled himself comfortably in his chair, and placed the tips of his fingers together.

"This Rollo Podmarsh—"

"No, I say!" protested the young man, looking at his watch.

"This Rollo Podmarsh—"

"Yes, but—"

THIS Rollo Podmarsh (said the Oldest Member) was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and like other young men in that position, he had rather allowed a mother's tender care to take the edge off what you might call his rugged manliness. Not to put too fine a point on it, he had permitted his parent to coddle him ever since he had been in the nursery; and now, in his twenty-eighth year, he invariably wore flannel next his skin, changed his shoes the moment they got wet, and—from September to May, inclusive—never went to bed without partaking of a bowl of hot arrowroot. Not, you would say, the stuff of which heroes are made. But you would be wrong. Rollo Podmarsh was a golfer, and consequently pure gold at heart; and in his hour of crisis all the good in him came to the surface.

In giving you this character-sketch of Rollo, I have been at pains to make it crisp; for I observe that you are wriggling in a restless manner and you persist in pulling out that watch of yours and gazing at it. Let me tell you that if a mere skeleton outline of the man has this effect upon you, I am glad for your sake that you never met his mother. Mrs. Podmarsh could talk with enjoyment for hours on end about her son's character and habits. And on the September evening on which I introduce her to you, though she had as a fact been speaking only for some ten minutes, it had seemed like hours to the girl Mary Kent, who was the party of the second part to the conversation.

Mary Kent was the daughter of an old school-friend of Mrs. Podmarsh, and she had come to spend the autumn and winter with her while her parents were abroad. The scheme had never looked particularly good to Mary, and after ten minutes of her hostess on the subject of Rollo, she was beginning to weave dreams of knotted sheets and a swift get-away through the bedroom window in the dark of the night.

"He is a strict teetotaler," said Mrs. Podmarsh.

"Really?"

"And has never smoked in his life."

"Fancy that!"

"But here is the dear boy now," said Mrs. Podmarsh fondly.

Down the road toward them was coming a tall, well-knit figure in a Norfolk coat and gray flannel trousers. Over his broad shoulders was suspended a bag of golf-clubs.

"Is that Mr. Podmarsh?" exclaimed Mary.

She was surprised. After all she had been listening to about the arrowroot and the flannel next the skin and the rest of it, she had pictured the son of the house as a far weedier specimen. She had been expecting to meet a small, slender young man with

an eyebrow mustache and pince-nez; but this person approaching might have stepped straight out of Jack Dempsey's training-camp.

"Does he play golf?" asked Mary, herself an enthusiast.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Podmarsh. "He makes a point of going out on the links once a day. He says the fresh air gives him such an appetite."

Mary, who had taken a violent dislike to Rollo on the evidence of his mother's description of his habits, had softened toward him on discovering that he was a golfer. She now reverted to her previous opinion. A man who could play the noble game from such ignoble motives was beyond the pale.

"Rollo is exceedingly good at golf," proceeded Mrs. Podmarsh. "He scores more than a hundred and twenty every time, while Mr. Jenkinson, who is supposed to be one of the best players in the club, seldom manages to reach eighty. But Rollo is very modest,

—modesty is one of his best qualities,—and you would never guess he was so skillful unless you were told. —Well, Rollo darling, did you have a nice game? You didn't get your feet wet, I hope? This is Mary Kent, dear."

Rollo Podmarsh shook hands with Mary. And at her touch the strange dizzy feeling which had come over him at the sight of her suddenly became increased a thousand-fold. As I see that you are consulting your watch once more, I will not describe his emotions as exhaustively as I might. I will merely say that he had never felt anything resembling this sensation of dazed ecstasy since the occasion when a twenty-foot putt of his, which had been going well off the line, as his putts generally did, had hit a worm-cast sou'-sou'-east of the hole and popped in, giving him a snappy six. Rollo Podmarsh, as you will have divined, was in love at first sight—which makes it all the sadder to think Mary at the moment was regarding him as an out-cast and a blister.

Mrs. Podmarsh, having enfolded her son in

a vehement embrace, drew back with a startled exclamation, sniffing:

"Rollo!" she cried. "You smell of tobacco-smoke."

Rollo looked embarrassed.

"Well, the fact is, Mother—"

A hard protuberance in his coat-pocket attracted Mrs. Podmarsh's notice. She swooped and drew out a big-bowled pipe.

"Rollo!" she exclaimed, aghast.

"Well, the fact is, Mother—"

"Don't you know," cried Mrs. Podmarsh, "that smoking is poisonous and injurious to health?"

"Yes. But the fact is, Mother—"

"It causes nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gnawing of the stomach, headache, weak eyes, red spots on the skin, throat irritation, asthma, bronchitis, heart-failure, lung-trouble, catarrh, melancholy, neurasthenia, loss of memory, impaired will-power, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, enervation, lassitude, lack of ambition, and falling out of hair."

"Yes, I know, Mother. But the fact is, Ted Ray smokes all the time he's playing, and I thought it might improve my game."

And it was at these splendid words that Mary Kent felt for the first time that something might be made of Rollo Podmarsh.



Rollo shut his eyes, and his lips moved feverishly. He was registering a vow that he would not fail her.



Lettice tackled Rollo. "Aren't you feeling well, Uncle?"
"I feel old," admitted Rollo, "old and rather battered."

That she experienced one-millionth of the fervor which was gnawing at his vitals, I will not say. A woman does not fall in love in a flash like a man. But at least she no longer regarded him with loathing. On the contrary, she found herself liking him. There was, she considered, the right stuff in Rollo. And if, as seemed probable from his mother's conversation, it would take a bit of digging to bring it up, well—she liked rescue-work and had plenty of time.

Mr. Arnold Bennett in a recent essay advises young bachelors to proceed with a certain caution in matters of the heart. A young man should, he asserts, first decide whether or not he is ready for love, then whether it is better to marry earlier or later; thirdly, whether his ambitions are such that a wife will prove a hindrance to his career. These romantic preliminaries concluded, he may grab a girl and go to it. Rollo Podmarsh would have made a tough audience for these precepts. Since the days of Antony and Cleopatra, probably no one had ever got more swiftly off the mark. One may say that he was in love before he had come within two yards of the girl. And each day that passed found him more nearly up to his eyebrows in the tender emotion.

He thought of Mary when he was changing his wet shoes; he dreamed of her while putting flannel next his skin; he yearned for her over the evening arborroot. Why, the man was such a slave to his devotion that he actually went to the length of purloining small articles belonging to her. Two days after Mary's arrival Rollo Podmarsh was driving off the first tee with one of her handkerchiefs, a powder-puff and a dozen hairpins

secreted in his left breast-pocket. When dressing for dinner, he used to take them out and look at them, and at night he slept with them under his pillow. Heavens, how he loved that girl!

One evening, when they had gone out into the garden together to look at the new moon,—Rollo, by his mother's advice, wearing a woolen scarf to protect his throat,—he endeavored to bring the conversation round to the important subject. Mary's last remark had been about earwigs. Considered as a cue, it lacked a subtle something; but Rollo was not the man to be discouraged by that.

"Talking of earwigs, Miss Kent," he said in a low, musical voice, "have you ever been in love?"

Mary was silent for a moment before replying.

"Yes, once—when I was eleven—with a conjurer who came to perform at my birthday-party. He took a rabbit and two eggs out of my hair, and life seemed one grand sweet song."

"Never since then?"

"Never."

"Suppose, just for the sake of argument—suppose you ever did love anyone: what—er—a sort of man would it be?"

"A hero," said Mary promptly.

"A hero?" said Rollo, somewhat taken aback. "What sort of hero?"

"Any sort. I could only love a really brave man—a man who had done some wonderful heroic action."

"Shall we go in?" said Rollo hoarsely. "The air is a little chilly."

We have now, therefore, arrived at a period in Rollo Podmarsh's career which might have inspired those lines of Henley's about "the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole." What with one thing and another, he was in an almost Job-like condition of despondency. I say "one thing and another," for it was not only hopeless love that weighed him down. In addition to being hopelessly in love, he was greatly depressed about his golf.

On Rollo in his capacity of golfer, I have so far not dwelt. You have probably allowed yourself, in spite of the significant episode of the pipe, to dismiss him as one of those placid, contented, shall I say dilettanti, golfers who are so frequent in these degenerate days. Such was not the case. Outwardly placid, Rollo was consumed inwardly by an ever-burning fever of ambition. His aims were not extravagant. He did not want to become amateur champion, nor even to win a monthly medal; but he did with his whole soul desire one of these days to go round the course in under a hundred. This feat accomplished, it was his intention to set the seal on his golfing career by playing a real money-match; and already he had selected his opponent, a certain Colonel Bodger, a tottery performer of advanced years who for the last decade had been a martyr to lumbago.

But it began to look as if even the modest goal he had marked out for himself were beyond his powers. Day after day he would step onto the first tee, glowing with zeal and hope, only to crawl home in the quiet even-fall with another hundred and twenty on his card. He was one of those golfers who never seem to have what you might call a full hand. If he was on his drive, he was off his putting; every time he struck a good vein of putting, something was bound to go wrong with his iron-shots; and on the rare occasion when it seemed as though he was at the top of his form in all branches of



"What is the matter, Rollo?" demanded Mrs. Willoughby sharply. "Don't stand there looking like a dying duck."

the game, a half-gale was sure to spring up, and that dished him absolutely every time. Little wonder, then, that he began to lose his appetite and would moan feebly at the sight of a poached egg.

With Mrs. Podmarsh sedulously watching over her son's health, you might have supposed that this inability on his part to teach the foodstuffs to take a joke would have caused consternation in the home. But it so happened that Rollo's mother had recently been reading a medical treatise in which an eminent physician stated that we all eat too much nowadays, and that the secret of a happy life is to lay off the carbohydrates to some extent. She was, therefore, delighted to observe the young man's moderation in the matter of food, and frequently held him up as an example to be noted and followed by little Lettice Willoughby, her granddaughter, who was a good and consistent trencherwoman, particularly rough on the puddings. Little Lettice, I should mention, was the daughter of Rollo's sister Enid, who lived in the neighborhood. Mrs. Willoughby had been compelled to go away on a visit a few days before, and had left her child with Mrs. Podmarsh during her absence.

You can fool some of the people all the time, but Lettice Willoughby was not of the type that is easily deceived. A nice, old-fashioned child would no doubt have accepted without questioning her grandmother's dictum that roly-poly pudding could not fail to hand a devastating wallop to the blood-pressure, and that to take two helpings of it was practically equivalent to walking right into the family vault. A child with less decided opinions of her own would have been impressed by the spectacle of her uncle refusing sustenance, and would have received without demur the statement that he did it because he felt that abstinence was good for his health. Lettice was a modern child and knew better. She had had experience of this loss of appetite and its significance. The first symptom which had preceded the demise of poor old Ponto, who had recently handed in his portfolio after holding office for ten years as the Willoughby family dog, had been this same disinclination to absorb nourishment. Besides, she was an observant child, and had not failed to note the haggard misery in her uncle's eyes.

Lettice tackled Rollo squarely on the subject one morning after breakfast. He had retired into the more distant parts of the garden, and was leaning forward, when she found him, with his head buried in his hands.

"Hullo, Uncle," said Lettice.

Rollo looked up wanly.

"Ah, child!" he said. He was fond of his niece.

"Aren't you feeling well, Uncle?"

"Far, far from well."

"It's old age, I expect," said Lettice.

"I feel old," admitted Rollo, "old and rather battered. Ah, Lettice, laugh and be gay while you can."

"All right, Uncle."

"Make the most of your happy, careless, smiling, halcyon childhood."

"Right ho, Uncle."

"When you get to my age, dear, you will realize that it is a sad, hopeless world—a world where, if you keep your head down, you forget to let the club-head lead, where, even if you do happen by a miracle to keep 'em straight with your brassie, you blow up on the green and fuzzle a six-inch putt."

Lettice could not quite understand what Uncle Rollo was talking about, but she gathered broadly that she had been correct in supposing him to be in a bad state, and her warm, childish heart was filled with pity for him. She walked thoughtfully away, and Rollo resumed his reverie.

Into each life, as the poet says, some rain must fall. So much had recently been falling into Rollo's that when Fortune at last sent along a belated sunbeam, it exercised a cheering effect out of all proportion to its size. By this I mean that when, some four days after his conversation with Lettice, Mary Kent asked him to play golf with her, he read into the invitation a significance which only a lover could have seen in it. I will not go so far as to say that Rollo Podmarsh looked on Mary Kent's suggestion that they should have a round together as actually tantamount to a revelation of undying love, but he certainly regarded it as a most encouraging sign. It seemed to him that things were beginning to move, that Rollo Preferred was on a rising market. Gone was the gloom of the past days. He forgot those sad solitary wanderings of his in the bushes at the bottom of the garden; he forgot that his mother had bought him a new set of winter woolies which felt like horsehair; he forgot that for the last few evenings his arrowroot had tasted rummy. His whole mind was occupied with the astounding fact that she had voluntarily offered to play golf with him, and he walked out onto the first tee filled



Mary gazed at these exhibits with amazement. "But—but these are mine!" she exclaimed.

with a yeasty exhilaration which nearly caused him to burst into song.

"How shall we play?" asked Mary. "I am a twelve. What is your handicap?"

Rollo was under the disadvantage of not actually possessing a handicap. He had a sort of private system of bookkeeping of his own by which he took strokes over, if they did not seem to him to be up to sample, and allowed himself five-foot putts at discretion. So he had never actually handed in the three cards necessary for handicapping purposes.

"I don't exactly know," he said. "It's my ambition to get round in under a hundred, but I've never managed it yet."

"Never?"

"Never! It's strange, but something always seems to go wrong."

"Perhaps you'll manage it today," said Mary encouragingly—so encouragingly that it was all Rollo could do to refrain from flinging himself at her feet and barking like a dog. "Well, I'll start you two holes up, and we'll see how we get on. Shall I take the honor?"

She drove off one of those fair-to-medium balls which go with a twelve handicap—not a great length, but nice and straight.

"Splendid!" cried Rollo devoutly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mary. "I wouldn't call it anything special."

Titanic emotions were surging in Rollo's bosom as he addressed his ball. He had never felt like this before, especially on the first tee—where as a rule he found himself overcome with a nervous humility.

"Oh, Mary—Mary!" he breathed to himself as he swung.

You, who squander your golden youth fooling about on a bowling-green, will not understand the magic of those three words. But if you were a golfer, you would realize that in selecting just that invocation to breathe to himself, Rollo Podmarsh had hit by sheer accident on the ideal method of achieving a fine drive. Let me explain. The first two words, tensely breathed, are just sufficient to take a man with the proper slowness to the top of his swing; the first syllable of the second "Mary" exactly coincides with the striking of the ball; and the final "ry!" takes care of the following-through. The consequence was that Rollo's ball, instead



of hopping down the hill like an embarrassed duck, as was its usual practice, sang off the tee with a scream like a shell, nodded in passing to Mary's ball, where it lay some hundred and fifty yards down the course, and carrying on from there, came to rest within easy distance of the green. For the first time in his golfing life, Rollo Podmarsh had hit a nifty.

Mary followed the ball's flight with astonished eyes.

"But this will never do!" she exclaimed. "I can't possibly start you two-up if you're going to do this sort of thing."

Rollo blushed.

"I shouldn't think it would happen again," he said. "I've never done a drive like that before."

"But it must happen again," said Mary firmly. "This is evidently your day. If you don't get round in under a hundred today, I shall never forgive you."

Rollo shut his eyes, and his lips moved feverishly. He was registering a vow that, come what might, he would not fail her. A minute later he was holing out in three, one under bogey.

The second hole is the short lake-hole. Bogey is three, and Rollo generally did it in four; for it was his custom not to count any balls he might sink in the water, but to start afresh with the one which happened to get over and then take three putts. But today something seemed to tell him that he would not require the aid of this ingenious system. As he took his mashie from the bag, he *knew* that his first shot would soar successfully onto the green.

"Ah, Mary!" he breathed as he swung.

These subtleties are wasted on a worm, if you will pardon the expression, like yourself, who possibly owing to a defective education is content to spend life's springtime rolling wooden balls across a lawn; but I will explain that in altering and shortening his soliloquy at this juncture, Rollo had done the very thing any good pro would have recommended. If he had murmured, "Oh, Mary!, Mary!" as before, he would have over-swung. "Ah, Mary!" was exactly right for a half-swing with the mashie. His ball shot up in a beautiful arc and trickled to within six inches of the hole.

Mary was delighted. There was something about this big,

diffident man which had appealed from the first to everything in her that was motherly.

"Marvelous!" she said. "You'll get a two. Five for the first two holes! Why, you simply must get round in under a hundred now." She swung, but too lightly, and her ball fell in the water. "I'll give you this," she said without the slightest chagrin, for this girl had a beautiful nature. "Let's get on to the third. Four up! Why, you're wonderful!"

And, not to weary you with too much detail, I will simply remark that, stimulated by her gentle encouragement, Rollo Podmarsh actually came off the ninth green with a medal score of forty-six for the half-round. A ten

on the seventh had spoiled his card to some extent, and a nine on the eighth had not helped; but nevertheless here he was in forty-six, with the easier half of the course before him. He tingled all over—partly because he was wearing the new winter woolies to which I have alluded previously, but principally owing to triumph, elation and love. He gazed at Mary as Dante might have gazed at Beatrice on one of his particularly sentimental mornings.

Mary uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, I've just remembered!" she exclaimed. "I promised to write last night to Jane Simpson and give her that new formula for knitting jumpers. I think I'll phone her now from the clubhouse, and then it'll be off my mind. You go on to the tenth, and I'll join you there."

Rollo proceeded over the brow of the hill to the tenth tee, and was filling in the time with practice-swings when he heard his name spoken.

"Good gracious, Rollo! I couldn't believe it was you at first." He turned, to see his sister, Mrs. Willoughby, the mother of the child Lettice.

"Hullo," he said. "When did you get back?"

"Late last night. Why, it's extraordinary!"

"Hope you had a good time. What's extraordinary? Listen, Enid, do you know what I've done? Forty-six for the first nine! Forty-six—and holing out every putt."

"Oh, then that accounts for it."

"Accounts for what?"

"Why, your looking so pleased with life. I got an idea from Letty, when she wrote to me, that you were at death's door. Your gloom seems to have made a deep impression on the child. Her letter was full of it."

Rollo was moved.

"Dear little Letty! She is wonderfully sympathetic."

"Well, I must be off now," said Enid Willoughby. "I'm late. . . . Oh, talking of Letty. Don't children say the funniest things! She wrote in her letter that you were very old and wretched, and that she was going to put you out of your misery."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Rollo.

"We had to poison poor old Ponto the other day, you know, and poor little Letty was inconsolable till we explained to her that it was really the kindest thing to do, because he was so old and ill. But just imagine her thinking of wanting to end *your* sufferings!"

"Ha-ha!" laughed Rollo. "Ha-ha-h—"

His voice trailed off into a broken gurgle. Quite suddenly a sinister thought had come to him.

The arrowroot had tasted rummy!

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" asked Mrs. Willoughby, regarding his ashen face.

Rollo could find no words. He yammered speechlessly. Yes, for several nights the arrowroot had tasted *very* rummy. Rummy! There was no other adjective. Even as he plied the spoon, he had said to himself: "This arrowroot tastes rummy!" And he uttered a sharp yelp as he remembered—it had been little Lettice who had brought it to him! He recollected being touched at the time by the kindly act.

"What *is* the matter, Rollo?" demanded Mrs. Willoughby sharply. "Don't stand there looking like a dying duck."

"I *am* a dying duck," responded Rollo hoarsely. "A dying man, I mean. Enid, that infernal child has poisoned me!"

"Don't be ridiculous! And kindly (*Continued on page 132*)

Everywhere people are discussing this greatest of Mr. Hughes' novels—and asking each other if David RoBards should have kept silence about the strange events in Tulip-tree House.

Within these Walls—

By

RUPERT HUGHES

The Story So Far:

THE plague had smitten old New York, and panic followed. 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. But 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 and others averred, was caused by lack of adequate water-supply in New York; 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 returned 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, and he hurried to his volunteer fire-company. With Chalender and the others he did his ineffectual best to stay the flames; on one occasion Chalender saved his life. Finally they had to fight the conflagration by blowing up buildings with gunpowder. And RoBards, with a marine-officer 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.

Illustrated by



Arthur I. Keller

Chalender was injured in separating two fighting workmen and was carried to Tulip-tree Farm. Sometime 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. Eventually, 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

He surprised couples stealing embraces or kisses frantically, or whispering guiltily, laughing with more than mischief. Sometimes it was Immy that he encountered, sometimes Keith.

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. . . . It was some weeks later that Patty learned what had happened.

About this time Patty met the great Daniel Webster at a dinner in New York and enlisted his aid in her father's claim for damages against the city. But even Webster's eloquence did not suffice, and when at last the case came to trial, the verdict was against Jessamine. And shortly thereafter, at Tulip-tree, the heart-broken old man took a suicidal dose of laudanum. Dr. Matson mercifully gave a certificate of heart-failure—and the walls of Tulip-tree kept silence.

Immy and Keith were grown up now—as RoBards realized with a shock when Chalender, calling to say good-by before his journey to the new California gold-fields, said to Immy: "The first nugget of gold I find, I'll bring back for our wedding ring."

It was only a little later that RoBards overheard young Chirside propose to Immy, and her halting attempt to tell him of Jud Lasher. *(The story continues in detail:)*

A STRANGE thing, a word; and stranger, the terror of it. Stranger still, the things everybody knows that must never be named. Strangest of all, that the mind sees most vividly what is not mentioned, what cannot be told.

Immy, for all her rebellious modernness and impatience of old-fashioned pruderies, was a slave of the word. She gasped and groped and filled her story with the pervivdness of eloquent silences:

"It was when I was a little girl—a very little girl. There was a big terrible boy—a young man, rather—who lived down the road—ugly and horrible as a hyena. And one day—when Papa was gone—and I was playing—he came along and he spoke to me with a grin, and he took hold of me—it was like a snake! And I tried to break loose—and my little brother fought him. But he knocked and kicked Keith down—and took me up and

carried me away. I fought and screamed but he put his hand over my mouth and almost smothered me—and kept on running—"

Then there was a hush so deep that RoBards felt he could hear his tears where they struck the carpet under his feet. His eyelids were locked in woe, but he seemed to see what she thought of; he seemed to see the frightened eyes of Ernest Chirside trying not to understand.

Immy went on:

"Then Jud Lasher heard Papa coming, and he ran. Papa caught him and beat him almost to death. . . . I didn't understand much, then. But now! Papa made me promise never to speak of it; but you have a higher right than anybody else, Ernest—that is, if you still—unless you—oh, tell me! Speak—say something!"

The boy spoke with an unimaginable wolfishness in his throat: "Where is the man? Where is that man?"

"I don't know. I never saw him after that—oh, yes, he came back again once. But Papa was watching and saved me from him—and after that I never heard of him. Yes, I did hear some one say he went to sea."

Another hush, and then Ernest's voice, pinched with emotion:

"I believe if I could find that villain I could kill him. My soul is full of murder. God forgive me!"

He thought of his own soul first!

Poor Immy suffered the devastation of a girl who finds her hero common clay, her saint a prig. But with apology she said:

"I ought never to have told you."

He dazed her by his reply:

"Oh, I won't tell anybody, never fear! But don't tell me any more just now. I must think it out."

He wanted to think—at a time when thinking was poltroon, and only feeling and impulsive action were decent. Immy waited while he thought. At length he said:

"If that man still lives, he'll come back again!"

"No—no!"

"He'll come back—for you."

"You wouldn't let him, would you?"

"You belong to him, in a way. It's the Lord's will."

He could say that and think it! The young zealot's own agony had benumbed him perhaps, but RoBards could have leaped from the window and strangled him as a more loathsome reptile than Jud Lasher. But he too was numb with astonishment.

Then the boy went human all at once and began to sob and wail: "Oh, Immy, Immy! My poor Immy!"

RoBards stepped forward to the window in a rush of happiness, and saw Immy put out her hands to her lover. He pushed them away and rose and moved blindly across the grass. But there was a heavy dew, and he stepped back to the walk to keep his feet from getting wet. He stumbled along the path to the gate and leaned there a moment, sobbing. Then he swung it wide, as he ran out to where his horse was tied. And the gate beat back and forth, creaking, like a rusty heart.

RoBards stood gazing down at his daughter, eerily beautiful in the moonlight through the rose-leaves. For a long time he sorrowed over her; then he went stealthily across his library into the hall, and out to the porch, where he looked at the night a moment. He discovered Immy as if by accident, and exclaimed: "Who's that?"

"It's only me, Papa, only me!"

"Only you? Why, you're about all there is. You're the most precious thing on earth."

He put his arm about her, but she sprang to her feet and snapped at him:

"Don't! If you please, Papa, don't touch me. I—I'm not fit to be touched."

She stood a way from him, bracing herself with a kind of pride. Then she broke into a maudlin giggle such as RoBards had

heard from the besotted girls in the Five Points. And she walked into the house.

He followed her, and knocked on her door. But she would not answer, and when he tried it, it was locked.

Chapter Twenty-nine

THE next morning RoBards heard her voice again. It was loud and rough, drowning the angry voice of her brother Keith. She was saying:

"I was a fool to tell him! And I was a fool to tell you I told him!"

"I'll beat him to death when I find him; that's all I'll do." Keith roared, with his new bass voice.

"If you ever touch him or mention my name to him—or his name to me," Immy stormed, "I'll—I'll kill—I'll kill myself. Do you understand?"

"Aw, Immy! Immy!" Keith pleaded with wonderful pity in his voice. Then she wept, long, piteously, in stabbing sobs that tore the heart of her father.

RoBards went to his library and stood staring at the marble hearthstone. Somewhere down there was what was left of Jud Lasher. He had not been destroyed utterly, for he was still abroad like a fiend, wreaking cruel harm.

Immy spoke to her father, and he was startled, for he had not heard her come in:

"Papa."

"Yes, my darling!"

"Do you think Jud Lasher will ever come back?"

"I know he won't."

"But how—how do you know that he won't, Papa?"

"Oh, I just feel sure. He'd never dare come back."

"If he did, would I belong to him?"

"Could a lamb belong to a sheep-killing dog?"

"That's so. Thank you, Papa." And she was gone.

A boy on a horse brought her a note that afternoon. She told no one its contents, and when Patty asked who sent it, Immy did not answer. RoBards was sure it came from Ernest Chirnside, for the youth never appeared. But RoBards felt no right to ask.

Somehow he felt that there was no place for him as a father in Immy's after-conduct. She returned to her wildness, like a deer that has broken back to the woods and will not be coaxed in again.

How could he blame her? What solemn admonition could he parrot to a soul that had had such an experience with honesty, such a contact with virtue?

Young Chirnside never came to the house. But he was



Patty sat on the edge of his bed and read to him from the story.



The dancers seemed to increase in audacity. Men made a joke of the crassest behavior.

the only youth in the countryside, it seemed, that kept away. Patty tried to curb Immy's frantic hilarities, but she had such insolence for her pains that she was stricken helpless.

Then Immy decided that the country was dull. The young men went back to town, or to their various colleges. Keith went to Columbia College, which was still in Park Place, though plans were afoot for moving it out into the more rural district of Fiftieth Street and Madison Avenue.

Keith met Chirnside on the campus, but he could not force a quarrel without dragging Immy's name into it. So he let slip the opportunity for punishment, as his father had let slip the occasion for punishing Chalender. Father and son were curiously alike in their passion for secrets.

Keith had little interest in the classic studies that made up most of the curriculum. He could not endure Latin, and the only thing he found tolerable in Cæsar was the description of the bridge that drove the other students frantic with its difficulties.

He was an engineer by nature. He had never recovered from his ambition to be a hydraulic savior of the city. And it looked as if the town would soon need another redemption.

In 1849 the Water Commissioners were dismissed and the Croton Aqueduct Department intrusted with the priesthood of the river god and his long, long temple.

So Keith looked forward to the time when he should be needed by New York and by other cities. And he studied hard. But he played hard too. The students were a lawless set, and drunkenness and religious infidelity were rival methods for distressing their teachers. Up at New Haven, the Yale boys in a certain class, feeling themselves wronged by a certain professor, had disguised themselves as Indians and with long knives whittled all the study benches into shavings, while the terrified instructor cowered on his throne and watched.

There was grave anxiety for the morals of the whole nation. The city was growing too fast. By 1850 it had passed the half-million mark! The churches had tripled in number, and the eight theaters had not added one to their ranks. Yet crime increased. Churches were not numerous enough to hold a quarter of the population, yet most of them were sparsely attended.

The American home was collapsing. Dr. Chirnside preached on the exalted cost of living, and stated that church weddings were on the decrease. The hotel was ruining the family. Rents were so exorbitant, servants so scarce and incompetent, that people were giving up the domesticity of the good old days.

The clergy bewailed the approaching collapse of a nation that had forgotten God—or had never remembered Him. There was a movement afoot to amend the Constitution with an acknowledgment of the Deity and "take the stain of atheism from that all-important document."

These were the Sunday thoughts.

In contrast were the Fourth of July thoughts, when the nation sang its own hallelujahs, and like another deity, contentedly meditated its own perfections. On these occasions every American man was better than any foreigner, and American women were all saints.

And there were the Election Day moods when the country split up into parties for a few weeks, and played tennis with mutual charges of corruption, thievery, treason. Then there was Christmas when everybody loved everybody; and New Year's Day, when everybody called on everybody and got a little drunk on good wishes and eggnogs.

David RoBards had his personal seasons, his feast-days and fast-days in his own soul. Everybody treated him with respect as a man of unblemished life in a home of unsullied reputation. A

RoBards spoke briskly: "Doctor says she's got to have complete rest and quiet; so we decided to cut and run."



neighbor used those very phrases to him and of him one day, and he entered the house wondering whether to be exalted with pride or abased as a successful hypocrite. Then Patty met him with a doleful word:

"We've got to give an At Home right away. Don't stand staring! We've gone out dozens of times and accepted no end of hospitality. We simply must pay our debts."

"I'd like to," said RoBards. "You and Immy have run up so many bills at so many shops that I am almost afraid to walk the streets or open my mail."

This always infuriated Patty, and it angered her now:

"Since you owe so much, you can owe a little more. But we owe something to Immy. We must give a ball, and it must be a crack."

"An orgy, you mean, if it's to be like some of the others we've gone to. Is that the most honest way to present a daughter to the world?"

"You're getting old, Mist' RoBards!" Patty snapped. "Orgies was the name poor old Papa used to call the dances you and I went to in our day."

The upshot of it was that Patty won. The choicest personages in town received an Alhambra-watered envelope containing a notice that the Mr. and Mrs. RoBards would be at home in St. John's Park that evening, week. Patty sent cards also to a number of young men whom RoBards considered far beneath her notice; but they were asked everywhere because they could and would dance the tight polka, the redowa, the waltz, the German; they could and would play backgammon and graces, write acrostics, sit in tableaux, get up serenades, riding-parties, sleighing-parties—anything to keep females from perishing of boredom. They all dressed correctly and alike, parted their hair straight down the back, posed as lost souls and murmured spicy hints of the terrific damnations they had known in Paris. Some of them lived in twenty-shilling-a-week boarding-houses and curled each other's hair.

Above all, they could and would dance instead of standing about like wooden Indians. Some critics said that the dancing in the American homes was faster and more furious than anything abroad except at the notorious masked balls in Paris, where the girls were grisettes.

It was into such an atmosphere that the young girl Immy and

the lad Keith must emerge from childhood. In such a dangerous world they must live their life. RoBards shuddered at the menace. . . .

Patty had a linen cover stretched tight over the parlor carpet. She got in an appalling amount of supper material—oyster soup in gallons, *dinde aux truffes* by the pound, ice-cream in gallons, jellies, custards, cakes, preserves—punch by the keg, and champagne by the regiment.

Everybody came. St. John's Park was a roar with carriages and bawling coachmen and footmen, some of them in livery. Tactless people set Patty's teeth on edge by saying that it was well worth coming "downtown" to see her. And Immy such a lady! She'd be making Patty a grandmother any of these days!

For a time RoBards enjoyed the thrill, the dressed-up old women and old men, and the young people all hilarious and beautiful with youth.

He had his acid tastes too, for many of the people congratulated him on the reported successes of his old crony, Captain Chalender. He was reputed to be a millionaire at least, and one of the best-loved men in California—and coming home soon, it was rumored. And was that true?



"So I've heard," RoBards must smile and murmur a dozen times, wondering how far away Chalender would have to go to be really absent from his home.

The house throbbled with dance-music, with the clamor and susurrus of scandal along the wall line of matrons, with laughter, with the eddies the dancers made—young men in black, and pink girls in vast skirts like huge many-petaled roses twirled round and round.

It amazed RoBards to see how popular Immy was. She was frequented by throngs of men. Her color was higher than her liquid rouge explained; her eyes were bright, and she spoke with an aristocratic lilt her father had never heard her use.

Keith was as tall and as handsome as any young buck there, and his father could hardly believe that the boy could be so gallant, so gay, so successful with so many adoring girls.

It was good to see so much joy in the home he had made for the children whose sorrows had been so many and so real. But as the evening grew old and the crowd thickened, his cheerfulness flagged. Perhaps he was merely fatigued with the outgo of welcome, sickened by having to say and hear the same thing so often.

But he saw the picnic becoming a revel, an orgy. The dancers,

whether waltzing or polking, seemed to increase in audacity, in blind or shameless abandonment to thoughts and moods that belonged to solitude if anywhere.

As he wandered about, he surprised couples stealing embraces or kisses frantically, or whispering guiltily, laughing with more than mischief. Sometimes it was Immy that he encountered, sometimes Keith.

When the supper-hour was reached, the rush was incredible. Men made a joke of the crassest behavior, and a chivalric pretense that they were fighting for refreshment to carry to their fainting ladies. But it was neither humorous nor knightly to spill oyster soup over a lace dress, to tilt ice-cream down a broadcloth back, or to grind a fallen custard into the expensive carpet.

When the German began about midnight, some of the men dared to carry champagne bottles with them and set them down by their chairs for reference during the pauses in the figures.

Hosts and hostesses were supposed to ignore the misconduct of their guests, but it made RoBards' blood run cold to see Immy go from the arms of some decent, respectful, sober youth into the liquorous embrace of a drunken faun whom she had to support.

He ventured to whisper a protest to *(Continued on page 122)*

Bill was just a goat, but he'd been a devil in his own home town, and when he became lost in the Northern forest, he maintained his valiant front: one of Mr. Roberts' delightful best.

Bill

By

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Illustrated by Charles Livingston Bull

THE wide river, gone shallow in the midsummer heats, ran sweetly under the starlight, babbling among its long sand-bars and chafing with a soft roar against the ragged, uncovered ledges. The steep and lofty shores, at this point some four hundred yards apart, were black with forests to their crests. From a still pool close inshore sounded sharply the splash of a leaping salmon.

Presently from behind a dark promontory about a mile downstream came a muffled, rhythmic, throbbing noise, accompanied, as it grew louder, by a heavy splashing. A few moments more, and a white steambot, her flat sides dotted with lights from the cabin windows, rounded into view. She was a stern-wheeler—in river parlance a “wheelbarrow boat”—propelled by a single huge paddle-wheel thrust out behind her stern. Flat-bottomed like a scow, she drew so little water that the rivermen used to declare she needed only a heavy dew to enable her to navigate across the meadows. Driving her way doggedly upward against the stiff current, she puffed and grunted like some gigantic animal, and red sparks from her wood-fed furnace streamed from the top of her lean, black funnel. Her captain was driving her at top speed, because the river was falling so rapidly that he feared lest he might get hung up for lack of water in the channel before reaching his destination, which was yet a good day's journey distant.

In the long, lamp-lit upper cabin, the few rough-clad passengers smoked and played cards, or dozed as well as they could on the stiff chairs, while a buxom, red-haired girl heroically strummed hymn-tunes on an unmelodious piano. There was no sleeping accommodation; for the old *Forest Queen*, except under stress of circumstances like the present, was wont to do all her journeying by daylight. But the passengers were not grumbling. All they wanted was to arrive, not to be hung up, by the shrinking of the stream, on some sand-bar in the heart of the wilderness. They knew the anxious captain was making good time, and they were all in good temper.

All, with one exception! Down on the lower deck, in the wide space between the furnace door and the bows, among piled freight—boxes of smoked herring, kegs of molasses, cases of miscellaneous groceries, drygoods and hardware—was tethered an immense, long-haired, grayish-brown goat, with an imposing beard hanging



from his throat and a pair of formidable horns sweeping back from his massive forehead. This dignified-looking passenger was in a very bad temper indeed. His wishes had not been consulted in regard to the journey he was making. He had been hustled on board by the lusty deck-hands with cheerful and irresistible familiarity; and he had had no chance whatever to avenge himself upon any one of them. He stood glowering, with wrath in his heart and scorn in his great yellow supercilious eyes, at the sweating firemen and the roaring, blazing mouth of the furnace beneath the boiler. The glare and the windy roar of the red flame, the loud pulsing of the wheel, the ceaseless vibration of the straining boat, all the inexplicable strangeness of the situation into which he had been so rudely thrust, filled him with uneasiness, indeed, but had no power to shake his defiant spirit.

He was an amazing apparition, and the doe was intensely curious. Bill fell to curvetting and prancing, confident that his charms could not fail.



bows to dry land, ran up the slope, and stood to watch the conflagration. The crew began feverishly tumbling the freight overboard and dragging it up the sand. The goat, who was by this time beginning to get alarmed, stamped impatiently and gave utterance to a loud bleat. One of the deck-hands, crying, "We aint goin' to forgit you, Bill!" ran up, seized him by one horn, slipped the tether from his collar, dragged him to the side, and gave him a friendly kick to accelerate his departure.

Bill sprang into the air, landed lightly on the sand, and whipped about like a flash, with lowered head, to avenge the insult to his dignity. But his rude rescuer was still on board, far above his reach. Another of the deck-hands, however, was close by, with his back to him, just stooping to lift a bale of blankets. The target was irresistible. With a snort of indignation Bill launched himself, struck the unsuspecting man fair on the broad seat of his breeches and sent him sprawling headlong into a pile of boxes. The man picked himself up with a volley of remarks which would make the printer's ink blush red, and glared around for some weapon with which to punish his assailant. But Bill, his honor satisfied, was already far up the sand-spit, capering derisively. At the edge of the bushes which lined the bank he turned and stared for a few moments at the soaring and roaring flames which filled

CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL.

The captain of the *Forest Queen* was a skilled riverman, his intrepidity wisely tempered with discretion. But long immunity from accident had produced the usual effect. The ancient proverb of the pitcher that goes too often to the well is apt to justify itself at last. Confident of his boat and of his skill, absorbed in his determination to beat the river, he forgot how the drought had been drying up not only the river but the long-seasoned upper timbers of the *Forest Queen*; he forgot the sparks which his overdriven furnace was belching from the funnel. One after another they caught, and clung, and gathered fresh vitality, and began to gnaw their way along the cracks in the parched timbers of the cabin roof. Thin, vicious red lines began to show themselves. A shift in the channel, a slight veering in the course of the boat, brought a draft along the cracks, and the furtive red lines leaped to life. Then with startling suddenness the whole after-section of the cabin roof burst into flames.

Pandemonium broke loose. The shrill, tin-throated bell rang frantic signals. The hoarse steam-whistle hooted. The one inadequate length of fire-hose, used for flushing the lower deck, was dragged aloft with shouts, and its puny stream spurted into the struggle. Brimming and splashing deck-buckets were passed up the companion and emptied futilely at the mocking monster which seemed as if it had just swooped aboard out of space to overwhelm and devour its prey.

The battle was lost even before it was well begun. The old boat was tinder dry and blazed riotously. The passengers in the cabin snatched up their belongings, flung themselves down the companion, and crowded forward as far as possible from the already scorching heat. The captain, seeing his boat was doomed, headed her about and ran her up as high as he could upon a long sand-spit which jutted out from the shore a couple of hundred yards below. He would at least save something of the cargo.

The passengers, with their grips and bundles, jumped from the

the river-valley with wild light, at the wide water rippling gold and scarlet past the already half-consumed wreck of his late prison, at the dense brown and orange clouds of smoke billowing away slowly on the light night airs, at the confusion and turmoil on the sand-spit. He had never seen anything in the least like it before. He did not understand it. And it all annoyed him extremely. With a toss of the head he bounded through the screen of bushes and made off, prancing and leaping freakishly, into the black shadows of the woods.

FOR the moment Bill had but one idea in his head—to put the scene of his discomfitures and indignations as far behind him as possible. From the burning boat there was light enough for him to see his way pretty clearly. At this point the precipitous ridge which skirted the river was cleft by a steep, rocky, wooded valley leading up into the wild solitude behind the ridge. A tiny thread of a stream, now gathering into still pools, now tinkling silverly over the ledges in thin films of cascade, meandered down to lose itself in the river just below the sand-spit. Sure-footed and light of tread like all his tribe, and exulting in his freedom, Bill took by choice the most difficult portions of the always difficult path, leaping unerringly from rock to windfall, from ledge to slippery ledge, and balancing his great bulk of corded muscle as airily as a bird. As he ascended, the way grew brighter, and the now shrinking fire once more came into view above the tree-tops behind him. Discontented at this, he hastened his flight and soon, having traversed the saddle of the pass and lost the stream, he turned off sharply along a grassy glade, a half-dried strip of swamp. A shoulder of the ridge behind him cut off all view or hint of the river valley, and he found himself swallowed up in the starlit, shadowy dark.

And now at last Bill began to feel the utter strangeness of his surroundings. The product of generations of civilization, he had few of the instincts of his wild ancestors left in his make-up, except for his proud independence and his impatience of restraint. He had no fear of the darkness, no apprehension that it might hide

unknown perils. But an unwonted sense of loneliness began to oppress him, and his ebullience of spirits died down. Moving noisily hither and thither, he cropped the wild grasses, and browsed, with interested curiosity, on the leaves and twigs of such of the bushes as appealed to his investigating nose. Having made a satisfying meal, he pushed under some overhanging leafage and lay down, looking out upon the starlit glimmer of the glade, and calmly, ignorantly turning his back upon whatever menace might lurk in the blackness of the forest.

As soon as he was quiet, the vast silence seemed to grip him. He had never before been aware of such silence absolute, and it presently began to arouse within him a deep-buried ancestral instinct of vigilance. His great yellow eyes rolled watchfully from side to side, though he knew not why, as he was conscious of no dread. His nostrils opened wide, questioning the novel scents of the forest air. His ears began to turn slowly backward and forward, straining to catch some hint of sound that would relieve the intolerable stillness.

For a long ten minutes or so there came no such relief; for all the small, furtive life of the forest had been stilled apprehensively by the intrusion of this noisy, mysterious-looking stranger. The rule of the wild was, "When in doubt, don't stir!" Then in a little while these creatures of short memory forgot their fears, forgot even the intruder's presence. The tiny feet of the wood-mice once more scurried faintly among the dry spruce-needles; and a chorus of squeaks proclaimed a disagreement over some captured moth or beetle. Bill's ears turned approvingly toward the sound, but his unpracticed vision failed to make out the authors of it. The elusive noises stopped abruptly and a pair of small, sharply flaming eyes, set close together and near the ground, floated swiftly into view. They met Bill's wide-eyed, interested stare with savage defiance. Behind the eyes Bill presently made out the slim, lithe, snaky form of a weasel. Sensing the venomous hostility of the malevolent little prowler, he shook his horns and gave a loud snort of contempt. The weasel slipped away into the darkness as soundlessly as it had come, in search of a hunting-ground not preëmpted by a big, mysterious stranger.

Not many moments later there came a light and muffled *pit-pat* of leaping feet, and Bill saw three snowshoe rabbits emerge into the glade. They sat up on their hindquarters, ears erect, and stared about in every direction with their foolish bulging eyes. Then they fell to gamboling as light-heartedly as children, chasing and leaping over each other as if quite forgetful of the fact that life, for them, was one incessant game of dodging death. As he watched their play, Bill began to feel more at home. He had seen rabbits—tame rabbits—before, lots of them; and though he had always hitherto regarded this tribe with top-lofty indifference, he now felt distinctly friendly to them. They called up pleasant memories and cheered the solitude. He even had a fleeting impulse to jump up and prance and gambol with them, but his instinct warned him that if he tried it they would take alarm and vanish. He did not want them to go, and so he kept quite still.

Then a startling thing happened, startling even to such unroutable self-possession as Bill's. From the blackness of an alder thicket just opposite, a shadowy shape, almost as big as Bill himself, shot into the air, with a harsh sound which seemed to paralyze the little players for an instant. In that instant one of them was

struck down by a broad, keen-taloned paw. Its dying scream seemed to release its two companions from their trance of terror, and they bounded off into the woods.

The slayer, a big Canada lynx, almost as long in the body as Bill himself, but much slighter in build, lifted his round, tuft-eared, snarling face and stood with one paw on his prey, glaring about him triumphantly with moon-pale, coldly savage eyes. But he crouched again instantly, laying back his tufted ears and baring



his long white fangs, as he found himself looking into the large, inscrutable eyes of Bill, who had risen to his feet, gazing at him from beneath the branches.

Besides bitterly resenting the attack upon his little friends the rabbits, Bill instinctively, on his own account, loathed the great lynx at sight. He had always had an antipathy to cats; and this, in his eyes, was just a gigantic and particularly objectionable cat.

For the fraction of a second the lynx stood his ground, ready

to battle for his prey. Then the strangeness of the apparition, and of the manner of its attack, daunted him. He shrank back and sprang aside. But his delay had been a mistake. He was not quite quick enough. Bill's iron front caught him far back on the flank—not, indeed, with full force, but with emphasis enough to send him sprawling. With a yowl of dismay he scrambled to his feet and fled ignominiously, the hairs on his stub of a tail standing out like a bottle-brush. Bears and wolves he knew; the antlered stag and moose-bull he understood; but Bill was a phenomenon he could not account for, and had no stomach to investigate.

Quite satisfied with his swift and easy victory, Bill had no thought of trying to follow it up. He stamped two or three times with his slim fore-hoofs, as he stared after the enemy's flight; then he turned and sniffed inquiringly at the mangled rabbit. The

when his appetite was satisfied, he pushed on, urged partly by the innate curiosity of his race, partly by a craving for some place that might give him the sense of home. The freedom and solitude of the wilderness were all very well in their way, but the need of something different was bred in his very bones.

As he went, he cropped a mouthful here and there, following his incorrigible habit of sampling everything that was strange to him—except mushrooms. Of these he harbored an inherited suspicion. He would sniff at them, then stamp them to bits with every mark of hostility. Presently he noted the big gray papery globe of a hornets' nest, hanging from a branch just above his head. In that hour of numbing damp and chill, not a hornet was stirring abroad. To Bill the nest looked like a ball of gray paper. Among other more or less edible things he rather liked paper. And he knew nothing about hornets. He reached up and took a good bite out of the conical bottom of the nest.

With a startled bleat of pain he spat out the fiery morsel, bucked about three feet into the air, and struck violently at his muzzle with one nimble fore-hoof. At the same moment half a dozen white-hot needle-points were jabbed into his nostrils. He heard, but gave no heed to, a sudden loud and vicious buzzing. Fortunately for him, the furious little yellow-jackets were too sluggish with the cold to be very active on their wings. Two or three more spasmodic leaps through the thick undergrowth

bore him clear of their vengeance. But their scorching punishment he carried with him. For a few moments he rooted wildly in the damp moss. Then, bleating shrilly with rage and fear and torment, he went tearing through the woods till he chanced upon a little pool where the water bubbled up ice-cold from its source in the heart of the hills. Into this he plunged his tortured muzzle up to the eyes, and somewhat eased the anguish.

Bill's flesh was healthy, and his system strongly resistant to such poisons as those of insects or snakes; so in a comparatively short time he was little the worse except for a tenderness which led him to choose only the most delicate provender.

And this experience, though bitter, was worth the price, for it saved him, on the following day, from a yet more bitter and disastrous one.

As he wandered on through green-and-brown forest aisles, following his vague quest, he was suddenly confronted by a clumsy looking pepper-and-salt-colored animal, squat and lumpy in build, and about the size of a very large rabbit. The creature had a short

black face with a blunt nose and little bad-tempered eyes. At the sight of Bill it paused, and its fur suddenly stood up all over till it looked twice its proper size, and its color changed to a dirty yellowish white with a blackish undertone. Then it came straight on, in its slow, heavy crawl, squeaking, and gnashing its yellow teeth crossly, quite unimpressed by Bill's bulk and his imposing appearance.

Had Bill been in his ordinary unchastened temper, he would have resented this procedure at once. He would have promptly butted the presumptuous little stranger from his path. He would have got his face, his nose, his eyes, stuck full of deadly porcupine quills, so barbed as never to come out but to work their way steadily inward. He would have gone staggering about in blind torment till death came mercifully to release him, and this chronicle of his adventures would have come to a melancholy end.

As it was, however, Bill was filed, at (Continued on page 102)



CHARLES LINCOLN BULL

Bill danced about the bear, thrusting and feinting. . . . There was nothing for the bear to do but face his ever-mocking, ever-circling opponent.

smell of the victim's fresh blood struck a kind of horror to his heart. He drew back, snorting and shaking his head. The place grew suddenly distasteful to him. Then, forgetting his dignity, he went bounding away down the glade, deeper and deeper into the forest, till the unpleasant impression faded away as his veins ran warm with the effort. At length, somewhat breathless, and weary from his crowded experiences, he snuggled down against the foot of a mossy boulder and went comfortably to sleep.

In the chill of a pink and silvery dawn he woke up, sprang to his feet, and gazed about him at the unfamiliar scene. Dew lay thick on the grass and moss and leaves. White wisps of mist coiled thinly in the narrow open glades. Down the dim corridors between the tree-trunks it was still gray dusk; but the high tops of the light-green birches and the dark-green firs and hemlocks were touched with rosy light. He fell to browsing contentedly; and

Illustrated by Howard Chandler Christy

This very modern, distinctly unusual and notably charming romance is by the distinguished author of "Wanted, a Husband," "Success," "Isle o' Dreams" and many another fondly remembered fiction.

The Eye of the Beholder

By

SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

A WARM May mist, woven of sunlight and vapor, overhung the smallest and loveliest of the Finger Lakes. Through it moved evenly a rowboat, the whispered rhythm of the oars alone violating the spell of silence. In the stern a small, ginghamed passenger gazed despondently at the tip of an unproductive fishing-rod. She had just expressed the conviction that all the trout were asleep, and they might as well go home.

"Let's try around that point. I'm sure there ought to be something there," said her more optimistic companion at the oars.

The light craft moved forward to a justification of the forecast, though not precisely according to expectation: there was something there. The passenger discovered it with the excitement proper to the impressionable age of ten.

"Oh, Miss Elsie! Look!"

The oarswoman turned. A hundred yards ahead, the figure of a man lay stretched on the beach, his head pillowed on his coat.

"Maybe he's drowned," suggested the passenger romantically.

"No; he's asleep," declared the other after a look. "Keep quiet; we don't want to wake him."

They drew along opposite the relaxed form, to a direct view of the face. It was a face of such flawless and obvious beauty that the small girl gave a little irrepressible gasp of wonder and tribute. Upon her companion the effect was quite different. She regarded the sleeper with an expression of incredulous surprise which presently changed to tense and dark absorption.

"Aint he grand!" whispered the awed child.

"Hush," commanded the other imperatively, and drew the boat in closer.

She leaned forward, concentrating with passionate intentness upon the man, taking in every detail—the rough serviceable clothing loosely modeled upon a graceful figure, the clear lines of the

"Nonsense!" he retorted. "I've got to complete this rescue. Come on." They ran
"You've got good wind," he said admiringly when they reached the foot of the slope.



"Where we goin', Miss Elsie?" queried the passenger.

"You're going ashore."

"Aint we goin' to wake him up or anythin'?" demanded the disappointed child.

"Not yet. Have you ever seen him before?"

"I never seen—saw anythin' *like* him before," averred the youngster with conviction. "He looks like a million dollars to me."

"No, not a million," said Miss Elsie absently, "—only five thousand."

"Well, that's a lotta money, Miss Elsie. That's all Pa paid for our whole farm. Is he worth all that?"

"He is to me," sighed Miss Elsie.

"You don't act like you was very glad to see him, though," pointed out the perspicacious child.

"I wish he were in Patagonia—he and his face! Man that is born of woman has no right to a face like that. And if he must have it, why should he bring it to this heavenly peaceful spot and intrude it into tired people's lives?"

"Do you know him, Miss Elsie?"

"I know who he is; he's Fate with a big F."

"I know," cried the youthful romanticist eagerly. "Fate is what makes folks that hasn't seen each other for yeerz-un-yeerz-un-years meet and clasp hands again."

"Jerusalem the golden!" ejaculated the other.

"Look what the movies have brought into our quiet and innocent rural life. See here, Myra, you put my letter in to the R. F. D. box this morning, didn't you?"

"Yessum."

"Do you think the postman has taken it yet?"

"None. He don't mostly come till eleven."

"Halt an hour yet. Can you get it before he comes?"

"Sure—easy." The child beamed with the delight of being of service.

"Run, then; will you, dear? And when you get it, take it to— No; bring it back to me on the beach where the lovely man is."

After landing the messenger and watching her scamper like a hounded rabbit through the fringe of underbrush, the navigatress pushed off again and softly pulled the skiff parallel to the shore until she rested on her oars opposite the sleeper and some thirty yards out. Drawing a long, slow breath, she exhaled it in the sigh of the woman who resentfully abandons her defenses.

"Damn!" she said softly.

She rose, stepped upon the gunwale, and went down in a smother of foam.

The man woke up. A very busy little waterspout was obtruding itself upon his half-dazed attention. Arms projected from it, and a face, and what appeared to be casual details of women's apparel. Not being *Sherlock Holmes'* friend *Watson*, he needed no expert assistance to deduce that somebody in the midst of that turmoil needed help and needed it promptly. He plowed his way into the lake, swam a few strokes, and seizing upon a convenient projection, towed the aquatic whirligig to shore.

"Are you all right?" he inquired politely, setting it on end.

"Oh, quite!" it answered composedly. "It's awfully good of you. Would you mind getting my boat?"

As he swam out again to retrieve the derelict, it struck him that the rescued girl was peculiarly calm and collected, all things considered. Her next remark confirmed the impression.

"I'm afraid I disturbed you," she said demurely.

He stared. "Oh, not at all," he assured her. "It was quite time for my morning tub. Had you been in long?"

"For about three swallows, I think. What's the formula for thanking one's noble preserver?"

After giving the matter some thought, he stated: "Marriage in one third act, I believe."

"That's the quickest proposal I've ever had," she remarked cheerfully. "It does special credit to your sense of duty, considering that I must look a perfectly hideous wisp."

face, the touch of sunburn upon the fair skin of the forehead and the chest, from which the khaki shirt had fallen open.

"Gray eyes, probably," she murmured to herself. "Well—"

Into her own shadowed eyes there came a look of weary determination. Cautiously she put her boat about and set her course for the shelter of the point.

He contemplated her. The drenched garments had molded close to her figure, setting forth the firm and gracious contours of her body. Her hair shone with a wet, purple-black luster, and there were purplish gleams in the dark eyes which held upon his face with a strange and studious regard—serious, troubling eyes under gloomy brows. The face was clearly modeled, and rich with blood beneath an olive skin, the mouth full and sullen-sweet, the nose small and of a provocative frivolity. Altogether a beguiling presentment!

"What do you look like when you're dried out?" said he.

"Oh, much nicer!"

"Then the thing is to get you dried out at once. Where are you staying?"

"At the Lowell farm on the Hill Road."

"Really! That's a good mile, isn't it? You mustn't get chilled. I'll race you across that meadow."

"Oh, no!" she protested. "You must go and change."

"Nonsense!" he retorted. "I've got to complete this rescue. Come on."

They ran. She was still breathing easily when they reached the foot of the slope. "You've got good wind," he said admiringly. "You're not a professional athlete or anything like that, are you?"

"No. Just an ordinary vacationer. Up here doing a little sketching. Name,"—she hesitated almost imperceptibly,—"*Elsie Lester.*"

"*Elsie Lester,*" he repeated. "It somehow sounds as if one ought to know it."

"You certainly oughtn't," she disclaimed. "I've never seen you before in my life."

"I'm sure of that. I'm a vacationer too. Up here doing a little—er—sleeping. Name, *Marcus Fletcher.*"

"Where are *you* staying?"

"At the Carr cottage. They've loaned it to me. I'm my own cook and housekeeper, general caretaker, first and second maid, chauffeur and butler. If you've got a chaperon handy, I'll ask you to tea."

"Don't own such a thing. But you might ask me anyway."

"I will. You're asked."

"All right. I'll come."

"That's great. How soon?"

"Oh, some day when I'm dry again."

"Do you dry out quickly?" he asked anxiously. "Wont you please hang yourself up back of the stove?"

"Is tomorrow soon enough?"

"Aren't you delightful!" he cried.

THIS, Mr. Fletcher reflected with satisfaction, was going far easier than he had any right to anticipate. By a curious coincidence, Miss Lester had precisely the same thought at the same moment. She decided that she might risk a more definite plan.

"Would you mind if I brought along sketching materials?"

"Bring along anything you like."

"My drawing-master likes me to keep in practice, and I might see something at your place I wanted to work on."

"The place is full of it," he assured her with enthusiasm. "Trees and landscape and—er—birds and woodchucks and all that sort of—er—art stuff. Two or three weeks' work, anyway."

"You're so lavish of hospitality to a stranger! But it happens that I'm studying people."

"Wouldn't I do? Such as I am, I'm at your service."

This was altogether too easy! She shot a glance full of suspicion.

"I don't know," she began dubiously, when a lamentable outcry cut her short. Miss Myra Lowell, emerging from a thicket on her return trip with the recovered letter and a man's coat, had caught sight of them. She rushed forward and precipitated herself into Miss *Elsie's* arms.

"You've been getting drowned," she wailed.

"Hush, dear," soothed the subject of this exaggerated opinion, bending over the child with a face of laughter and compassion which gave the watching Mr. Fletcher a brand new slant on the subject of feminine beauty. "I'm all right. I got a little spill; that's all."

Myra detached herself and appraised the damp condition of the third party. "It's him," said she in awed accents. "Did he breast his way through the billowses and bear you unconscious and all but lifeless to safety?"

"She's got me mixed up with Douglas Fairbanks," observed the rescuer.

"This is Mr. Fletcher, Myra. He did all that you say."

"Aint that wonderful!" exclaimed Myra. "Here's his coat I

found on the shore. Make him put it on you. They always do."

"You funny movie-struck child!" laughed Miss Lester. But when Mr. Fletcher gravely held the coat for her to put on, she slipped into it and dropped the retrieved letter which Myra handed her, into the pocket. The trio moved on, Myra avid of details all the rest of the way home. At the rear gate of the farmyard Miss Lester wriggled damply out of the coat and returned it. For the moment he seemed less interested in her thanks than in a spick-and-span Flyaway roadster which stood in the side yard looking decidedly out of key with the simple farm establishment.

"That's Miss *Elsie's,*" explained Myra, who had followed his glance. "She takes me riding in it. Want to go sometime?"

"Delighted," answered Mr. Fletcher mechanically. "That is—er—no; I don't care for motoring, thank you." He looked from the car to the house, and thence to the car's proprietress, as if trying to resolve some discrepancy. When he said good-by and turned away from the gate, he was still so absorbed in thought that he quite forgot the letter until he happened to thrust a hand into his pocket. Then he called to the girl, who was just entering the side door, holding up the white square.

"Never mind," she called back. "Keep it for me."

"As a guarantee that you'll come?"

"If you need it. As possible future information, too. It's all about you."

"About me? How can it be, since it was written before we met?"

"You'll know sometime," she told him gayly.

"That," she said to herself with a sort of vicious satisfaction, two minutes later as she squirmed out of her clinging garments, "will hold you for quite a while, Mr. *Marcus Fletcher.* Men," she added philosophically, "are so much more curious about women than women are about men."

Trotting briskly down the hill, he said to himself: "I'd like to know who the devil she is and what she's up to with me."

OUTSIDE, a soft wind shook fragrance from the trees. Brisk waves, running almost to the sill of the Carr cottage, repeated their untiring and liquid meter. A robin hopped upon the porch, glanced through the open door, whistled and withdrew. What he saw was an interior giving forth an atmosphere of feminine rearrangement expressed in such details as the draperies on the settle and the prodigal bowl of trilliums on the tea-table. Before the broad window, she who might have been judged responsible for these graces was busy over a drawing-board. A few yards away a man lolled in a Morris chair. He wore a dinner-jacket with an impressive showing of stiff shirt-front and looked self-conscious. The hour was four-fifteen p. m. For the most part the man kept his eyes fixed upon the worker. Occasionally they strayed to a sealed letter on the mantel bearing an uncanceled stamp and an address in beautifully penned chirography. Although obviously ready to mail, the epistle had been watching over that still-life scene for quite a period.

The man stirred a little. "*Elsie,*" he said.

"Well? Don't move, please," said the girl.

"You don't mind my calling you *Elsie,* do you?"

"I don't mind anything, if only you'll hold quite still."

"I wish you wouldn't be so infernally don't-minded," he complained. "Here we've known each other intimately for ten days—"

"Intimately?" she queried with lifted brows, as she changed her position a bit.

"What else could you call it? We've spent hours together every day. We've talked about everything under the heavens; at least, I have, and you've helped when you haven't been too absorbed in work. You've painted me and crayoned me, and inked me, and pastelled me, and drawn and quartered me, and as far as anything real between us goes, I might as well be a tailor's dummy."

"One can't know a tailor's dummy intimately, can one?" she murmured. "They're so secretive."

"There you go again. The best I can get out of you is a josh."

"Alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays are my serious days. Besides, I can't afford to encourage that intense expression of yours. It makes you look older than I thought you."

"I'm thirty-six, if you care to know."

"Vital statistics are rather out of my line. But I do like that slightly concerned look on your face. It mitigates your otherwise flawless beauty and makes it quite endurable."

"Damn my flawless beauty!"

"There! You've gone and moved."



"It's all there," she said. "Read the letter. And please don't think me rotten and hate me."

"I'm going to move more in a minute."

"Please! You'll spoil a good hour's work if you do."

"I'm going to come over there and take away that silly board of yours and kiss you."

"Wait ten minutes."

"And then I may? It's a promise?"

"You said you were going to."

"But I want you to say that I may."

"We—ell." She spoke with the absorbed indifference of one concentrating on the job in hand, to whom outer matters are of negligible importance. "You didn't wait for any permit the evening we went walking."

At this he scowled.

"Did you like it?" she pursued.

"No," he answered sulkily.

"No," she mocked. "Then why repeat a distasteful experience?"

"Did you expect me to like it when you turned yourself into a—a plaster cast in my arms?"

"Plaster cast? Was that the effect I produced on you? How very unflattering! Perhaps it was only my way of self-defense." She began to hum a melody to which the words became presently audible:

*"Said the tailor's dummy to the plaster cast,
I should like to kiss you if I only dast!"*

"Don't you think I'm a clever *improvisatore*?"

"I think you're much too clever for me in every way. I haven't got a Chinaman's chance," he grumbled. "Why did you let me, anyway?"

"Let you? Kiss me? Why, you seemed to rather want to. And you're entitled to some reward, you know, for being so good about sitting for me."

"Reward!" he scoffed. "So that's your notion of it."

"Martin, turn your head a bit this way—there!"
 "What am I to appear as this time? Proof of the efficacy of old Dr. Snooks' Hair-restorer?"

"Now you *are* ungallant. I suppose you're accustomed to a higher degree of responsiveness from women. You handsome men get so spoiled. Do women make love to you much?"

"No," he barked.

"Do you make love to women much? But of course you do. To have a face like that and not take advantage of it would be too much to expect of frail mascul—"

"Damn my face!"

"That's twice you've sworn today. Such a temper!"

"I beg your pardon, if that's what you want. But you're the most tantalizing girl I've ever seen."

"Wrong again. I'm not a girl. Thirty looms in the immediate future. I'm a woman—in most ways."

"In most ways? But not all? Does that mean that you're not married? I've taken it for granted that you're not. But most of my theories about you have been about one hundred per cent wrong."

"This one is right. I'm not married."

"How on earth did a girl like you ever get this far without somebody haling her to the altar in a slip-noose?"

The sullen-sweet mouth crinkled a little at the corners. "I've been too busy to get caught. Matrimony is an idle woman's expedient."

"Hm! That reminds me: you pretend to be an art student. And now you tell me that you're nearly thirty—not that I believe it by seven or eight years."

"Monsieur is pleased to be complimentary. One can be a student of art all one's life. Don't my sketches look studentlike enough?"

"They look vague and unfinished," he admitted. Thereupon she hid a private smile, "But then, I know nothing about pictures. Perhaps you finish 'em up when you get back to the farmhouse."

To this shrewd surmise she made no response. Had he seen any of the completed product, even his inexpert eye, she guessed, might identify the workmanship. "Time's up," she said. "You can move now."

"Is that an invitation?"

"As you like," she returned calmly.

HE jumped to his feet, strode over to her and looked down into her unwavering eyes. Then he laughed and shook his head in self-denial. "You've got absolutely the best defense I've ever run up against," he asserted. "Stone-wall stuff. That's experience. Couldn't be anything else."

"If you mean that you aren't the first man that's tried to make love to me, you aren't."

"I'll bet I'm not—not by several hundred. But what do you mean by 'tried?' Haven't any of them succeeded?"

"What do you mean by 'succeeded?'"

"Didn't you ever play back?"

"Oh, a little, now and again. I'm not wholly without the feminine instinct of curiosity."

"Perhaps not. But I believe that you're wholly without—well, some other feminine instincts."

"No; I'm not wholly without that, either."

"Then you have played back in earnest?"

"Yes. Once. Very much in earnest."

"Well?"

"It was no good. A mistake."

"I see," he said gently. "And it hurt?"

"Yes; it hurt like hell at the time. I was only nineteen. But I got over it. One does. I saw the man last year, and he tried to make love to me again. Not a thrill!"

"Do you know," said he slowly, "that you've let me closer to you in these last two minutes than at any time since I've known you?"

"I have I? I suppose I have. Closer than when I let you kiss me. Much! It's rather clever of you to understand it, though."

"Because I've got my share of good looks, you can't help but think me a fool, can you?" said he, aggrieved again.

"No; I don't think anything of the sort. I don't think about it at all."



"To you I'm nothing but a face."

"You've a very good figure too," said she encouragingly.

His answering grin was a confession of surrender to her persistent mood. "Perhaps you'll tell me, then, why you keep it dressed up like a butler at four o'clock in the afternoon."

"Haven't I told you? I'm making a special study of the ree-fined and elegant gent type, the kind that always wears evening clothes in illustrations and such. You're awfully ree-fined, and I'm sure you're a perfect gent."

"Are you?" he retorted calmly. "The general impression is that I'm a complete and hopeless rotter."

"Men's impression or women's impression?"

"Does it make so much difference? Yours, if you knew who I am."

"How dramatic! Who are you, Cyril?"

There was no answering smile on his face as he said: "Martin Fleming."

She knit her strong wide brows over this. Suddenly a flash of comprehension wiped laughter and mockery out of her face. "Ah, I see," she said soberly.

"You've been reading the papers. That saves my explaining further why I'm skulking here under an assumed name."

"I've been reading the Dulaney scandal because I happen to know the Dulaneys slightly. Just why have you told me this now?"

"You mean I ought to have told you at once that I was the 'missing co-respondent' that the newspapers have been yammerin' about."



"I don't know why you should tell me at all," was the cool response.

"Don't you?" he retorted angrily. "Can't you understand that I want to be honest with you at least?"

"But I'm not the censor of your morals and standards. I've enough trouble looking after my own without worrying over other people's. You see, I live in a world which approves and even admires morality, as a theory, but doesn't insist on it as a practice."

"In other words, the United States of America."

"Don't be cynical. It spoils your upright expression."

He turned sullen. "Still harping on my infernal face! Nothing that's happened means anything to you, so long as it hasn't changed my classic looks."

"Hasn't it, though? Something has." Moving across to him, she touched, with a gentle, impersonal finger, the harsh seam at the corner of his mouth. "That's new. Isn't it?"

He shivered under her touch. "Don't do that."

"Excuse my artistic freedom," she apologized nonchalantly. "I keep forgetting you aren't a model."

"Do you say things like that just to see how much you can infuriate me?" he demanded. He set the hard grip of his hands on her two shoulders. "What would you do," he asked half savagely, half yearningly, "if I drew you into my arms and held you there until you gave up?"

"Smudge your nose with ink," was the prompt reply. "It's practically indelible."

"Oh, blazes!" he said disconsolately. But he had the grace to laugh at his own discomfiture.

"That's better." She gathered up her equipment. "Time to return to the peaceful simplicity of the farm. Are you coming?"

His face lighted up. "Yes indeed, if I may. Still," he mused as they left the cottage together, "I don't know that I ought to let you come back here again."

"That's for you to decide, of course. But I'm not nearly through with you. And isn't it a little late to be considering the conventions?"

"It isn't that. But there's a possibility of my being trailed. If a detective arrived and found you in the place, it mightn't be very pleasant for you. Speaking of detectives, do you know what I suspected for one wild moment?"

"No. What?"

"That you were one."

"A detective? How glorious! When was this?"

"That first day. You did make rather a dead set for me, you know."

"So you noticed it? Coarse work on my part. But I supposed you'd accept it as the logical effect of your manly beauty upon the susceptible feminine temperament."

He stopped short. "Elsie, will you do something for me?"

"Probably. Women usually do, don't they? What is it?"

"Cut out that 'manly beauty' guff from now on."

"All right; if you'll agree to forget the gay Lothario stuff that you pull by fits and starts. It doesn't amuse me."

"It's a bargain." They set themselves to the slope of the hill in a silence which he broke by saying: "Remember the first time we climbed this road? I wondered (Continued on page 148)

The Sand Pile

By

MARY
SYNON

The Story So Far:

TOM MERCER had killed Jere Connors, who had defrauded him out of the home he had saved so long to buy—the house which was to have sheltered his wife Winnie and their little son Buddy. And now as a result Mercer found himself in the penitentiary—worse, in a prison ruled by Jim Torrens, the man from whom he had won his wife Winnie. What chance with the Pardon Board could he hope for now, with this man who hated him, master of his destiny?

Working one day with an old convict named Philo on the building of a new prison wall, Mercer saw his boy Buddy playing on a sand pile without, and so knew that Winnie had come to live in the penitentiary town in order to be near him. For some days Mercer was able to talk with the child from the wall, to play with him, even, for old Philo loaned him a curious pitiful ladder he had made from thousands of bits of string collected during his thirty years in prison—and kept watch for the guard while Mercer stole a few moments with the boy. He learned that Winnie had found work as stenographer in the steel mills near by.

The possibility of escape tempted Mercer and Philo more and more. Buddy's birthday was coming, and Mercer recklessly promised to come to his birthday party. Philo brought out a box he had made of shells as a gift for the child.

On the night of Buddy's birthday, in a rising storm, the two convicts escaped from their cells, and old Philo guided Mercer through the prison corridors, to the outer courtyard. There in the darkness of the storm they threw the end of the ladder over a spike purposely left in the wall.

Mercer made the ascent first. He had reached the top of the wall, when a glare rose from the steel mills. He called to Philo to wait, but the old man was already climbing after him. Holding Philo's gift to Buddy in his hand, he dropped to the sand pile outside the wall. Then a shot rang out and old Philo slumped down on the top of the wall. . . . The prison siren shrieked the alarm, and a warning rocket flashed upward. (*The story continues in detail.*)



What if he should kill Torrens? "Tom," she pleaded, "let

SLOWLY the crimsoned flood across the sky waned as Mercer, not daring to breathe, pressed close against the wall. The thunder, rolling off into the distance, left the air so still that he could hear all those sounds which rushed into life within the prison, answering the signal—the cries, the commands, the ringing of telephone bells, the patter of footsteps. Nearest of all came the running of the sentries, but no sound came from that place just above him, where he knew old Philo must still be lying. The running steps padded onward in the darkness.

Peering outward, Mercer calculated from his remembrance of the ground his chance of getting to cover. He would have to run between the flares from the mills, and he did not know how often they rose. He would be found, unless he could hide.

Drama is at its zenith in this steel-strong and flame-vivid novel by the gifted woman who wrote "Portage," "The Croupier," "Heredity" and numerous other stories which Red Book Magazine readers will remember with a lively appreciation.

Illustrated by Gayle Hoskins



go! Don't strangle him that way." Her cry rose to frenzy.

Where? Memory of the time when he burrowed in the sand opened a narrow door of hope. He had done it before. Could he do it now? Wouldn't they see the marks? He'd have to take the chance, at any rate. With the wild speed of a trapped animal, he began to dig the hole into which he would crawl. When it was big enough to hold his bulk he plunged, pulling the sand down upon him. An ear-splitting clap of thunder burst above him; then delugingly came the rain; but Tom Mercer, tense in his hiding-place, did not even recognize it for the boon which might be the answer to the only prayer he knew, the one of Buddy's teaching which he turned over and over in his palpitant brain.

Sounds came muffled now, but he knew that the sentry stood on the wall above him. He heard a call, and other footsteps,

then other voices, followed by the confusion of much movement. Through the beat of the rain, he heard a sound like the dropping of bodies, then voices. "No one here," he distinguished. Something probed through the sand, touching him, then was withdrawn. The voices drifted away; the footsteps ceased; the beat of the rain grew steadier. After a long time silence returned.

With infinite caution he began to shift the sand above him until he could breathe more freely. Then he thrust up his head. He could see no one, although he waited long. He dropped back, awaiting the sentry's repassing. When the steps came close, he lay in the sand. He saw through the rain that the flare had come with the guard's appearance, and he calculated that the simultaneousness bettered his chance of crossing the open space unseen. There might, he knew, be a cordon of watchers drawn up around it. He braced himself for the running, and drew his body out of the pile. Head down against the rain, he broke into a run.

Miles long and miles wide seemed to him that space between the wall and the huddle of houses. The wet sand, clinging to him, weighted his going, but he flung himself on, while over and over his brain kept repeating: "Winnie, Buddy! God! Give us this day our daily bread. Winnie, Buddy—" clicking the words like the rhythm of a clock.

The white flame from the furnaces of the mill thrust out again its tongue-tip, and Mercer threw himself on the ground. The light, rising, showed him that he had come within twenty feet of the nearest house. When the light died down, he crawled through the mud to the house's shelter and, for the first time since

he had dropped from the wall, he drew a long breath.

The fifth house, he had calculated from Buddy's directions, was the one where they lived. The curtains were drawn, but he could see that a light was burning. He remembered with relief the child's remark that they had waited until they could get a house to themselves; but even in his fear, the sight of the poverty of the place brought an ache to his throat. The house which Jere Connors had taken from him was such a real home, white and shining and set in a garden! He gritted his teeth as he moved along under the eaves of the others, but with a trembling that was not fear but the mastering power of a greater emotion, he drew up against the side of the miserable little place which housed his wife and child.

Through the thin clapboards he could hear Buddy's voice, plaintive in petition. "But I can't go to sleep," he was saying. "You said I could stay awake all my birthday, and it'll be my birthday until twelve o'clock."

"It's after ten now," he heard Winnie answer. Her voice, unheard for so long, thrilled him as it had not even in the times when she had given him her girlish love. The note of weariness, of pain, in it set him longing to take her in his arms until the hot thought that he, and he alone, had brought her to sorrow shook his courage. He could do nothing for her now. She would have to hearten him, to help him, to hide him. For the moment he thought to go, to leave her in the little security she might have, but once more Buddy's voice lifted. "Please let me stay awake! Something's going to happen. I know it's going to happen, and I can't go to sleep."

"What's going to happen?"

"I can't tell you."

"Buddy, you don't mean that—" Her voice trembled, and she began again. "When did you see him last?"

"Two weeks ago yesterday, when the men came."

HE heard her sigh before she spoke again. "Buddy, Mother has to get up so early that—"

"You aint come to bed yet. Mummy, wouldn't you like to see Daddy?"

"Wouldn't I? Oh, Bud dear— Go to sleep."

"But if—"

He could stand it no longer. The longing in her voice broke down the brief determination. Softly he beat on the window. There was a silence within, that he knew was born in fear. He rapped again. Winnie's voice answered: "Who's there?"

"Let me in," he pleaded.

"He's come," he heard Buddy's cry. "He said he'd come for my birthday, and he's here!"

The door opened an inch.

"Winnie," he whispered.

"Wait," she said.

The light went out and the door came wide. He stepped inside and took his wife in his arms. For a breathless moment love lifted him to heaven. Then Buddy's hands groped over him and Buddy's voice exclaimed: "Oh, you're all wet, and sandy!" He turned and caught up the boy as Winnie moved away to relight the lamp.

In the aureole of gold he saw her anew, saw how pitifully tired and worn and worried she looked. The thought of all that she must have suffered to bring her down from her girlish blitheness to this wearied aspect of age caught him by the throat, and he hated himself as he had hated Jere Connors and Torrens; but the brave smile which she raised to him blotted out from his mind all thought but the overpowering joy of being with her once more. "I had to come, Winnie," he said.

At his words the shadow came back to her eyes. "Oh, Tom," she said, "I knew you'd come, but I knew you shouldn't. It went do any good for you to come this way. Didn't Buddy give you my message?"

"How could I? Fourteen years of that?"

"It wouldn't be that. It may only be a little while. I've been working, Tom dear, for you, and—"

"What good would it do? We don't know the kind of people who can get pardons, and Torrens is there to stop it." At mention of the Warden, she turned away. "No, I had to make the break." He told her the story swiftly.

"And you don't know how much he was hurt?" she asked him when he told her of Philo's cry from the wall.

"No," he said. For the first time he seemed to realize how much the old man had done for him. He gave Buddy the box, and the child took it in an awed wonder, as if he understood something of the portent of the gift. "I want you to keep it as long as you live," Mercer told him. "Some day you'll know all it means to me and you. I haven't any present for you," he added.

"You're the present," Buddy said, clinging to him as if fearful lest he lose him. He dragged his father down into a chair and climbed upon him. "I saved some of my cake for you," he told him, nestling into his arms; then in the content of hope fulfilled, he fell asleep.

"Tom," Winnie asked, leaning over the table toward him, her eyes clouded with fear, "what are you going to do?"

"Get away," he said, "in a little while."

"You mean—"

"It'll be a tough job, but I'll make it. I'll find something

to do, and when it's safe, I'll send for the two of you. We can start all over."

"We'll start all over some day," she said, "but we can't do it this way, Tom."

"You mean you don't want me to be free?" He stared at her in wonder so startled as to seem hostile. "You don't want me to get away? You'd rather I stayed back there?"

"Oh, Tom dear," she begged, "don't you understand? It's no use, this trying to sneak away from the law. Nobody can do it."

"I'm going to do it," he said doggedly. "You brought my clothes, didn't you? Well, why can't I change into them tonight and cut across country? It's harvest-time, and I can work my way along the farms. I'll be getting further off every day. They won't find me." His words, meant for her reassuring, lifted his own hopes, but they left her flat. "You can't do it," she said. "You can't get away. They'll be watching every road, every railroad station, for miles."

"Other men get away," he argued sullenly.

"For how long? Tom, you can't make it. No one can."

"Then what shall I do?"

She hesitated, fingering the rough tablecloth, not lifting her eyes toward him. "Go back," she said.

"Go back?" he repeated. "You're crazy! Not in a million years!" A sudden suspicion assailed him. "Don't you want me any more?" he asked.

She looked him straight in the eyes at that. "When we knew the worst," she said, "I told you that I loved you so much that I would wait for you through all the years. Do you think that your sentence could change me? But I didn't tell you that I was afraid of just one thing, of what prison might do to your faith in me. It's done it, hasn't it?"

"I'm sorry," he said shamefacedly. "But oh, Winnie, if you knew what a man thinks when he's cut off from everything, you'd understand a little."

She came from the other side of the table, and laid her hand upon his head. "I do understand," she said. She bent and kissed him on the brow. "Poor Tom," she sighed, "I think sometimes that you and Buddy are both of you my children." She picked up the sleeping child. "I must put him to bed," she said.

He stood, watching the rite he had not seen for so long a time. Once the boy awoke, stretched out his hand to his father, and smiled sleepily. "Did you give him the cake?" he asked his mother. Then, before she could answer, he was asleep again. A gust of wind, following the fury of the rain, shook the flimsy house. Winnie, kneeling beside the child's bed, arose with startled eyes.

"Did you hear anyone?" she asked.

MERCER listened. "It's nothing," he said, but he came over to her, and they sat together at the side of the sleeping boy. Winnie's head slipped down to his shoulder, and his arm encircled her. For a little while, forgetful of the menace which might be coming nearer at every instant, they dwelt in a land sentried only by love. It was Mercer who found first need of speech. "You aint never been sorry you married me?" he asked.

"Never," she said, "and I'm not going to be sorry now."

He drew away a little. "What do you mean?" he asked her. "I mean," she said, "that there's only one thing for you to do, Tom. You're going back—tonight."

"I can't, Winnie."

"You must."

"I wont. If you'd known what I'd been through," he pleaded in bitter self-pity, "you wouldn't ask me to."

"I can guess, but it makes no difference. We've learned what it costs to break the law, no matter why it's done. We can't afford to let it cost any more than it does now. Please, Tom, for all of us, go back while you can!"

"I wont," he insisted, moving away from her. "I'm out, and I'm going to stay out." His tone rang into a snarl. "Where are those clothes?" he demanded.

"Tom, please," she began—then leaned toward him in sudden terror. "What was that?" she whispered. Through the thin boards came a new sound. There was a fumbling as if for a bell, then a knock on the panel of the door. The eyes of the man and woman flashed question and answer. She pointed to the closet back of the boy's bed, but he shook his head.

"Got a gun?" he whispered.

"No," she said.

"I'll fight it anyhow," he growled.

She stood trembling, when the knock came for the second time. "Who is it?" she asked; but before the answer came she



Fearfully she found and lighted a match. "You haven't—you haven't killed him?" she managed to say.

moved to the door, giving Mercer time to get back of it before she swung it open. The rush of the wind blew the flame of the lamp, obscuring for an instant the face of the man who stepped within the little house; but even before Winnie's gasping cry, Mercer knew him, and with head up for battle to the death, he stepped out to face Torrens.

WITH a gaze which held neither surprise nor satisfaction, the Warden met him. "I thought you'd be here," he said. He turned to Winnie, pulling off his wide-brimmed hat and thrusting it under his arm. "I'm sorry to find him here, though," he told her. She made no answer, if he had expected one, and he looked once more at Mercer. "I suppose you know," he said, "that the man who tried to escape with you, old Philo, was shot. He's dying."

"Oh!" It was Winnie who cried out. Grief, too poignant for expression, gripped Mercer at the knowledge that the old man would lose his one wish, the yearning to die a free man.

"The guards thought he was alone," Torrens went on. "You weren't missed, but I knew that Philo wouldn't have tried it that way, and I went to look for you. You were gone. I thought it all out, and I knew you'd come to Winnie. So I've come—to take you back."

"I'm not going back." Mercer drew up against the wall.

"Oh, yes you are," Torrens said.

"Not alive." The glint in his eyes told them that he meant the threat.

Swiftly Winnie moved between him and Torrens.

"Oh, please," she said, "listen to me, both of you!"

Her voice trembled, but she went on bravely: "Tom

will go back with you, Jim, when he understands; but he doesn't understand yet. He knows that he was convicted for a crime for which few men suffer. He can't see why. He believes yet that he

had the right to kill Jere Connors. Some day he'll know that no one has the right to take a life. But don't you see that he's just beginning to learn so many things? He's afraid to go back now. He won't believe that he has a chance for pardon. He thinks that you will block him, that you will see that he serves every year of those fourteen."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Do you mean that you,"—she hesitated in confusion,—"that you are petty enough to want to hurt him?"

"Is it pettiness to know that, if it hadn't been for him—"

"Don't say it," she entreated. "It was never Tom's fault. If there was any, it was mine. I didn't know, until he came, that I couldn't care for you; but I thought you had forgotten that, long ago."

"I knew he hadn't," Mercer said. Torrens made no denial. "What's the use of talking?" the other man went on. He had not moved from the wall, and his eyes had never left the Warden's face. He had the look of a wildcat about to spring, but Winnie's lifted hand must have held him back, for he waited as she spoke again.

"You know," she told Torrens, "almost as well as I do, that Tom only did what half the men in Peachtree would have done if he hadn't done it first. You knew Jere Connors. No murder is justifiable, I know; but there were extenuating circumstances the jury didn't see. The Pardon Board might see them, though. It isn't that Tom is bad. There have been men in high places who have shot down men with less provocation than he had, and yet they were not put in prison! The men on the Board will see that Tom will go straight, for he never went crooked in any other way. Tell him there's a chance for his getting out soon."

"There was," Torrens said, "until tonight."

"You mean—"

"If he hadn't tried to escape, taking an old trusty with him, the Board might have considered it. But now—"

"You lie," said Mercer, "and you know you lie. There never was a chance. There never will be a chance while you're warden. But I'm not going back with you. You can kill me if you like. I haven't a gun. But you're not going to drag me back there."

He braced against the wall as Torrens' hand went to his hip pocket and brought out his revolver. "Is he telling the truth?" the Warden asked Winnie. "Has he a gun?"

"No," she said, moving until she stood between the two men. "But you're not going to shoot him, Jim. If you do, it'll be me first."

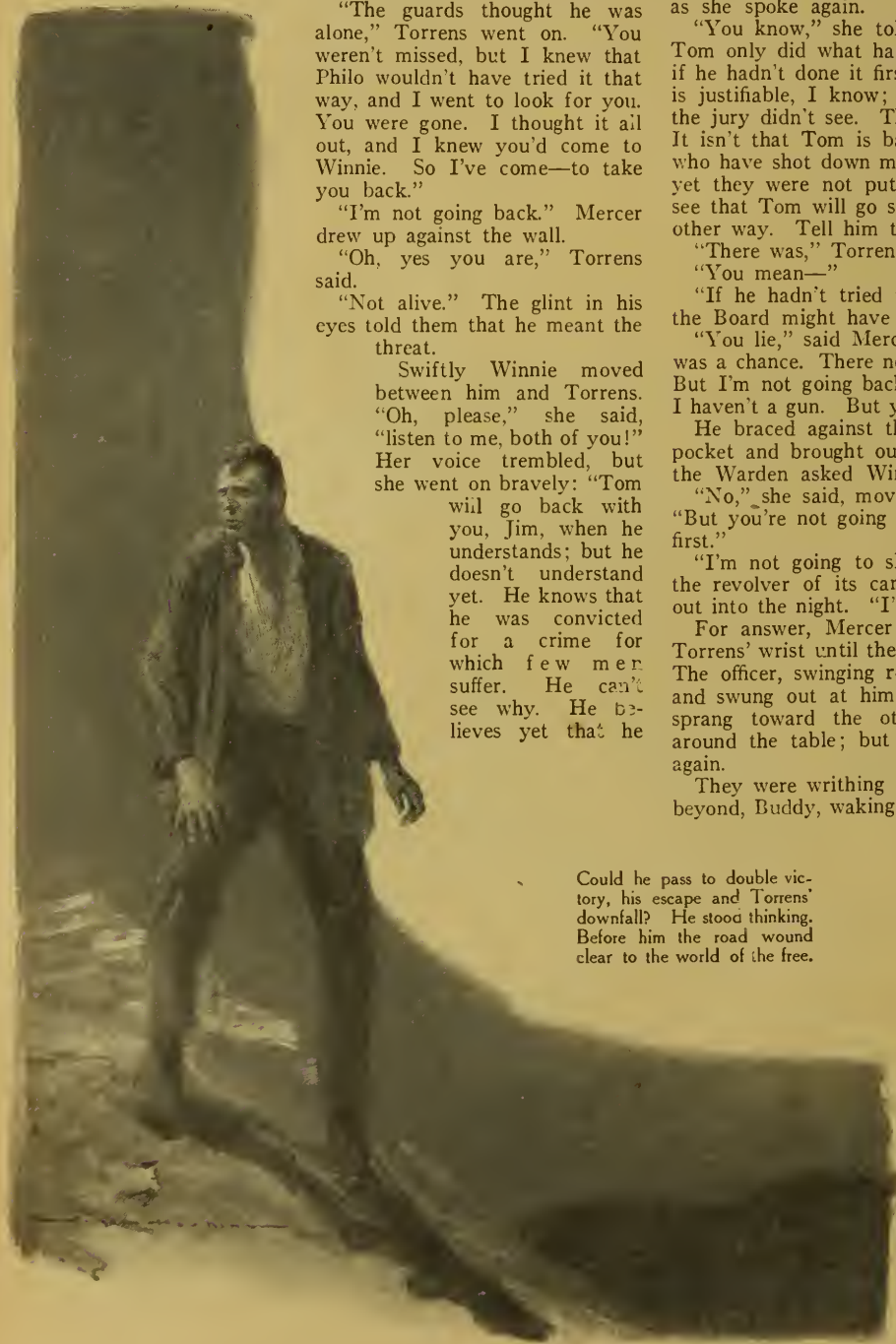
"I'm not going to shoot anyone," Torrens said. He emptied the revolver of its cartridges, opened the door, and flung them out into the night. "I'm going to take him back, just the same."

For answer, Mercer rushed upon him as he turned, twisting Torrens' wrist until the Warden dropped the revolver to the floor. The officer, swinging round, wrung his hands free of his captor, and swung out at him with all his force. Mercer swerved and sprang toward the other's throat. Torrens dodged, whirling around the table; but Mercer, too quick for him, came at him again.

They were writhing in each other's arms when from the room beyond, Buddy, waking, began to cry. Winnie, eluding the whirling of the men's bodies, rushed in to the boy; but he was already standing at the door of the room, and she could only kneel down beside him, striving to shut away from him sight of the struggle which eddied before them.

Around and around the low, narrow room the two men reeled. Their breathing, growing heavier every instant, seemed to fill the place. Sometimes the triumph seemed to go to Torrens' heavier bulk, only to swing back to Mercer's liteness. For it was Mercer who fought with terrible and furious intensity. Torrens, she realized from the beginning, was only trying to hold his own. She knew, however, that if Tom pressed him to the danger-point, he would start to batter with the awful certainty of a great machine. Once, back in Peachtree Valley, she had seen him overcome a drunken Hungarian who had tried to start (Continued on page 156)

Could he pass to double victory, his escape and Torrens' downfall? He stood thinking. Before him the road wound clear to the world of the free.



The deeply moving story of a newspaper employee who rebelled and wrote the truth as he saw it, is here set down by a skillful writer. It is by no means an ordinary story—and you will find it interesting indeed.



Clegg finally realized that Doris was shaking him; he felt infinitely weary in the hot dawn.

*Illustrated by
William Meade Prince*

The Owl

By

McCREADY HUSTON

HUDDLED in the telephone-booth of the news-room, Robinson Clegg was reading an editorial article on the Italian situation to Bosworth Harden, owner of the *Ray*. It was hot in the booth. Worn out by the grind of his labor, that of filling the two wide editorial columns of the *Ray*, Clegg was suffering. The grimy proof wriggled and danced; whole paragraphs smudged and ran together under his tired eyes. Harden began to offer an insertion, deadly long, which would have to appear word for word and comma for comma.

As his employer droned on, Clegg found himself recalling instances of misplaced punctuation and of mistaken words that had taken him to Harden's downtown office in a hurry to explain. He was taking some notes now but he despaired of revising the article correctly. He felt he must try to end the agony.

"You think that will be all, Mr. Harden?" Clegg broke in at a fall in Harden's voice, pushing the booth door open with his foot, knowing he might lose something important in the noise of the typewriters outside, but feeling that he must have air quickly. But his strategy failed. Harden went on evenly:

"Just above the third paragraph you might say, Mr. Clegg. . . . Now, let me see. . . . Yes, where you refer to the historical correctness of Italian diplomacy, we might say something about Cavour. That will give it flavor—just a line. You know, of course, about Cavour?"

"Yes, Mr. Harden—something about Cavour. That will improve it, I think."

"And Mr. Clegg," went on the cold, carefully toned voice, "remember your 'that' clauses. I don't want too many; they are

weak. We want the *Ray's* utterances to be strong."

"Yes; I have a note of that. I shall have these corrections made now, Mr. Harden."

"You will see the revised proof, Mr. Clegg?"

Clegg stiffened; he was trapped. Hope of getting home in time for the doctor's special visit was gone.

"Certainly, Mr. Harden. I always see the revised proofs." He managed to end the conversation without betraying his disappointment; the habit of repression served him.

He sat for a moment in the booth, his hand on the telephone, trying to pull himself together enough to 'phone Doris that he wouldn't be home in time to see the doctor. Finally he gave over telephoning Doris and stumbled out of the booth to the corner where his battered desk and typewriter stood. Half-past four, he reflected, and he had promised his wife he would leave then, no matter what happened; and now he would be here until six, waiting for the correction of something that did not matter. That was the irony of it; nothing he was permitted to write really mattered.

Turning automatically to his typewriter, he began to pick out the sentences he must insert for Harden. From his notes he slowly pieced together what he thought the owner had dictated and with his pencil went through the proof of his original article and marked the words that were to be altered, indicating the places where new matter was to be inserted. Then he sat and dully tried to recall something about Cavour that would satisfy Harden and fit into the context. But he succeeded only in adding to his sense of bewilderment.

Two men on the other side of the roll-top desk had been talking for several minutes before Clegg realized they had mentioned him. The sound of his name, repeated, caused him to rub his eyes and straighten up as a man will when he suddenly becomes aware of a physical and mental slump.

"The old boy is getting to be a regular owl, isn't he?"

Randolph was the speaker, the reporter Clegg usually envied when he had time to look around the big room—handsome, capable, foot-loose Randolph. The answer was inaudible; and as Clegg listened, the pair, evidently fearing they had been overheard, rose and strolled to the other end of the room. He watched them without resentment.

Randolph was right. He *was* an owl.

He turned away from his machine and lighted his pipe, puffing in irritable jerks. A bit of cracked mirror lay on his desk; he picked it up and studied his lined face. That was it—an owl.

"A great, gray owl at forty-five," he said to himself. "And in fifteen years I'll be a snowy owl—the fellow who started out to become an eagle! Some eagle!" And as he sat there with the bit of cracked mirror in his hand, he kept repeating: "Some eagle!"

Suddenly he caught sight of the clock and began to write the interpolation about Cavour. . . .

It was eleven o'clock that night when Clegg, having persuaded Doris to let him stand the first watch by the bedside, closed her door softly and stole in to sit in the worn reed rocker in little Mary's room. He had not had time to bathe or shave. Dinner had been a kitchen-table mockery. There had been ice to crack, dishes to wash, this and that to carry; and he had done the duties of domestic and nurse quietly and cheerfully, comforted by the news that the child had held her own through the long, difficult day.

She was sleeping now, quietly and naturally, it seemed



"Then the milk-inspection. Children are dying—"

to Clegg; and as he thought of the long vigils during her delirium, he breathed with great relief. No more of that, and he could stand Harden, he thought.

Since the day of their little daughter's horrifying accident, Clegg and his young wife had gone about in a daze. The daily visits of the doctor were periods of racking doubt, straining anxiety. The bedroom care for many days had yielded no grateful sense of giving comfort and relief to the stricken child; it seemed as if they were continuing, prolonging her sufferings.

Somehow they managed to pick up a bit of food here and there. They got through the formalities of daily living, and Clegg went to his office as usual each morning, but they walked in a maze. The heat had for a week been terrific, torturing.

Clegg reached out and drew the ice-cap into position and then relaxed in his chair, letting his eyes wander out over the field of midsummer stars. He had no wish to sleep; instead he wished to avoid dropping down into the chasm of oblivion, only to be called suddenly to cope with the heartbreaking emergency of the moaning child. He would rather stay awake until the end.

Of course his mind drifted back to Harden.

Davidson, his predecessor on the editorial page, had told him once about a call he had made at Harden's home. He had found his employer seated in a cavernous library, dark and cool, behind a rosewood desk. A high, frosted glass of a fragrant, iced drink in the newspaper owner's hand had impressed Davidson, and he had dwelt on that to Clegg, on that and on the manservant moving noiselessly through the shadows.

Davidson, who had a high sense of humor, had not got on well with Harden that night. He had had some things to say and he had said them; and being foot-loose, he was able to accept the consequences. He had been able to retail the interview about the office with a high heart, giving a clever impersonation of the cold, impassive proprietor of the *Ray* and president of the First National Bank in the act of molding public opinion.

Harden had laid his hand on the telephone and had said to Davidson: "This is my instrument for making opinion. I never go to the editorial rooms of the *Ray*. A sense of detachment is essential to clear thinking."

"A sense of detachment!"

Clegg hid his face in his hands. That was exactly what he needed, what his crying nerves demanded. But detachment was impossible when one must spend his time searching for topics safe enough for the *Ray*. For while evils in the city cried for abatement, and the people for an advocate, Harden chose to ignore the homely problems which the paper should grapple and preferred to have his editorial columns reflect opinions on which there was no controversy. He was afraid of trouble, and his business interests were an intricate fabric to be held aloof from his publishing adventure. Davidson had gone that night to tell him the *Ray* ought to get behind the slum-elimination ordinance because it was right, and had ended the interview by presenting his resignation.

Under Harden, the *Ray's* war record had been almost despicable.

But even with as safe a man as Robinson Clegg to seek the safe subjects and write on them in mild subjunctives,—Harden's admonitions to make the *Ray's* utterances strong were not to be construed too literally,—the owner could not keep his hands off. Clegg's own theory was that Harden, the business man, had a secret ambition to be known as Harden the editor. Nobody had stayed on the job as long as Clegg; nobody else had been willing to endure the conditions.

Clegg did not sleep, but as he sat by the bed, he had imaginings that in daylight would have seemed as impractical as dreams. What if people were wrong about Bosworth Harden's cold heart? Perhaps he was a lonely, misunderstood man, undiscovered by the kind of soul he needed for under-

"Is that all?" Harden stopped him, eyes flinty.



sickness first; all men were sympathetic where children were concerned; the way for confidences would be opened, leading to informal, pleasant conversations about newspaper practice and policy. He would go tomorrow. . . .

Clegg finally realized that Doris was shaking him. He felt sick, infinitely weary in the hot, sticky dawn; but as he shuffled out to get the ice, he had a vague memory of his intended call upon Harden, a warm stirring to action, and he felt better. He fumbled around the stove in the kitchen, putting on coffee and shifting soiled dishes on the table. The milk, he found, was sour, the butter a disgusting mass. That sickly weakness came over him again; no matter, the hot black coffee was what he needed. And so the new day began.

After hours of morning glare and heat, the doctor came and went. It was only in the middle of the morning, however, when Clegg, discouraged in the act of trying to help Doris with her household tasks, got away; and although he was not obliged to be at the office so early, as he had the permission of the managing editor to remain at home for the doctor's visits, he was glad to get to his work. He knew he was feverish,

but he attributed that to the excitement of the climax he intended to force with Harden.

"I'll have to tell him about how I started out to be an eagle," he found himself saying as he inspected his lean grizzled head in the washroom mirror.

Somehow he got through the day. . . .

Clegg leaned against a cool white pillar of Bosworth Harden's deep porch and regarded the butler absently. He had toiled up flight after flight of innumerable rustic steps, over miles of curving, white graveled walks, under acres of towering trees, all unnatural to him in the moonlight, speaking to him

"Look here!" Henderson said. "Don't you know that you might as well burn your plant down as try to crawl from under—*now?*"

standing, timid, fearing to invite acquaintance. Perhaps, face to face, he would be kindly, considerate. Clegg had never seen him. His relations with him consisted of sending his "copy" over to the bank every morning, whence it was returned by messenger, sometimes cut to pieces by the rapid, impatient strokes of a heavy pencil, sometimes untouched. Occasionally he would be summoned to the telephone to talk about an article after it was in type, for Harden was so strict about such things as usage and punctuation, that he frequently wished to verify his recollection of a word or phrase read in manuscript. Often he would order extensive revisions, causing infinite delay.

Davidson had given Clegg a month; but that was a year ago, and he was still hanging on. It was a case of bread and butter. What was it that Randolph had said about an owl? Clegg started up. He knew he had been dozing. Mary was stirring, and he must get her to sleep again without waking Doris. He must fill the ice-cap. . . .

In his chair again, he thought on and on.

He would go to see Harden and have a little talk—not at the bank, but across the rosewood desk, out at the house on the Drive. Perhaps he would catch him in his study on a warm evening, and he would send for another of those tall frosted glasses and shove the cigarettes across the table. Tomorrow evening he would try it if Mary was no worse. He would tell Harden of Mary's

of the remoteness of the man he was trying to reach. At the top he had paused, weak, hardly able to appreciate that he was at last on the rim of his adventure. Conscious of absolute dejection, he murmured something to the butler about business for the *Ray* and fell to regarding the grounds. Force, confidence, good presence were what he needed, and he lacked them all. His winter suit, worn under sore compulsion into the summer, hung clumsily, and he had not shaved. Across the lawn was a white fountain in a bed of heliotrope. He was seized with a desire to rush to it and clamber into its cool depths.

Instead he went along a wide white hall to the doorway of Harden's study. The butler drifted away.

It was as Davidson had said. The owner of the *Ray* was sitting there behind a desk; it must be the one of rosewood. Miles of thick red carpet lay between. The only light came from the wall behind the small figure at the desk, and Clegg reflected that it settled his sitting down, because it would shine on his face; he was not prepared for that. That silver chest must be the cigarette-box. Everything was as he had pictured. Only the cold drinks were absent. Harden would send for them.

"Well, Mr. Clegg?"

The man at the desk was tapping on it with a pencil as Clegg stirred from the doorway and moved forward. The length of the journey across the room gave Clegg a chance to study his employer

briefly. What he saw was a small, narrow head, small eyes too near to the thin nose, and a mouth that suggested more than faintly that of a fish. But he saw Harden could bring that downward curve into a straight line. It was time to speak, but the words that he had planned did not come.

"Yes, Mr. Harden, I came to see you. I wanted to have a little talk. I thought this might be the best time and place."

"Is it about the paper?" Harden's tone was flat.

"Well, yes. It was about the paper and my connection with it."
"Well?"

The pencil was still tapping, and Clegg watched it, knowing that instead he should be looking Harden in the eye.

"I need more money."

There! That was wrong. He caught himself miserably, knowing he had blundered in the worst way. He knew he must get to something else; so he tried to hurry on and floundered. The pencil seemed to be tapping a little faster, a little louder.

"You see, sir, we have had a little run of bad luck."

He stopped. He had intended that it should all be quite casual and friendly, and here he was still standing, and had got nowhere. He had been as blunt and embarrassed as a schoolboy before his principal. He put a diffident hand on the table, then quickly removed it. He fingered his hat.

"You will have to take that matter up with Mr. Henderson." Harden said it coldly, leaning back slowly and catching his hands behind his head. "I leave all details to Henderson. Is that all?"

"Well, no sir." Clegg was grasping now. He tried to muster an easy smile, but it was like trying to smile for a photographer. "I thought we might have a little talk about the *Ray's* editorial page. A trifle more of force, something to say about the street-railway situation, get behind the tenement-house bill; then there is the milk-inspection. The children are dying this summer. These are homely subjects—"

"Is that all?" Harden stopped him short, his eyes flinty.

"Why, yes sir. I believe that was all."

"All right. When I want your advice about the *Ray's* policies, I shall send for you. See Henderson about the other matter."

He picked up a pile of correspondence and made a motion of dismissal. Then he looked up at the gaunt man towering across the desk. "And remember, Mr. Clegg, there is no such thing as bad luck. We might have a little human-interest editorial along that line some time—soon."

It is odd how swiftly men can get home when they have to.

The doctor was with Mary when Clegg reached the house, and when the physician had finished with the patient, he rested his gaze on the man who sat on the foot of the bed.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked brusquely. And without waiting for an answer, he slid his smooth fingers along Clegg's wrist and again over his forehead. Then he suggested to Doris that she try to get through the night alone and send her husband to bed. So it was that Clegg dropped down in the stifling room under the eaves, there to conceive a plan. Morning found him feverish. He was sure that most of it was due to his idea.

Clegg had thought it all out as he lay and stared out at the street-lamps and the stars, straining for an expected cry from the sick-room. He gathered no resentment toward Harden; his employer simply had not understood; and Clegg, going over the scene in his mind, saw himself the clumsy actor, mumbling and forgetting his lines. Harden must have thought of him as an owl, an old gray owl. So his plan was conceived in peace, and it gave him strength.

The long flight of dirty stairs which led from the business office to the editorial rooms of the *Ray* seemed endless as he clumped up them that morning, and he had to stop and take hold of the rail at the top. Henderson saw him through his open office door, standing there mopping his forehead. Henderson liked Clegg. He wished things might be different. But on principle he

ignored the editorial page and devoted himself to the news-columns.

Clegg looked in.

"I'm not staying all day, Mr. Henderson. I'll just fix up the page so you needn't pay any attention to it. Then I think I'll go back home. I'm not feeling well today."

"How's the little girl?"

"Doing nicely. But I think the heat is getting us all out there."

Clegg passed on to his desk. He had firmly in mind what he wanted to do. So, without preliminary, he adjusted a sheet of paper in his old typewriter and tapped methodically for several minutes. He did not have to pause. He poured out what he had to say in smooth, almost rhythmical periods. He reflected grimly as he slipped the sheet off that it was the easiest piece of writing he had ever done. He went through it with his pencil, scribbled at the top, "Lead editorial second edition," and sent it to the composing-room. Then he glanced at the clock, and seeing that it was after eleven, he reached mechanically to the top of his desk and took the copy of the first edition that the office-boy on his rounds had placed there.

Turning immediately to the editorial page, he tore it out and with his pencil wrote across the face of the least worthy of his editorials for that day, "Kill for new matter in second edition." Then he sent the marked page to the composing-room. It was done.

At one o'clock, after an hour of sitting with his feet on his desk, his head sunk forward, he climbed to the composing-room and walked rather unsteadily down the aisle of page forms. He noted Kenny, chief of the make-up men, busy at the editorial page, lifting an article out. He saw the bright new metal of another editorial lying at Kenny's elbow ready to go into the page.

So Clegg went downstairs and home.

IT was Bosworth Harden's custom, on returning to his very private and very bare office in the bank after his luncheon, to examine the editorials in his paper. Today, as he strolled in somewhat late,—it was after three,—he was reflecting upon the increasing incompetence and impudence of employees generally. The men were more inclined to fight back. Perhaps it was an effect of the war. He might have an editorial on that soon. It would be good discipline to make that man Clegg write it, after last night's episode—that is, if he didn't discharge him. Even with the scarcity of men, he could get a dozen to fill that place, men who would not think it the writing editor's province to influence the ownership. What could a man like that know about what was good for the paper, or best for the people? Traction reform, too! He had suggested that! With the directorate of the proposed consolidation waiting for Bosworth Harden to say whether he would take its presidency! Well—

Suddenly conscious that his telephone-bell had been ringing for some time, he lifted the receiver and gave the operator in the outside office permission to connect him with the party calling. It happened to be the rector of Trinity Church.

"Ah, Mr. Harden, I am fortunate to find you in," said the suave voice over the wire. "I should have come over to your office, but I wished to be the first to congratulate you, and I knew you would have many callers this afternoon."

"And why should you wish to congratulate me, Dr. Grant?"

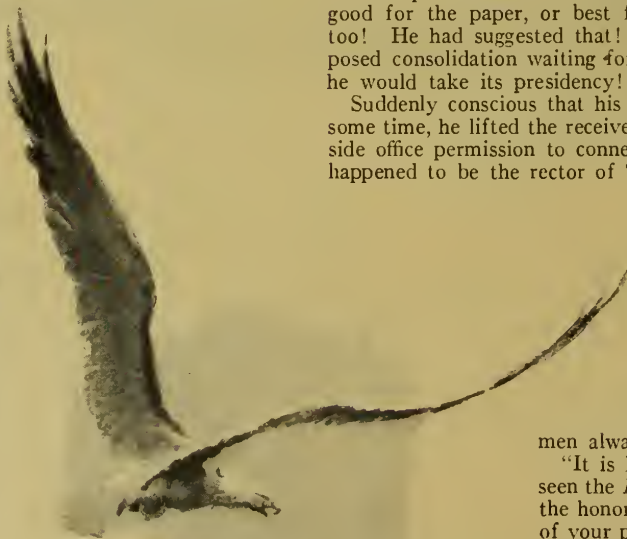
Why, thought Harden, did clergymen always evade the point?

"It is like you to be modest. But I have seen the *Ray*, and you cannot rob yourself of the honor that is due you. Putting the force of your paper behind the slum-tenement bill will assure it of passage. I feel that—"

"It is very nice of you to say that, Doctor, but I fear there must be a mistake. We have preferred to let the Council handle that matter unadvised."

Harden was wondering what blunder the *Ray* could have committed. He reached for his crisp copy of the first edition and leafed it open on the desk. "What part of the paper did you see it in, Doctor?"

"On the editorial page. It was a splendid announcement, one that will make you thousands of friends in the city," was the reply. (Continued on page 130)



Illustrated by
Tony Sarg



SOME people have no more idea of how to tell a story than some of our most popular authors.

Filgate—a pink-and-white, pomaded, waxed, manicured, thin-voiced tailor's dummy, a regular twentieth-century *Osrice*—dropped into the chair beside me at the club the other night, and worked off this one on me.

Shockingly constructed, the part that ought to be known from the start not coming out till the last, like your railway-ticket out of your pocket, it is worth putting on record as an example of how irritatingly these things can be done.

Something in the evening paper enabled Filgate to switch us on to matrimony, a subject on which I am armed with, on the one hand, the calm, steady judgments of a bachelor of forty, and on the other, the wide range of impassioned views poured on me by married friends, who, like the fox in the fable, having themselves suffered a calamity, lose no opportunity of tempting or of chiding the unscathed into the like fate.

As I dislike Filgate very much, and as he is unmarried but does not know that I am unmarried, I at once took the opposite side of the argument and opened upon him the batteries supplied me by my married friends, among them the following weighty aphorism:

"Marriage," I said ponderously, "is the natural state. An unmarried man, Filgate, is unnatural. He is incomplete. To say that a man cannot find a suitable mate is puerile and absurd. He should make it his business to find one. Systematically and sedulously he should seek for one. If he does that, Filgate, if he earnestly gives his mind to the subject,—as is his bounden duty to himself, to the state and to society,—he cannot fail, within a very brief period, to find her."

"Just leaned over smiling and called out: 'Got your letter. Nothing doing.' Standing there frozen stiff, a taxi walloped into him from behind!"

"Oh, can't he!" said Filgate, no more impressed than I am myself, when the aphorism is handed out to me. "Oh, bay Juve, can't he, though!" And he thrust out his stupid little legs and clicked his shiny little boots together.

"No, Filgate, he can't," I replied severely.

"Well, that shows you don't know a chap I know—a chap called Mungo."

I said I felt uncommonly glad I did not know a chap with such a repulsive name. "What is he, an Australian aborigine?"

"Ew nu, ew dee me nu," cried Filgate. (That is how he talks, but I shall not try to phoneticize his pronunciation all the time.) "He's English. He's in the Civil Service; same bwanch as I am."

"Same *what*?" The man has also a perfectly maddening trick of suddenly lisping an *r*.

"Same bwanch, old fellow—same bwanch as I am. Quite a charming fellow. Not very dressy, perhaps,"—he glanced down approvingly at his own glossy person,— "but most earnest and estimable. Ew, rather! Mungo's his Christian name, you know; but everybody calls him Mungo. It ought to have been Mango—

that's a fruit or a flower or a bird, or something, you know, in Cochín China or India or some rather ridiculous place where his father had eaten it or picked it, or shot it, or whatever it is you do to mangoes, you know, and wanted to call him after it, only the clergyman at the christening took the *a* for a *u* and then insisted it must remain *Mungo*, or he couldn't be a child of grace or some rather absurd thing in the catechism. Rather hard on poor old Mungo, what? He's often told me how much he'd prefer *Mango*. More distinguished, don't you think?"

I mentioned Mungo Parke as a comforting sop to his namesake's sensibilities, and—

Marriage and Mister Mungo

By the Famous Author
of "This Freedom" and
"If Winter Comes"—

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON

"Ew, bay Juve," declared Filgate, "I didn't know that. I only know Hyde Park and St. James', and I believe there's a Battersea Park, and in America I fancy there's a Yellowstone Park, or some rather absurd place like that. Where *is* Mungo Park?"

I told Filgate that Mungo Parke was an explorer and not a landscape, that I believed he had finished up as a cannibal stew, and that the sooner Filgate got on with the narrative of his own Mungo, the better I should be pleased.

"Ew, bay Juve, an explorer, eh?" said the stupid little ass, in no degree discomposed by his ignorance. "That's better still. Yes, rather, old chap—about Mungo really making an earnest business of finding a wife.

"Well, now, I'm not going to tell you who all these girls were that Mungo tried to marry, or how he got to know them. Take too long. I'll just give you their names in order as we go along, from Kiddie Preston to Plain Jane. Not that he ever wanted to marry Plain Jane, of course, tee-hee, tee-hee," (this is the inane and maddening sound with which Filgate laughs), "but he'd got into the habit of taking all his troubles to her, and he did it with all his refusals. I knew her as well as I know him. Everybody calls her Plain Jane, just as everybody calls him Mungo.

"Well, old fellow, marriage, with Mungo, was even more than a sedulous and earnest object in life. It was a religion. Ebsileetly. His parents encouraged it. It was their dying words to him. Both! His father's last words were:

"Marry, Mungo. Marry, my dear boy; and always remember Plain Jane." And his mother's were: "Mungo, marry. Marry, Mungo, and don't forget Plain Jane."

"Why were they so keen on Plain Jane?" I grunted—I loathe nothing so much as being cornered by one of Filgate's fatuous recitals.

"Ew, tee-hee, tee-hee," tittered Filgate, clicking his beastly little boots together again. "Why, of *course* they were. Naturally, old fellow. Another thing, when poor old Mungo was born—"

"Oh, all right, all right, Filgate. Stick to Mungo when he was going to marry. Get on with it, man."

"Rather, old fellow. Well, as I was saying, that was their dying wish, that he should get married, and you know they both died in the same week, and bay Juve, poor old Mungo was so upset about it, and so anxious to do the right thing, that he'd have married the week after, if he could have found a girl. I assure you most solemnly he would. As it was, he found one the week after—Kiddie Preston; and what with being madly in love at first sight—and first time, too—and religiously moved to bring off his parents' wishes, he ebsileetly rushed the thing, and proposed in a fortni't—"

"Ew, I say, dash that chap," broke off Filgate. A man, in passing us, had brushed a muddy boot past Filgate's shining patent leathers, and up the little ass must pop to flick his ridiculous shoes with his silk handkerchief. Then, because he had stooped, his *ie* must be fiddled with, and his waistcoat jerked, and then his little white hands pressed firmly on the golden waves on each side of his parting.

These proceedings I watched with a baleful eye, which Filgate catching, "Sorry, old fellow," he chirped, and settled himself daintily and patted himself and continued:

"Yes, proposed in a fortni't. Ebsileetly. He did it by letter, old fellow; hadn't quite the courage to ask her to her face; and the



"But dash it all, man—" said Filgate.

morning after he'd posted it, he wandered about the West End, where he was likely to meet her shopping, simply trembling from head to foot with wondering how she'd look and what she'd say if he came across her. Trembling! Bay Juve, old fellow, I thought his hat would come off when I happened to meet him, he was shuddering so. Bay Juve, it was a cruel business, old fellow. It really was. The letter he'd written was so passionate it was practically written in his heart's blood. He showed me a carbon copy of it afterward — splendidly methodical chap, old Mungo. Bay Juve, it would have

scorched the paint off a door. It really would, old fellow."

"Cut out the 'old fellow,' if you don't mind, Filgate," I interjected.

"Right, old fellow," said the stupid little ass, and continued: "Well, when should poor old Mungo actually see her at last but catch sight of her on top of a bus. In Piccadilly Circus. He was just crossing, and the bus was just passing; and d'you know, old fellow, she actually gave him the answer to that life-blood letter from where she sat! Ebsileetly! Just leaned over smiling and shaking her head, and called out:

"Got your letter, all right. Nothing doing!"

Filgate paused, and stared dramatically at me. (I stared impassively back at Filgate.) The dramatic glint faded out of his pale blue eyes (they bulge), and he went on, expostulatingly:

"Well, but I mean to say, you know! After a letter like that! From the top of a bus. Did you ever? Poor old Mungo was ebsileetly frozen by the shock and the crudity of it. Ebsileetly.



"And was arrested by a wuffian of a park keeper, not for being in the pond himself, but for permitting a dog in a bathing pool."

Frozen stiff where he stood in the middle of the Circus, and a bwoot of a taxi—

"A what?"

"A bwoot of a taxi, old fellow. Standing there stiff, and a bwoot of a taxi walloped into him from behind, and he was three weeks in a hospital. Three weeks! Well, I mean to say, what about that for a start in trying to get married?"

"Well, what about it?" I returned. I absolutely refuse to display any emotion over Filgate's stories.

"Well, pretty cruel, old fellow, surely?"

"Nonsense! A bit off-hand of the girl, perhaps. Girls are like that nowadays, Filgate. As to the accident, if the taxi ran onto the pavement and hit your Mungo, I don't see it was her fault."

"Oh, but it didn't, it didn't, old fellow. He was in the road. I said that, didn't I?"

"You said he simply stood frozen stiff in the middle of the Circus."

"Yes, well?"

"Well, that's the triangular bit under the fountain, if it's anywhere. Is that the end?"

"Oh, rather not; sorry, old fellow. I meant the middle of the road. Ew, dear me, rather not. No. Plain Jane came to see him while he was in bed, and he told her all about it,—he'd always confided everything in her since they were children,—and she comforted him, and said she expected he'd been too hasty, and that he must just look for some nice girl, now, and take it more slowly.

"Well, he did, old fellow. In fact, he took it too slowly. He was so shocked and upset by the way Miss Preston had treated what was, to him, such a sacred matter as a proposal of marriage, that he dragged out the next one to two years and a half. Two years and a half! Ebsileetly. She was called Toomuch, this second one. Phœbe Toomuch. She lived at a place called Streat-ham. I don't suppose you've ever heard of it, old fellow. I never had. It's one of the sibubs. How dear old Mungo ever could find his way there, I never could imagine. I expect he inherited a sort of explorer instinct from his father, who of course



"He hit him a knock with an umbrella and pitched him down the steps."

had plunged about the trackless forests of Cochin China or wherever the absurd place mangoes come from is and—"

"It's Mungo you're telling about, isn't it?" I said.

"Ebsileetly," said Filgate.

"Well, cut the mango, if you please."

"Ebsileetly, old fellow. Well, this Toomuch girl had a most frightful father. He was a merchant of some absurd kind—tallow, or hides, or some rather ridiculous thing like that, and he not only used to piffle about his garden in white shoes and a straw hat, but he called his daughter 'my lass.' It appears that they actually use that kind of language up in Huddersfield or Halifax, or absurd places like that, and that was where this frightful old father came from. Why don't these astonishing kind of people stay where they're born? That's what I can't make out.

"Well, poor old Mungo explored his way out to this place, Streatham, every night for two and a half years. I assure you most solemnly, old fellow, he never lost his way once; and then one night, whatever on earth do you think happened? Why, he'd scarcely shut the front door behind him as he was leaving, when this frightful old father popped out after him with a perfectly enormous umbrella in his hand, and ebsileetly foaming with wage—"

"With what?"

"With wage, old fellow, and bawled out at poor old Mungo: 'Hast tha asked my lass toneet, or hast tha nowt?'"

"Well, I mean to say, did you ever hear such language in your life? Poor old Mungo, with the most splendid dignity, never said a word to the savage old ruffian, but quite quietly took out his handkerchief and blew his nose—"

"What, the old man's nose?"

"No, his own nose, old fellow; and the savage old bwoot roared out: 'Tha's bin pernuckettin round after my lass nigh three year, and tha't no nearer asking her than when the first coom gilfollopin about her.'

"Of course, I can't possibly pronounce his barbarous dialect, old fellow; but that gives you some idea of the sheer horror of it. And in any case, and even putting dialect aside—I mean to say I heard the other day that some people in those fearful parts actually say 'cassle' for 'castle,' so it shows how appalling the thing is—even allowing for that, fancy using such disgusting words as *pernuckettin* and *gilfollopin* to a man like poor old Mungo! I mean to say, dash it, he's in the Civil Service. Well, anyway, believe me if you can, old Mungo never even blenched—"

"Never what?"

"Blenched, never even—" (Continued on page 134)





Cinderella's Sister

Illustrated by
William Fisher

"After all, we're neither of us quite such rotters as we sometimes imagine," observes Peter Nolan at the end of this spirited story of a certain social stratum that is not quite so fast as it sometimes would like to think itself. Miss Lauferty describes it with vivacity and a keen sense of drama.

CINDERELLA, on wedding the Prince, appears to have driven off to the palace in the crystal coach of state and so to have passed out of her family's ken.

Bonniebelle Carton, on becoming Mrs. Jasper Redmond of New York and Tuxedo, embarked for a cross-country run in Jasper's Rolls-Royce, and so passed out of the Carton world and Logansport's most exclusive circles. But she never got out of that city's ken, sight or knowledge. It kept right on speculating about her through the various vicissitudes and joys of the Carton family which the birth of Bonnie's two children kept her from coming West to share.

When Louella May married and went to the Argentine to live, Logansport knew that every stitch of her French, convent-made and Chicago-Madame-Lorice-designed trousseau came from Bonnie.

"And Lou was never so nice to Bonnie," smiled Logansport, rocking complacently. "She certainly made her little sister run errands—though of course she never called her a brat, the way Hildred did."

Then Logansport lowered its voice. The Hildred-Bonniebelle situation was worth its best stage whispers. Everyone who was posted at all knew that when Bonniebelle Redmond walked down the church aisle she had walked up as Bonnie Carton, Hildred, trailing in her wake with her arms massed with Killarneys which were the gift of the groom, bore in her heart the collective thorns of all the roses at the wedding or in the world—also the gift of the groom.

Jasper Redmond was the most eligible man that chance and a college friendship had ever brought to Logansport. And when he and the traditions of the Redmond millions came to town, Hildred Carton had been the first of Logansport's wise virgins to light her lamp, set her teeth and garb herself for the good hunting Jasper offered. All Logansport knew that, and also knew how, when Bonnie came swaying across his path, slim and fragrant and instinct with lure and the color of her awakening dreams, the older sister was forgotten, and Miss Sweet-and-Seventeen was whirled

into Jasper's arms and the biggest wedding the town had ever seen.

What Logansport didn't know was that Hildred's thorns had power transcending the mere pricks of envy or chagrin. They could lacerate. For the first time in a repressed, ambitious and self-centered life, Hildred Carton had felt something bigger than the calculated emotions of her stage-effects. She had fallen in love with Jasper. She wanted him and not his millions. Then Bonnie had come, and Hildred was pushed out of the rôle in which she had cast herself, and assigned the infinitely less satisfactory one of maid of honor at the Redmond-Carton wedding.

It was a choice tidbit. Only Hildred's high-flung head and scornful smile kept it from being a feast. Only Hildred's sharp tongue saved her from the extremely personal interviews a small town knows so well how to conduct.

At the end of three years Logansport had accustomed itself to Hildred's jaundiced bitterness and accented spinsterhood.

"Wait till she's thirty," said Logansport, shaking its head wisely.

But neither Logansport nor Hildred was permitted to wait. The influenza epidemic carried the elder Cartons into the Great Beyond, and with far-reaching effects, bore Hildred down to the Argentine to live with Louella May.

In Buenos Aires, Hildred learned to wear flaming orange and burning red, and to fling her dark hair high on her head with scorn of the white lock that streaked from the center parting to her left ear. A black velvet ribbon about her slim throat, and long jet pendants in her ears, helped accent her angular height. The Argentine liked soft, luscious curves and gentle, alluring eyes. Hildred's eyes were translucent like amber, and as hard.

Those eyes told nothing of all the bitterness she felt when Lou packed her off at the end of six months for what she explained was the visit on which Bonnie just insisted. Hildred's voice, too, was blank as she spoke words telltale to anyone less self-centered than Louella May:

"But I can't stay with Bonnie—and her husband."

"Why not, I'd like to know? Isn't she your sister just as much as I am?"

"I don't have to stay with either of you, Louella May. I could take a little place of my own—"

"And run it on your fortune? Five thousand dollars brings in about three hundred a year. What are you going to do to stretch that to pay even the rent, Hilly? Take in washing—or pose for artists?"

"You say such cruel things, Louella May. I never know how to answer you. But I can't go to Bonnie."

"You are going," replied Louella May sweetly, adding with unfluffed amiability: "And if you don't know how to answer me, don't try. Can't you trust Bonnie and me—your own younger sisters, who always looked up to you and respected you as long as you made it possible—to have your best interests at heart? Don't you know we'd do anything to make you happy?"

"Am I supposed to know that?" asked Hildred bitterly. "I'm not very happy here, Louella May, but I'll try to look happy. Don't send me to Bonnie—and her husband. I can't bear that. I can't bear—living off him."

Hildred couldn't bring herself to speak Jasper Redmond's name. How, then, she asked herself desperately, could she bear the sight of him, the touch of his hand, the sharing of the air he breathed?

"How can you bear living off my poor Noël, then?" demanded Louella May. "We can't afford to keep you. That's a fact. Bonnie can. Now, be decent for once in your life, Hildred. If we can save enough, we'll be happy to welcome you home again in six months or a year."

"Home again!" repeated Hildred. "Like an alley cat!"

But after that she locked in her heart all she felt, flinging out as the sole sign and portent of her lacerated feelings the heavy mourning garb which she resumed for her journey from Buenos Aires to New York.

A daze enwrapped her as she came into the harbor at New York, continued to enfold her during a luncheon at the Ritz, the motor-run down to Jasper's Long Island place, Bonnie Brae, and mantled her in merciful lethargy during the dinner that ensued. Temporarily she viewed Bonnie, Jasper and life with indifference instead of hostility. And like a puppet, she went through the long evening of elaborate reaching out for adjustment. The children and the Argentine seemed the safest topics with which to

bridge the years. And the children and the Argentine were, in a manner of speaking, worn threadbare by the time midnight and the traditions of joyful reunion permitted the suggestion that one might stop talking and go to bed.

Bonnie escorted Hildred to the door of her blue-and-cream guest-room, kissed her good night with the sweet gentleness which was the very aroma and essence of Bonnie, and then woke Hildred with unmerciful abruptness from her haze and daze by her simple, "Now kiss brother Jasper, and then off for Dreamland."

Something in the startled alertness of Hildred's amber eyes when Jasper placed his lips to her cheek must have set a hitherto silent chord of Bonnie's nature to vibrating. For half an hour later, bearing in one hand a hairbrush of amber, monogrammed in gold, and trailing in the other a cigarette of Egyptian tobacco similarly decorated, Bonniebelle Redmond invaded her guest-chamber without the preliminary of a knock on the closed door.

Bonnie had never known doors that didn't swing wide at her approach. And knocking of all sorts and descriptions lay outside her scheme of things. She was sunshine and blue sky and peach-blossom petals in coloring and texture, and her disposition and conduct passed as a perfect match.

"Have you everything you want, old dear?" she demanded hospitably, swaying gracefully in the doorway amidst a cloud of smoke, orchid chif-fons and flying golden hair.

"Everything but what I want," replied her guest unexpectedly, suspending in midstroke and with something strangely like hostility a wooden hairbrush washed free of varnish and veneer.

Bonnie looked vaguely at Hildred's cheap and evidently long-enduring brush. Then her dancing, glancing blue eyes took in Hildred's gray crêpe kimono embroidered in white cotton and purchasable anywhere at two dollars and forty-nine cents. Hildred's eyes followed Bonnie's itinerary and then journeyed back again—from her wooden brush and kimono of crêpe to Bonnie's amber and gold and chif-fons.

"Everything but what you want?" Bonnie repeated, coming into the room and sinking down on the *chaise longue* of blue and rose taffeta piled high with white pillows. "I wonder if you'd say that if you meant it, Hilly! I wonder if you'd say it if you didn't know I'd think you wouldn't say it if you meant it. Is there anything I can do?"

"You can go to bed and let me get some sleep," said Hildred bitterly. "The trip from sister to sister is a little exhausting for—the old maid."



Hildred's bitterness broke its dam of caution. "Bonnie! Always Bonnie!" she stormed.

Bonnie brightened visibly. She heard her cue, and she took it with conscious, fairy-godmother generosity.

"You won't be that long. There are heaps of nice men down here. And when we spin you over to the country club, you'll not know which to choose. But first we'll go up to town and get you heaps of pretties."

"I have all the clothes I want, and I don't want your men. I know which will choose me—and that's just nobody," replied Hildred. "I'm not attractive—never was. There never was a man that any girl couldn't take from me for the mere trying."

"Did you ever try to take one back again?" laughed Bonnie amiably. "Men are restless. They like change. You're sort of different, Hilly, and if you wore the right colors, vivid ones to make you the Spanish type, you'd be stunning."

HILDRED eyed Bonnie for a moment through narrowing eyes. Then she spoke bitterly, and just what was in her heart:

"I have five thousand dollars in the world, and two rich sisters who don't want a sour old maid on their hands. I ought to marry, but men don't like me—and I hate men. If you care for one, he makes you suffer. If you don't—merciful heavens! I couldn't bear a man to touch my cheek, if I didn't care."

"But if you did care!" cried Bonnie, crushing out her cigarette against a blue enamel tray and rising to catch Hildred's long, tapering fingers in her soft, plump, white hands. "We'll find the right prince. There's one for every girl. You've never seen yours—that's all."

Breakfast in bed and a day of lounging eliminated from Hildred's face the marks that travel had put there. The tense, perpendicular line between her heavy brows continued to remain and to give the effect of drawing her hungry amber eyes a trifle too close. But that evening when she swept into the living-room in a flaunting thing of orange chiffon over pale amber satin, she produced the effect of a sunset cloud lured into momentary captivity. Jasper lifted his big, slow-moving figure from his chair with the sidling grace that had in the long ago startled Hildred anew each time she saw it.

Beholding this again after all the years, Hildred flamed to crimson that lighted and overlighted her orange-and-amber cloud.

"Hullo, Sis! Looking scrumptious—like a little bit of old Seville or Madrid, or whatever burg it was the poet sang about!" was Jasper's greeting. "And now the leading lady's come, the curtain will rise."

"We're going to have dinner at the country club," explained Bonnie. "I thought you might as well meet a few interesting men right off, and get started."

"Get started at what?" demanded Hildred, fixing her eyes on Bonnie's pink-and-blue-and-cream sparkle.

"Don't cross-examine me before Jasper!" protested Bonnie. "But play your cards right, Hilly. Any one of the men we've corralled for tonight will do. Newt Randall, Jimmy Minturn or even Peter Nolan, if you want to achieve the impossible. Be nice, Hilly. Don't say ugly, clever, cutting things. And take that death's-head black ribbon off your neck. You look like Marie Antoinette after they guillotined her. Oh, forgive me, darling—if I'm brutally frank about the ribbon. But I have your best interests at heart."

"It wasn't the ribbon!" gasped Hildred, removing it as if it suffocated her, and turning to the man who had humiliated her three years before, to see how he enjoyed his wife's conspiracy to corral a man for the ugly old-maid sister.

Jasper was laughing and humming a tune, but Hildred's eyes compelled a response.

"Bonnie's right. Follow Bonnie, and you can't go wrong. She knows how to get 'em, coming and going. Now, let's see what advice brother Jasper can give you. Oh, yes—if you want the boys to like you, follow 'em conversationally and when you're dancing; don't lead. You look as if you might."

"Don't you remember—" began Hildred almost breathlessly, and then she broke off suddenly: "I'm in the way. You have to arrange for me to meet all these men so one of them will take me off your hands now and then."

"Now, my dear," protested Jasper, laying his hand on Hildred's arm, "did I ever act as if you were in the way?"

At the touch of his fingers, Hildred started as if there had been an impact against her white flesh. A pulse fluttered in her throat. Visibly she pulled herself together—held herself taut. But her voice was creamy and indolent when she spoke:

"You warned me not to lead—to follow. Couldn't you give me a bit of practice before we go to the club? Put on a record and see how I dance."

"Sure thing," agreed Jasper. "Put on a record, Bonnie."

Bonnie obeyed, and a moment later Hildred melted into Jasper's arms. When the record burred out at the tuneless end, Hildred snuggled close to Jasper before she would suffer him to let her go. Then she flung herself off at arm's-length.

"How our steps blend!" she cried. "Jasper, it's heaven to dance with you."

Jasper smiled, and settled his collar with a jaunty hand.

"You'll ask me for the first, won't you?" said Hildred.

"Well ra-ther! But after one exhibition, I see Jimmy and Pete and Newt knocking each other over with clamor for the next. Those boys are as fine as they grow 'em."

"And if I prefer you?" demanded Hildred softly.

"I'm not going to be a dog-in-the-manger about my beautiful guest," protested Jasper with a gallant pocketknife dip from the waist.

His eyes sought Bonnie's for approval, and found them, instead, in the moment before she consciously adjusted their expression, wide, questioning, not to say startled. Hildred's eyes flamed from Bonnie's face to Jasper again.

"You never were a dog-in-the-manger," she cried, whirling toward the doorway in a flush of smiles as brilliant as her orange draperies. "What you didn't want, anyone else could have. What you did want—you took. If you're still like that, dog-in-the-manger isn't the name for you. . . . Shall I run get my coat?"

"No! Wait, this is for you—from Jasper and me," called Bonnie as Jasper lifted a cape of brown chiffon and soft kolinsky from a high Venetian chair.

Hildred shuddered into it, and the bitter droop twisted back to her thin, scimitar-like lips.

THAT night when they returned from the country club, Jasper said to Bonnie almost shamefacedly:

"Say, kiddie, we've got to give Hildred a good time even if she makes a wry face about swallowing it. That girl has suffered. I didn't dream she—oh, hang it all, I'm sorry for her. She's so intense, so darn loyal. We've got to make things up to her somehow—make her forget."

Avoiding his eyes for the second time that evening, Bonnie answered:

"There were so many people tonight. Hildred seemed shy. One at a time is better. Pete Nolan's such a wonder. We must have him around heaps."

"So you can dance with him?" demanded Jasper, laughing a little as if he weren't quite sure how seriously he meant it. "Nolan's too much of a hero among the bored married women. They all fall for him. He'll never settle down to business. We ought to find a real man—one with big, primitive feelings to match hers."

Bonnie studied her husband for a moment. There was something unwavering in the steadiness of her blue eyes, but her mouth twinkled into a tiny smile before she replied:

"Jap Edwards? He's such good fun—or Newt, maybe. He's dreadfully lonely since the stupid little wife of his died."

"Jap Edwards is a dancing fool," replied Jasper crisply. "And Newt's a dull old foggy. It'll take a real man to interest a woman of Hildred's brains and depth of feeling."

"Of course I knew they wouldn't do," agreed Bonnie. "But there is one obvious person: Jimmy—Jimmy Minturn. He thinks he's a woman-hater. But if he ever cared, he'd just have the one woman in his life."

"And bore her to death," replied Jasper unexpectedly. "No. On the whole, it'll have to be Nolan. The rest of the gang's impossible to trot around with a vivid creature like Hildred."

"Peter's a dear," agreed Bonnie placidly.

"I'm glad you think so," snapped Jasper. "But please remember we're asking him for Hildred."

PETER NOLAN was tall, slim, bronzed like an Indian, with high cheek-bones and keen blue eyes. When an invitation to dine at Bonnie Brae followed his previous evening's invitation to dine with the Redmonds at the club, Peter Nolan narrowed his eyes, conjured up a vision of the about-to-be-married-off sister-in-law of Jasper Redmond and accepted with elaborate spontaneity.

That night Hildred wore flame, but it was flame veiled in smoke, and with a foundation like a crimson blaze built under its orange lights. And Peter Nolan waited for the flame to blow across his face, planning mentally to duck with a proper show of safety-first methods. But Hildred sat shamelessly with the light in her amber eyes bathing Jasper's face, and the smile on



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her lips freezing to scimitar sharpness when her glance must be turned from the stimulation she seemed to find only in Jasper's eyes.

As far as Hildred was concerned, Peter Nolan wasn't there. To cover her sister's rudeness, Bonnie laughed and chattered with Nolan, while Jasper, moving his bulky shoulders now and then in self-conscious irritation, at other times flung back his blond head with the crowing pride of the rooster and other triumphant males.

So Peter Nolan turned to Bonnie. Why not? She was the prettiest little peach-blossom thing in the world.

"I want to dance!" cried Hildred after dinner as they sat on the screened balcony overlooking the Sound. "This black coffee and Jasper's cognac from his rich-beyond-hoarding store of dusty bottles make my feet tingle. Let's put on a record. I'll teach you a step I learned from a Spanish boy down at Rosario. You'll love it, Jasper."

"My dear! You're an optimist. Jasper's too fat. Take Peter," broke in Bonnie with a smile of wifely amusement.

"Yes—take me. Our hostess offers me as a free gift," said Peter lazily, getting up to his slim height.

Hildred took one eager, unconsidered step toward him; then Jasper pushed Nolan aside with an air of injured dignity: "I think I can manage any step Peter can," he remarked emphatically, catching Hildred's hand and dragging her toward the doorway.

For a moment Hildred lingered, reluctant and amazed at that reluctance. Then as Peter sank down with what might have passed for an air of relief and duty well done, and gave himself to the absorbing task of setting a flaming match to the cigarette between Bonnie's softly curved lips, she tightened her fingers about Jasper's and melted with him into the shadows of the living-room.

Bonnie leaned back against the amethyst cushions of her butter-colored chair—a pastel in the dusk.

"It's a shame to doom you to lurk out here in the moonlight with only me," she said after a moment.

There wasn't a trace of coquetry in her words. She thought it was a shame that her plans were going like this. They'd have to try Jimmy Minturn with Hildred next.

"Only you—are my choice for a partner—in the moonlight," replied Peter Nolan, getting his most practiced Irish lilt into his voice. "Don't fling me around—as a gift."

"I call that sweet. Let's go in and learn the Spanish boy's step too," replied Bonnie, after a startled moment given to resenting this sweetness of his well-advertised and over-produced brand.

"Are you afraid of me—or afraid to trust Jas with that amber-eyed sister of yours?" asked Peter.

"Oh—neither. How can you think such a thing?"

"Then let's stay out in the cool and listen to that music. It sobs, and I'm just happy enough to like the contrast."

"It's nice to be a happy person, isn't it?" replied Bonnie comfortably. "I'm one too. But I didn't know you were. You don't always look happy."

"I think I even look happy, now, when you're so unkind. To be with you here—"

Peter's voice was taut as a violin-string. But Bonnie giggled.

"I love this. Please go on," she said. "You see I was married from the nursery, as they put it, and the babies trotted right along to town, and no one has ever flirted with me so nicely!"

"Don't laugh at me!" began Peter, and then he joined Bonnie with a deeper, more honest vibration than any his voice had held so far. "If you're going to laugh, though, let me join in the chorus. What a pal you'd make—what a pal!"

He leaned forward boyishly and held out his hand—palm up.

"Would I?" cried Bonnie, putting her hand in his. "I'd like a pal."

"You have one," said Peter, crushing her fingers into his palm.

He had glanced into the dimly lighted living-room just then, and silhouetted against the bright west window, he saw the amber-eyed sister stop the slow, gliding step she was teaching Jasper, and carry his hand with sudden passion to her heart and thence to her lips. It was a little trick Peter had often used. He didn't quite see what Hildred meant by it; but for the matter of that, he didn't quite know what he meant by this declaration of palship he had just made to Jasper's wife.

ARDSMERE on the Sound is a very modern community. It prides itself on its exclusiveness and conducts itself on the lines, far from straight and yet running distinctly between two points, so popular in numerous smarter and less smart communities today. The two points are any man and any other man's wife—or any woman and any other woman's husband. Object—anti-matrimony.

No one paid any particular attention to the group of four which consisted almost conventionally of husband and wife and wife's sister and another man. And even when it became fairly evident that the group had a way of subdividing, no one minded. You can't be conspicuous on an everybody's-doing-it plan.

Country-club dinners, dances, yachting trips, house-parties, all the old formulae for summer amusement, claimed the Redmond household for a month after Hildred's arrival. Flaming conspicuously in her oranges and crimsons, she made claim as conspicuous to her brother-in-law's time, attention and interest.

No one paid any particular attention to Bonnie. That was because two men were paying her so much attention. She had Jimmy and Peter Nolan for play-mates, and she seemed well content. The great philanderer and the complete man's man seemed to join hands in their devotion to Bonnie.

Then, in a mellow September twilight against which Hildred flamed in her crimson sweater, she met Peter Nolan sauntering down the terraces from the front portico of Bonnie Brae to the great driveway which swept across the front of the house. She was dashing up the terrace steps, swinging in her slender right hand a hat of cream felt from which floated a crimson scarf.

"Whither away so fast, Sister Helen?" bantered Peter, using the name which always produced on Hildred—even though she did not know the old ballad of the pitiless older sister—the effect of a jeer.

"To dress," cried Hildred breathlessly. "Aren't we all dining at the club?"

"Not 'we-all.' Bonnie is ill—a blinding headache—a touch of the sun," replied Nolan, watching Hildred with unwinking blue eyes. "The party's off."

"Your part of the party. I suppose I could still persuade Jasper to take me."

"He wont need much persuading," replied Peter gravely.

"And if Bonnie gets better—miraculously—after we're gone, I fancy you wont need much persuading to come back and cheer her loneliness," retorted Hildred, as she seated herself on a rug-covered stone bench.

"That's just what I've been doing for weeks," averred Peter, joining her.

"Mercy, you sound solemn! A new rôle for Peter Nolan, I take it—consoler of the lonely."

"A new rôle," repeated Nolan, "one Bonnie inspires. She's very sweet, your little sister."

"And I give you plenty of opportunity to—make sure of that! For that," Hildred taunted him, "you owe me many thanks, Sir Peter. And now I'll be running along."

"Wait!" Peter caught her wrist in his hand. "Why are you doing this? It can't give you anything real or lasting. It can't give Jasper anything but a dose of head-turning flattery that lazy slob doesn't need. It can only give Bonnie a headache."

"Well?" Hildred faced him insolently, her eyes narrow, her scimitar lips in their thinnest curve. "And suppose one of those things is just what I want it to give? Oh, Peter Nolan, philanderer in chief of Ardsmer, are you lecturing me?"

"Sorry! I must be an odd un in the rôle of preacher." Peter dropped her wrist.

"Maybe it's because you want to see what Jasper finds so fascinating," hazarded Hildred, interested by her own impudence and wondering vaguely how much of the truth she was going to speak after a month of play-acting and evasions.

"Are you flirting with me, Sister Helen? You might permit Bonnie one ewe lamb."

"Bonnie!"

HILDRED'S bitterness broke its dam of caution and flooded all about her.

"Bonnie! Always Bonnie!" she stormed. "I didn't choose to be bitter and revengeful. It was Bonnie made me so—from the beginning, when she made me seem like a dark, long-legged spider! When she took Jasper! When she made him kiss my cheek the night I came here—as if I were so safe, that kissing me couldn't mean anything to him! When she flung me at you, knowing you'd shame me and dash for freedom if I made a move! What chance have I with Bonnie around? Bonnie! Always Bonnie! You, too! The cold, wary Peter Nolan—she's got you, too. But you can't stop me. I'll finish what I've started. I'll take what's coming to me."



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WOODBURY'S FACIAL SOAP

Peter made no move to stop her when she turned and skimmed up the steps and across the terrace. He watched her silently until she disappeared behind a hedge of green. Then he turned and remarked sociably to the stone dolphin against which his arm rested:

"Well, I'll be damned! I hope you get just what's coming to you. I hope we all—manage to collect our dues."

AN hour later, in the dusk before dark, Hildred, trailing somber black set on fire by the scarlet tulle crushed across her shoulders, slipped noiselessly to the screened balcony where Jasper sat waiting, cigarette held listlessly between those odd fingers of his with their curving tips. Slipping to the arms of his chair, Hildred stooped and set another cigarette against the flare of his. Then in a moment, she caught the cigarettes and the hand which held his to her lips, drew in a quick breath and exhaled a cloud of gray smoke fairly in Jasper's face.

"My new trick. You said it was my type, so I've learned to smoke. Have to do all that Bonnie does—"

"And a little bit more," laughed Jasper, immensely flattered and craving myrrh for the frankincense. "You actually learned to smoke because I said it would be becoming?"

"Yes."

Jasper looked up at the woman perched so lightly on the arm of his big wicker chair. She was staring steadily ahead, eyes wide, scimitar lips parting redly over her cigarette. He laid the curving fingers against her throat, lightly, tentatively. Hildred shuddered at the actuality of the touch she had so often tried to dream into being. Jasper's hand strayed to her cheek; it turned her face so that the hungry amber eyes flooded his face with their light. Then his hand slipped to her shoulder, and his arms went around Hildred and drew her down against him in the embrace of the big wicker chair.

And Bonnie, who had crept down from her room for a tonic breath of sea-air, turned in the doorway where she had stood for a second like a gray wraith of mist, and fled again to her room and its sanctuary. But not before Hildred's eyes, lit with triumph, had flickered across the doorway and seen the bit of gray that was not sea-mist.

For a moment Hildred yielded to Jasper's arms, and then she flung herself out of them and back against the wall, where she stood glaring at him with parted lips and narrow eyes.

"We mustn't!" she cried. "I—I can't."

"We mustn't!" mimicked Jasper, his big bulk moving toward her. "We mustn't!" he laughed, catching her to him and taking her lips.

Suddenly, though it wasn't what she intended at all, Hildred went limp in his arms. Dead weight, she sagged against him.

"I'm cold," she whimpered. "I want my coat—the coat you and Bonnie gave me. I'm hungry. I want my dinner."

Jasper released her, laughing in excited triumph.

"You're frightened," he said huskily. "That's what. You're frightened. I guess this has been waiting for us both—for three years. We had something to finish. And now it's come, you're afraid. . . . Run get your coat, darling. You don't have to be afraid of me."

"Do you care—enough so I don't have to be afraid?" whispered Hildred, amazed, shaken out of the mold into which she had been setting herself.

"I want you enough for anything," declared Jasper, his gray eyes aflame.

But Hildred fled up the stairs and to her cool blue-and-gray room. There she darted across the room and flung herself down in front of the triple mirror.

"I mustn't let things go so fast. I mustn't let things run away from me," she muttered to her flaming, pulsing, triumphant image, trying to control the stormy heavings of her breast with a cold white hand which fluttered for a moment before she could steady herself.

Then she said to herself stubbornly, quietly: "She took him from me. She suggested my taking him back. She said men were restless. Well, he's mine now—but the right way—no indecency and hurry—the right way. I won't be bride's-maid at the wedding this time."

Then she flung on the cape of chiffon and kolinsky, glided down the stairs, eluded Jasper's arms, and declaring it was too windy for the little roadster, went to phone the garage for the coupé which needed one of the chauffeurs to drive it.

IN the late evening Peter Nolan strolled out to the lawn where Jasper and Hildred were having their coffee in a little summerhouse whence all but they had fled for the dancing.

"Of course everyone else seems to think this kiosk was built under orders from King Jasper the First," he remarked nonchalantly, appearing in the doorway with an assured air of intending to linger, pressed to stay or no.

Jasper glared and muttered a casual: "Where's Bonnie?"

"Am I thy helpmate's keeper?" asked Peter idly. "Say, what I came out for is to borrow Hildred for this dance—an Argentine tango. And they're paging you for the phone, Jasper, old dear."

"I'll wait here. I don't want to dance," said Hildred, struggling with her breath.

"I won't be long. Stay with Hildred till I come," said Jasper, rising and bulking large for a moment before he faded into the gray night air.

"You might," suggested Peter, "make some effort to entertain me, even if you don't care to dance with me."

"Why should I?"

"Oh, of course, I'm tagged and ticketed as a non-marrying man and all that, I know. But aren't I worth as much effort as old Jasper? He's more or less of an ineligible too, you know."

"Ineligible," she mimicked. "You think a woman only thinks of marriage?"

"And why shouldn't she? A harbor for storm—and old age. An insurance against loneliness—more or less. And a neat little way of making a living honorably and without inviting society to do

one of its holier-than-thou exhibitions of sweeping its skirts aside."

"You talk as if you hadn't aided and abetted dozens of women into the situation where society feels it can sweep its skirts aside."

"Not dozens! Dear lady, you flatter me. I may be a bit of a rotter, but I'm not Don Juan reincarnate. And see how unsuccessful I am with you!"

"With me!" cried Hildred passionately, goaded somehow by his lightness and imperviousness to anything bigger and more real than the game he played. "Only one man ever wanted me. Only one man—ever. And Bonnie took him."

"And now you're taking him back." Peter stated it politely, as an accepted and accredited fact.

"Yes—if I can."

"Oh, you can, all right. And Bonnie will help you. She's proud you know. She won't just stand still and let you take her man. She'll push him toward you."

"Her man!" stormed Hildred. "He was mine first."

"Well, now, I doubt that. If he'd been really yours, a little blue-eyed kid wouldn't have known much about stealing him. And he's pretty thoroughly hers now. Two kiddies in the nursery and all that, you know."

"What are you trying to suggest—that I gave him up—now I've got him?" boasted Hildred. "Leave me alone. Leave me alone! I was so sure of myself before you began suggesting—"

"I'm not suggesting anything. I was merely wondering if you were going through with it. Going to do a bolt and all that? Going to be a mother to his kiddies some day, and all that?"

"You travel fast," sneered Hildred. "But you can't laugh me out of—my revenge. I've waited three years, eating my heart out. Ashamed and rejected and defeated! People always took Bonnie's part. They always will. You do now. But I've a right to something."

"Well, you'll get all you've a right to when Jas divorces Bonnie," suggested Peter in the tone of a looker-on in Babel.

"When Jasper divorces Bonnie?"

"Sure. Why not? They do, you know."

"But that wasn't what I thought. Not in New York! She'd divorce him, and name the woman who gave her cause, who won him away from her. The woman who—took back her own. The woman who broke Bonnie's heart in return for a broken heart. The world would know she had charm enough—to recapture her man and break—"

"Oh, yes! Yes indeed! Broken hearts! Well, Bonnie's wont break. You see, there's Jimmy Minturn. Bonnie and I are pretty good pals, you know. . . . Suppose I were to betray her confidence and tell you that Bonnie and Jim Minturn are slipping down to his place at Oyster Bay tonight?"

"Suppose I were to make it clear to you that you can—get your Jasper without getting pitch on your skirts first? You see, with Bonnie beating him to it this way, Jas could get a divorce and name Jimmy."

"And Jimmy would marry Bonnie," said Hildred blankly.



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Everyone knows the coarse, dry texture that is spoken of as "weather-beaten." That is the result of constant and continued exposure.

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Try a little of this particular cream side by side with any cold cream and see the marked difference. The cold cream is oily—the Pond's *Vanishing Cream* has not a drop of oil in it. Instead it is made from another ingredient famous for its softening and soothing qualities and which the skin can absorb instantly. This cream keeps the skin's natural moisture in, and so protects it from

the drying effects of wind and cold. No matter how cold and windy it is, your skin will keep its natural transparency and softness if you always smooth on Pond's *Vanishing Cream* before you go out.

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The cream with *just the right amount* of oil to reach deep into the pores and remove every trace of dirt and impurity without overloading the skin is Pond's *Cold Cream*. Smooth it into the skin of the face and neck every night before retiring.

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"How could he? Don't you know the reason he's been a woman-hater and a man's man is because he has a wife, raving crazy, at Matteawan these years back? Here comes old Jasper. I'll do a quick get-away. Car's over by the caddy-house. Take my advice, Sister Helen, and play it safe."

"I COULDN'T get the message. It was a long-distance one from Jimmy Minturn down Patchogue way. Wonder what he wanted?" said Jasper, strolling back and seizing Hildred's hand in his with an air of possession.

"Did he say anything about Bonnie?" asked Hildred.

"Bonnie? Why should he? She's home feeling abused—getting rid of her fool headache. It's a darn lucky thing she got sick tonight, so we—"

Jasper's arm slid amorously about Hildred. The curving fingers caressed the soft flesh of her shoulder. And with a sudden force, which she hardly understood, the girl rose, caught her kolinsky cape about her with the shuddering movement with which she always donned this gift from Jasper and Bonnie.

"You don't even pity her! You wouldn't have any pity—or—mercy," she cried amazingly, and dashed her fleet slimness across the lawn, stumbling in the darkness, intent on a low gray shape she could discern in the shadowed path by the caddy-house.

There was the hiss of an exhaust, the chug of a turning engine. In a second there would be the spark of power. The car would go.

"Wait!" screamed Hildred to the night air. "Wait for me. Peter—Peter, wait!"

As she reached the gray bulk, Peter Nolan stirred his wiry frame and rose from the running-board of his car, where he was crouching motionless.

"I thought you were starting. I thought you were gone," she cried breathlessly.

"Oh, no! Why should I hurry? The air here is so sweet. Syringa and all that. Plenty of other cars to chug off."

"But now we must go. Hurry, hurry! They've just got to Patchogue. That was Jimmy Minturn telephoning Jasper. But he doesn't know, yet. If we hurry, Jasper need never know. We can bring her back," panted Hildred, her hand laid pleadingly on Peter Nolan's arm.

"My dear lady," he said, his face impassive in the moonlight, "why all this rush? Why this sudden desire for a midnight jaunt with me? Do you think your reputation can stand it? Do you think old Jas will like it?"

"Jasper!" she cried impatiently. "What do I care? Don't you see he hasn't any pity for anyone? He just goes after what he happens to want at a particular minute. With Bonnie half-dead of a headache, he amuses himself with me. She took him from me. I got him back again—for tonight. Tomorrow he may be hers again. And she wants him. So she's got to still be his. I'm sorry for you—but she's really all Jasper's. She's doing this to make him care again."

"I don't understand women," protested Peter. "You said you hated her. You said she'd taken what you wanted,

and that you were going to have it—him—Jas—back again. Now you've got him, and she's finished if she's found with Jimmy Minturn. What more do you want?"

"I want you to start this car," cried Hildred. "I want to save my little sister. How could anyone hate her, really? She's only twenty now. A baby! I've got to save her. I've tortured her enough in return for what she couldn't help. I don't want her Jasper. And he isn't going to brand anyone in my family. Not anyone!"

"All right. Hop in," said Peter. "I'm pretty fond of Bonnie myself, you know. I've never bothered much with a nice kid like her before and I'm pretty fond of little Bonniebelle. But it's a large order for you to go skimming off with me at midnight. Here comes Jas. He's sleuthed us out. Want him to see you start off with me like this?"

GATHERING her chiffons and furs about her, Hildred sank down on the low seat of the racer. There was a chug, a roar of the exhausts, a swish and a lurch, and Peter's low gray car swirled off dustily before Jasper's astonished eyes.

Peter Nolan drove in silence for fifteen minutes, plunging powerfully through the cool mists of the midnight air. Suddenly there was a cough and a sputter. The engine balked; the car stopped.

"Where are we? Can you fix it?" demanded Hildred in a breath.

"Don't know. Looks like the end of nowhere."

"We must hurry—we must. They might be miles from Patchogue by now. We must get to his place before dawn," cried Hildred, whipping at Peter with unmerciful demands.

"They might be anywhere now," replied Peter. "Montauk Point—anywhere."

"Oh, Peter, if you want to help me save my soul alive, if you love poor little Bonnie at all, hurry, please hurry. Don't let jealousy—"

"And Jasper? Your love for him? Your revenge?"

"I don't love him. I don't want any revenge. What for? I've been asleep or mad. Bonnie got him because he was hers—not mine. He's still hers. He'll know it tomorrow. He's that kind. But when tomorrow comes, and I realize what you know, how am I going to look you in the face, Peter Nolan? Why did Bonnie have to kick over the traces like this? She's—she's spoiled my plans."

"She saw you and Jasper on the terrace tonight. She phoned me. I went to her. She was so desperate that she was ready to run away with me—to risk her poor pretty little reputation with me the way you're doing. But she was ready to risk it, loving Jasper all the while."

"And when you wouldn't go, she turned to Jimmy Minturn. What fools we Carton women are! Oh, the poor little kid!" moaned Hildred. "Perhaps she's with Jimmy now, loving you all the while."

"Loving Jasper all the while," repeated Peter inexorably. "While you?"

"Oh, Jasper! Jasper's a bad dream.



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Androcles Never Knew His Luck

YOU remember Androcles—a tramp in the wilderness, a limping lion, a thorn, a tender heart. And a year or so later, an arena, a maddened, hungry lion turned loose, Androcles uneaten, Nero dumbfounded, the animal given a cage of honor and Androcles a new toga! And you remember the moral—Gratitude. A touching example, it will live forever because it has virtue.

OF course, had Androcles been a justly condemned criminal instead of a mild amusement for the Roman holiday, the lion, being a dumb beast, would have acted just the same. Had Androcles, on the other hand, been so unlucky as to draw a gladiator instead, both would probably have carried out their parts of the pro-

gram, even though Androcles had extracted a full dozen aching teeth from the same gladiator the night before.

That's the difference between brute gratitude and gratitude within reason.

But how many of us can rise as high as that lion of Androcles?

LIFE is but a debt we owe. We owe it to those who brought us into the world and nourished us in babyhood and cared for us in youth to manhood. It is a debt we owe to those with whom we have agreed to share the future. If there is really anything to gratitude and to the payment it demands, then life insurance provides an open doorway through which we can look with certainty and contentment.

Take me to Bonnie. Make your car go—if you care for her at all—the way I think you do, decently and splendidly—the way a woman wants. Oh, Peter, Peter, how much are you going to let Bonnie pay for having a sister like me? How much?"

Then Peter Nolan flung back his head and laughed, deep throaty laughs gurgling out on the moist air.

"If you'll turr around and walk up that path, you'll get to Bonnie all right. To the Redmond place—to Bonnie Brae. That's the back road. I didn't say she'd eloped with Jimmy Minturn. My only declaration was that she—sent for me. Don't pop those amber eyes of yours any wider. They're bigger than the evening star now. I merely said: 'Suppose I were to betray her confidence and tell you that Bonnie and Jim are slipping down to his place at Oyster Bay?' I suggested. I said: 'Suppose I were to say—' You did the rest."

"You mean Bonnie's right up there at the house?"

"Yes."

"And that's the road to Bonnie Brae?"

"The road to Bonnie Brae—and Bonnie."

"And she didn't run away with Jimmy Minturn?"

"No, Hildred, she's right up in her room, I suppose."

"But why did Jimmy telephone? She'd have gone with you, wouldn't she? She sent for you and asked you to take her away? You care for her, don't you?"

"I like Bonnie. She's a good little scout—a nice pal, a sweet kid," catalogued Peter Nolan gravely. "And I didn't care much for the smash you two seemed to be ready to take head on. I telephoned Jimmy, and when I got him on the wire, I moseyed out and told Jas he was being paged. Kind of played Santa Claus all around."

HE smiled, gravely, patiently, almost sweetly—but Hildred didn't analyze his smile. She only knew that he was standing there grinning when she felt the world and Long Island and her own intentions rocking under her feet. So there in the dusty, midnight road, Hildred faced Peter Nolan, aflame, alive with indescribable emotions such as she had never felt before. Her long, slim hand went to her throat and came against a throbbing pulse that was carrying a crimson tide to her face.

"Why did you do it? Why did you make a fool of me—this way? Is it because you can't let any woman escape? Because you have to claim some sort of victory over everyone?"

Then Peter Nolan stopped smiling, and his blue eyes flashed gravely above the high bronze cheek-bones as he caught Hildred's two wrists in his hands and crushed them against him.

"You brave little fool—after all, we're neither of us quite such rotters as we sometimes imagine," he said. "I did it because I had to find out if you cared for Jasper. I did it because I wanted you to know— Say, look here, what right have you to question me, Hildred? You won Jasper away from Bonnie the best—or worst way you knew how, didn't you? Well, haven't I the right to win you from him any way I can?"

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Rids your hands of that three-
times-a-day-in-the-dishpan-look
54 dishwashings in a single package

Lux for washing dishes! *At last* there is a way to wash dishes without coarsening and reddening your hands.

It isn't like experimenting with something new and untried. Of course Lux would be wonderful for dishwashing. You would know it—yet you feel as if you had made a delightful new discovery. Lux saves your hands. It is as easy on them as fine toilet soap.

Your hands are in the dishpan an hour and a half every day—sometimes even longer! That is why it is so important to use a soap for washing dishes that won't irritate your skin, that won't dry the indispensable natural oils.

Just underneath the surface of the skin, Nature placed these oils—secreted them in millions of tiny sacs. They nourish the chiffon-thin outer skin, keep it soft, pliable and resistant.

But Nature didn't provide against the

*One teaspoonful
makes the water
soapy all through*



ravages of kitchen soaps. If your hands wash dishes in harsh, alkaline soap suds three times a day these abundant oil sacs are drained dry. Your fingertips, those sensitive organs of touch, grow rough and scratchy. Your hands show unmistakable signs of the dishpan.

With Lux in your dishpan your hands won't be robbed of their natural oils. Lux is so pure and gentle it can't dry your skin. These delicate flakes preserve the satiny softness of your hands;



*As easy on your
hands as fine
toilet soap*

they won't redden or roughen the most sensitive skin.

Just one teaspoonful to a pan

Flip one teaspoonful of Lux into your dishpan. Turn on the hot water. Now watch these fragile flakes break into instant suds.

Just one teaspoonful—it sounds incredible, but try it!

A single package does at least 54 dishwashings—all the dishes, morning, noon and night, for almost three weeks. Not just the china you use on special occasions, but the regular everyday dishes as well.

Dishes so clean and lustrous!

No cloudy, dull surfaces left on your tumblers, no soapy streaks on silver and dishes.

Just a swish of your dishmop in the pure Lux suds—and out come your dishes—clean and sparkling.

Keep a package of Lux handy on your kitchen shelf. Use it for the dishes always. Don't let that hour and a half in the dishpan every day be a hardship to your hands. Begin washing today's dishes with Lux. Lever Bros. Co., Cambridge, Mass.

THE LONG, LONG DAY

(Continued from page 52)



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very well done, but not cheerful; and another picture after, just a woman with lovely curling hair cut short on her forehead, and a sort of white scarf wound round her face, lying dead on a bed. Rather morbid, I thought it, and then I looked for the painter's name, and it was not there, and then I saw the picture was not there either, and I was looking at a clean blank sheet of paper, the sort they put in between those good reproductions, to keep them from sticking to one another. There hadn't been any picture at all; it was just that Rosemarie again, lying dead with her head tied up, this time.

I threw the book down on the floor, and I believe I got rather angry. I know I said to myself that for two pins I would call in a parson—if there had been one handy, and if I had known enough of their patter to know what to ask for. I believe there is, or was, some game or other which they play, to stop that sort of thing. There certainly ought to be.

But it was the Land of the Long, Long Day; and while there is time for everything, in that day, there is not always everything that there is time for. So I had not any remedy for the things that most unjustifiably continued to bother me.

AFTER the call of the Government launch, nobody, for quite a long time, came near Kaluna trading-station. I don't know that I minded; I had been going through the various stages of mind that out-back men know well: the first, brief stage when you think it the fun of the world to be all alone, when you sit after breakfast, and smoke, and damn the rest of humanity, and wonder why you ever lived in a city; the second stage, a longer one, when you begin to look down empty tracks, and over empty seas, counting on the chances of some one—anyone—coming along, when you know you are wasting in spirit, as a starved creature wastes in body, for contact with your kind. Then comes the third stage, when you begin not to care; you find you can get along very comfortably without people—but unlike the first stage, this one has no fun in it; nor has the fourth stage, when one begins to fear the coming of any human creature; nor the fifth, when one hates the very thought! Further, I will not go, but there are those who can fill in what is wanting.

I think I was somewhere between the third stage and the fourth, when something did come along—a stray cutter on its way to Thursday Island. It called to bring me stores ordered sometime previously by Winans, and to deliver a letter from him, posted on his arrival in Sydney.

The letter told me what I had never yet known—the true reason for his going away.

Koki, it seemed, had been at his tricks with a vengeance; he had given good value—from Winans' point of view—for the boar-tusks and clam-shell bracelets he had received. He had shown Winans

picture after picture of Rosemarie; he had promised him that he should see her again, an actual living woman. I don't quite know what he meant to do, or exactly how he meant to draw fresh profit from Winans' mad generosity; be sure the old devil had *some* cunning plan or other—but Winans upset it. As soon as there was the slightest hint to go on, he remembered that he had not, after all, seen Rosemarie buried—that, mad with grief, he had run away from her dead body, which, after all, might not have been dead. Injuries to the head were deceptive; trances had been heard of; doctors had made mistakes. Anyhow, Winans had bolted for London, with all the profits of his trading in his pockets, and his heart on fire within.

I thought a lot about all this, but I came no nearer to a conclusion—except, I remember, that I felt myself quite uncommonly glad to know that Koki was going to be hanged.

THAT evening, as I was sitting on the side veranda, which is the quiet one, enjoying a last pipe before turning in, I heard steps coming up the front veranda ladder. They were shod steps. You cannot imagine what that means, when you see one white man in six months—maybe not so many. I stopped smoking, and sat dead still in my chair, listening; and I could hear my heart beat in the stillness. I thought it was the captain of the cutter, possibly; he was a Malay half-caste, and he wore boots. He might have come back about something or other. But I did not really think so, if you understand; I was trying to prepare myself for disappointment.

The steps came on; they paused at the entrance to a room—Winans' room. The doorway of this room was in my sight, if I turned the least bit in my chair. Will you believe me, when I tell you that I could not make up my mind—or maybe it was my body—to do so?

Winans used to shave every day, which I don't do, myself. There was a little trade mirror hanging on one of the veranda posts, where you could get a good shaving light. It hung opposite to me as I sat; the light from the lamp near my chair was strong enough to throw reflections. In it, I saw the person who had come into the house. And it was a girl—a girl with a mass of short, waving and curling hair, and two large, deep eyes set under reed-straight brows, and a mouth like that of an antique statue.

I did not move.

The girl may have seen me, or may not. She began walking about, turning her head this way and that, and seemingly looking for somebody or something. She did not speak, but I had a strong impression that she wanted to. I felt, or knew, that she was so shy she literally could not speak, unless some one addressed her first. And yet, you know, she did not look shy. She was just like the photograph, line for line; yet she was almost brazen-looking.

Come in and see the NEW CORONA



A N I N V I T A T I O N

You are most cordially invited to visit any of the 1300 Corona stores, from Maine to California, where the New Corona is now being shown. Whether you are one who has never tried *personal typing*—or an expert from the ranks of Corona's half million users—you will want to try this *new* Corona with your own hands, and see what an advance has been made in portable typewriter designing. To locate the nearest store, find "Corona" in your phone book, or write for our new folder.

CORONA TYPEWRITER CO., INC.
GROTON, N. Y.

There are Corona sales rooms and service stations in all parts of the world. Above is a glimpse of the Corona store in Rochester, N. Y.

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3. Standard Portable Keyboard.
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EDISON MAZDA LAMPS

A GENERAL ELECTRIC PRODUCT

That seemed strange, when one came to think of it. The photograph was like a lily!

I do not know why I spoke. I only know I did.

"Can I do anything for you?" I said. It was rather silly, but what would you have said yourself?

She seemed delighted.

"This is Mr. Winans' store, isn't it?" she said. "Is he here now?"

"No!" I said, talking to her in the mirror. "He has gone away on holiday."

She seemed perplexed at this, and (I thought) angry. But she said nothing at all, just came a little farther in, and sat down, in Winans' room. I could see her.

"How did you come here?" I asked, perhaps a little sharply.

I will swear she began a native word in reply, but it seemed to fade away into air, and she answered composedly: "By the *Kiami*."

Now, that was strange; for the *Kiami*, though undoubtedly she was—would have been—due to call at a native village some three or four miles away, about this time, was, as a matter of fact, lying wrecked on a river bar a hundred miles off. It seemed almost as if the girl did not know that, whoever she might be. I should not have known it myself, had not a canoe come along the coast with the news, some hours earlier in the day.

I said nothing, and when I looked into the glass again, she was not there. She was not in the house at all. I lighted a hurricane-lamp, and went out to stare at

the sand below the veranda steps—I don't know why. But I got nothing out of that; it was a mere porridge of native footprints and dog-pawings. The hour was very late—getting near one; so I went to my stretcher and turned in. Something within me said, "So she really was not dead at all—like the people in the stories," and something else, deeper down, in my mind laughed for all reply.

In the *dubu* there was drumming that night, low, threatening drumming that went on hour after hour. It kept me from sleeping for a good while, but I went off at last, with the sinister murmuring still in my ears. I knew what it meant; I knew the news had come down the coast by "native telegraph" that Koki was to die.

SOME days later I saw the woman again.

It was in broad sun; she did not actually come or appear; she just *was*, on the veranda, outside Winans' room. I did not speak to her this time. She stood there, staring at me for I do not know how long, and I never saw a lovelier, nor a more evil face. Now, you are to recollect that Rosemarie, by her pictures, and by what I had been told of her, was hardly lower than the angels.

I thought—not then, but afterward—that I understood.

While I was looking at her, determined that on this occasion nothing should tempt me to speak, a sudden burst of sound came from the great *dubu*, where the fish and crocodile devil-figures were, and

where Koki had made his home. It was a loud, brazen cry, a concerted shriek from all the men (I think) of the village, and it was followed by such a burst of thunder-drumming that the very walls of the store seemed to shake. Then there was a sudden silence, and in the silence I heard the black waves breaking on the beach, and my little traveling clock, that I never parted with, in my room striking a tiny, silvery *Two*.

When I looked where the woman had been, she was gone. She never came back. Nor did the plunging engines, nor the pale faces of people falling into gulfs of foam. It was as if a clock had stopped, as if a door had shut. Something was ended.

I went on keeping store. I got the copra-house well filled; and it pleased me, when a stray copy of the Papuan *Rag* came down the coast, to note that prices were soaring. I read the paper all through, even the advertisements. It seemed shorter than usual. When I had done, however, I noticed that an extra slip had fallen on the floor. I picked it up; it was printed on one side only, and contained late news. Among other items was the loss, with all hands, of the ship in which Winans had sailed for home.

I felt rather sorry, on the whole. Winans had been good to me.

I went to the tin box, and looked for his paper of instructions. It was a will, of sorts—not legal, since it was unwitnessed, but the Intestate Estates people were very decent about it. It left the store and goods to me, with the proviso that I must first of all cable to a certain doctor in a certain London hospital, and ask for particulars of Rosemarie Ibister's end. If living, she was to have all there was.

I cabled when I got in to Port Moresby, and I had the answer to show when I went up to the office to claim my legacy. The doctor said that she had died on a certain date, and had been buried in Kensal Green; he gave the number and place of the grave.

I heard, later, all about Koki's execution. They hanged him near the town, and thousands of natives and hundreds of white men came to see it.

"What day was it?" I asked. He told me, and I did a little counting in my head. "It was about two o'clock, was it not?" I asked.

"No," he said, "it wasn't; it was half-past one." But somehow, that did not satisfy me, and I asked the jailer.

"Was to have been one-thirty," he said, "but the old beggar said he wanted time to say his prayers, or something, and with one thing and another, it didn't come off till the stroke of two."

I kept the store of Kaluna, and I live there now. You had better not call on me; I have gone on to the fifth stage, and I do not welcome visitors. I don't expect to go any farther. If there had been any possibility of that, what happened to Winans would prevent it.

You want to know what I think? I think that Koki played too high, and succeeded in losing things he couldn't control. I also think that it—she—was *not* the girl—neither alive, nor dead.

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FRESH
Tuxedo
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Guaranteed by
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INCORPORATED



BILL

(Continued from page 67)

the moment, with a wholesome suspicion of what he did not understand. He certainly did not understand a creature which could grow to twice its size in the course of a second. He eyed it with curiosity, not unmingled with apprehension, till it was within two or three feet of him. Then he discreetly stepped aside. And the porcupine waddled slowly past, grunting and squeaking to itself, too indifferent, or too sluggish of wit, apparently, even to wonder what sort of being Bill might be.

ON the following evening, soon after sunset, Bill came out suddenly upon the bank of a small river, rippling and murmuring over its gravelly shoals. The wide sky was tender with a soft, violet light, and musical with the silver twang of the high-swooping nighthawks hunting gnats in the quiet air above the trees. To Bill this was a most comforting change from the gloom and stillness of the forest. And presently he settled himself for the night on a patch of warm sand beneath the projecting roots of a half-undermined maple, more content than he had been at any time since he had been so rudely dragged from his subservient flock and his old familiar pasture.

The next morning about sunrise, while the mists were afloat upon the water, Bill rounded a leafy point and came upon a sight which thrilled his lonely heart deliciously. A slim young doe, light-limbed and stepping daintily, came down to the river's edge to drink. In color she was of a delicate, ruddy fawn, with cream-white belly, and a clear white patch on her trim stern. Bill felt at once that there was some far-off kinship between her tribe and his; and however remote, he yearned to make the most of it. Holding his great head high, and approaching with delicate, mincing steps so as not to startle the fair stranger, he gave utterance to a harsh bleat, which he meant to be the very last word in caressing allurements. The doe jumped as she lifted her graceful head, and stood staring at Bill with wonder and question in her big, dark, liquid eyes. She knew at once that he was not hostile; but he was an amazing apparition, and she was intensely curious. How ugly he seemed to her, with his coarse, shaggy coat, long, bearded face, and stout horns sweeping back from his heavy brow! A puff of air brought his scent in her direction. Her fine muzzle wrinkled with distaste, and she sidled away a few paces. But her curiosity held her from flight.

His ardor stimulated by this coy withdrawal, Bill fell to curvetting and prancing, rearing on his hind legs, tossing his horns, showing off to the best of his powers as he drew nearer and nearer. He was careful not to be too hasty though he was confident that his bold and virile charms could not fail of their effect. They were effective, indeed, but by no means as he fancied. Not thus was the slim doe desirous to be wooed. She stood her ground till he was within a dozen paces of her. Then, her curiosity quite satisfied, she whisked about on her dainty,

pointed hoofs, gave a disdainful flirt of her little tail, and went bounding away up the bank and over the bushes in prodigious leaps that carried her twenty-five feet at a time.

With a bleat of piteous appeal Bill raced after her. But not for long. In a few seconds she had vanished utterly. With downcast mien Bill dropped the vain pursuit and moved heavily back to the river. Sore at heart, he sniffed for a while at her light footprints. Then he continued his journey downstream. As he went, his disappointment gave way to anger. He had been scorned and flouted shamefully. Not so would his lordly advances have been treated by his admiring little flock in the old home pasture. His wrath at last gave way to homesickness, and he felt very sorry for himself.

LATE that evening it chanced that a vagabond Indian, poling his way upriver in his birch canoe from the far-off settlements, had landed, pulled up his light craft and made camp just a few hundred yards below the spot where Bill, in a deep cleft in the bank, had settled himself for the night. This Indian, unlike most of the men of his shrewd breed, was a rather simple-minded rascal, shiftless and thieving, fuddled with drink when he could get it, and always something of a butt both in his native village far upstream and in the settlements where he was wont to sell his baskets. It was strictly against the law to sell spirits to Indians; but on this last visit "Poke," as he was called derisively, had found a dishonest trader, who had obligingly accepted all his basket money in return for a few bottles of fiery "square-face."

Already mildly "oiled," though his task of poling against the stiff current had forced him to be moderate, Poke had now but one idea. This was to indulge himself, free from all distractions, in a blissful orgy of fire-water. The night was bland and clear. He had no need of a shelter. He did not trouble even to unload the canoe. Bringing ashore only his blanket, a hunk of bread and two of his precious square black bottles of gin, he spread the blanket at the foot of a steep rock and hurriedly lighted his little camp-fire. Then, squatted beside the companionable blaze, with a grunt of luxurious anticipation he dug out the cork with his sheath-knife and took a generous draft of the liquor.

Alternately munching chunks of bread and drinking avidly from the black bottle, Poke was soon in a condition when the world seemed to him a glorious place. Cold, hunger, pain, toil, weariness were things which had never been and never more would be. Rocking himself slowly on his haunches and occasionally muttering quietly, he stared into the little fire, feeding it from time to time with dry sticks till his foolishly grinning face glowed in the dancing flame.

Suddenly a sharp sound of footsteps on the gravel at the other side of the fire made him look up, stupidly enraged at



The New Coupe-Sedan

THE beautiful *new* five-passenger Willys-Knight Coupe-Sedan has doors both front and rear, which dispense with the need of folding seats and give easy entrance and exit to all. The Coupe-Sedan is one of the seven New Willys-Knight models which are attracting keen public interest.

WILLYS-OVERLAND, INC. TOLEDO, OHIO

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WILLYS-KNIGHT Coupe-Sedan

the interruption. All he saw was Bill's great horned and bearded head, with the big yellow eyes averted in the firelight, gazing at him fixedly from around the corner of the rock. Never before had he seen such a head, such awful blazing eyes. But he had dreamed of something like it, after listening to the priest's description of the hell that awaited evildoers. His fuddled brain leaped to the conclusion that this was none other than the devil himself, come to snatch him off to eternal torment. With a yell of horror he sprang to his feet, hurled the bottle—now quite empty—at the dreadful vision, thrust off and fell into his canoe, and went paddling frantically downstream. It was not the direction he wished to go, but it was the quickest path of flight.

Bill, who had come with the most friendly intentions, seeking human company and hospitality, had jumped back into the shadows with a startled snort as the bottle crashed loudly on the rock beside his head. He came forth again at once, however, stared after the fugitive for a moment, and then stepped around to examine the little fire and the abandoned blanket. Finding a crust of the bread left, he joyously devoured it. He seized the blanket and tried to toss it in the air; but as he was standing upon it with his forefeet, it resisted him. This excited and amused him, and he proceeded to have some fun with it, enjoying himself immensely.

The frightened Poke, daring at last to glance back over his shoulder, was horrified to see a black horned shape, looking to him as big as a horse, dancing diabolically about the fire, and flapping an awful, dusky wing. In his panic he threw overboard his last bottle!

Tiring at last of his antics with the blanket, and cheered by a feeling that he had once more come in contact with humanity, Bill lay down beside the rock and fell asleep.

IT was early in the following afternoon when Bill came upon the first signs of human habitation in the wilderness. Forced by a deep and still bayou, or backwater, to turn his steps far inland, he traversed a low ridge clothed with beech-trees, and saw before him a pleasant valley, with the roofs of a log cabin and a low barn showing in the distance. There were several wide patches of roughly tilled clearing in view; and immediately before him was a very crude but substantial snake-fence of brushwood and poles, inclosing a rugged pasture. And in that pasture was a sight that rejoiced his soul.

Among the low green bushes and gray boulders five sheep were feeding—two white ones and three black. These latter, called black by courtesy, were rather of a rusty brown, with black head and legs. Bill was acquainted with sheep, and had always recognized them, condescendingly, as humbler and uninteresting kin to the aristocratic tribe of the goats. But all the sheep he had seen hitherto had been white ones, very fat and woolly and futile. These three brown ewes, leggy and nimble, reminded him of his own light-footed flock, and his heart went out to them. But his experiences in this strange land had taught him caution. He

was afraid that unless he should make his advances gently, these altogether desirable creatures might vanish, as the doe had done, and leave him again to his loneliness.

The sheep were pasturing at some distance to his right near a corner of the fence which was fairly overhung by dense forest. He would go over and try talking to them nicely through the fence before thrusting his company upon them in his usual swaggering way. He was quick to learn, was Bill, and this time he was not taking any risks. He moved as quietly, now, through the underbrush as if he had been born to it.

Bill had almost reached the point he was aiming at, when an appalling thing happened. One of the brown ewes was lying down, peacefully ruminating, quite close to the fence, and with her back to it. Nothing was further from her simple mind than any possible peril. Suddenly a great black shape seemed to drop over the fence just behind her and fall forward upon her. In the next instant, as she jumped to her feet with a terrified "Ba-a-a-a," a mighty paw descended upon her, and she sank down again, her back broken. The shaggy bulk of her slaughterer almost hid her from view as his jaws fixed themselves greedily in her throat. The rest of the flock raced down the pasture with wild bleatings.

It required no previous knowledge of bears to inform Bill that this black monster would be a terrible, a deadly, antagonist. But his bold heart, almost bursting with rage, took no account of the odds. Already in his sight those ewes were his. With one magnificent bound, barely touching the top rail, he was over the fence. In the next he launched himself, head down. With all his weight and all his fury behind it, his iron front struck the bear in the most sensitive part of the flank, just behind the ribs.

With a gasping cough the bear, caught unprepared, rolled clear of his victim. He was dazed and breathless for a second; but before his amazing assailant could repeat the stroke, he recovered himself. Crouched back on his haunches, his little furious eyes fixed upon the foe with the wariness of a trained boxer, he held one great long-clawed paw uplifted in readiness for a blow that should end the fight.

Bill was a crafty fighter as well as a daring one. He had danced back some paces, for room to gather momentum. He was just on the point of charging again when he grasped his adversary's tactics. He had seen what that mighty paw could do. He leaped to one side, and dashed in from another angle. But the bear whirled nimbly on his haunches to confront him again; and he swerved just in time to evade the pile-driver stroke.

And now Bill began a maneuver which his great adversary found most annoying. He danced around the bear, thrusting and feinting, and ever circling, ever challenging, while the bear was kept turning, turning, turning on his haunches till fairly beside himself with rage. At last he made a lightning rush, hoping to end the matter. But his elusive foe was beyond reach in an instant, as swiftly and lightly as if blown by the wind of his rush. With a savage growl he sprang

back to seize again the carcass of his victim. Just as he reached it, something like the fall of a hillside struck him full on the rump, and propelled him clean over it. He had made a mistake in turning his back on Bill, even for a second. There was nothing for him to do but crouch on his haunches again, and face once more his ever-mocking, ever-circling opponent.

The remaining ewes, meanwhile, somewhat recovered from their panic, were standing huddled together at a discreet distance, watching the battle with awe. It was plain, even to their somewhat limited perceptions, that the bearded and prancing stranger was their champion—a champion even so bold as to defy a bear. Strange as he was, their simple souls admired him.

AT this juncture of affairs a loud and very angry shouting turned all eyes—even those of the bear and Bill—toward the other side of the field. A long-legged man in gray homespuns, bareheaded, and swinging an ax, came into view over the curve of the hill. He had been working in the field below the pasture, and had seen the sheep running wildly. As he raced up the hill with long strides, his appearance and his shouts struck panic to the heart of the bear. That sagacious beast knew Man. He had no wish to face a man alone, still less a man *plus* Bill. He made a wild rush for the fence. Just as he was going over it, the top rail breaking under his weight, Bill caught him again like a catapult, low down in the stern, between the thighs—a devastating blow. With a squeal he went over, landing on his snout, and fled away through the thickets with no more dignity than a scared rabbit.

The tall man stopped beside the body of the ewe and stood leaning on his ax. He was indignant and sore at the destruction of his beast, but his sporting spirit was interested in Bill.

"Some goat!" he remarked with admiring emphasis. "Some scrapper! Say, old son, I wish we'd had you with us over in France."

Bill, immensely pleased with himself, but also pleased with the man's voice, so obviously friendly, came prancing toward him, half expecting a carrot or a lump of sugar as a reward for his performance. But as no tidbit was forthcoming, he paused irresolutely.

"Shoo!" said the man. "Buzz off now, son, and join the ladies. See where they're waiting for yeh over there. I'll see to this poor bit of mutton."

Bill's eyes and thoughts were already turning in that direction, and quite as if he understood the man's words, he trotted over to join the huddled ewes. Uneasy at his strange appearance, they shifted and shrank a little; but he approached so gently, so diffidently, that their fears were soon allayed. A moment more, and he was among them, rubbing noses with each in turn. Having thus accepted his presence, the ewes placidly fell to pasturing again, as if nothing unusual had happened. But Bill, for a long while too happy to feed, kept moving about the flock, from time to time shaking his horns at the forest as if defying all its perils to trespass on his new kingdom.



WHAT SURPRISED THE CHEF

Real Cream in Cream Soups

"You don't mean to tell me," exclaimed a noted chef, who was visiting the "Home of the 57," "You don't mean to tell me that you put *real cream* in your cream soups!"

His specialty was cream soups. His exclamation of surprise came when he saw the great cans of real cream, fresh from the dairy, waiting to be made into Heinz Cream Soups.

"Of course!" was the reply. "What else?"

"But I never use cream in my cream soups—or even milk. It isn't necessary. Nobody notices the difference."

He was told, however, that real cream was necessary for Heinz Cream Soups.

*Doesn't the label say
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HOLEPROOF HOSIERY COMPANY, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Holeproof Hosiery Company of Canada, Limited, London, Ontario

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THE FIDDLIN' DOLL

(Continued from
page 47)

"And Trixie," said the Kid. "Don't forget the sweetest kid in all the world."

"And Trixie," repeated the Boy Plunger. "She'll be proud of me too. This is my last day on the track."

"Now, you're talking," approved the Kid. "It's 'Home, Sweet Home' for me too!"

Their castle of dreams collapsed a few moments later with the completeness of a child's sand-house under the blow of the spade. And, irony of ironies, it was a speckled coach-dog that was alone responsible.

Henry the Rat got the tip from the negro Goat-eye, and he ran all over the ring at the last moment looking for his pal or the Boy Plunger. He wanted to give them the story for what it was worth. He wanted to tell them that Champion Jeff, the canine sleeping-companion of Lord Roberts, had distemper. Horse and dog had been separated. On two nights Jeff had chewed his rope and gone back to the Roberts stall. Then they had locked the dog up in another stable. Goat-eye said the horse was sulking.

But the Information Kid and the Boy Plunger did not hear of this until afterward. What they saw was sufficient. The horse that "couldn't lose," never even started!

When the barrier flashed up, Lord Roberts, usually the quickest of breakers, remained in his position. The starter shrieked imprecations; the assistant starters lashed out with the rawhides; Jockey Sutherland bobbed up and down frantically in the saddle—all in vain! The bay stallion flattened his ears, drew back on his haunches and wheeled in a stubborn circle. Around the near turn went the field! Not until the rushing tangle of color was sweeping past the half-mile pole, did the Shelby entry quit his position, and break into a sullen gallop. His jockey made no effort to urge him into full stride; the damage was done.

A FEW evenings later the Information Kid, standing at a telephone in Mother Ryan's boarding-house, which adjoins Jefferson Park, called up Henri's Petite Place and asked to speak with Trixie. She answered the phone at once. "Oh," he hailed, "I'm near crazy! The Boy Plunger's shot himself!"

"No, Kid—no!"

"Yeah—night before last. I knocked up the gun, and he got off with a flesh-wound. Me and the Rat stuck with him for fourteen hours. Then he shook us—wandered off by the swamps. Now it's pneumonia and—and oh, girl—I think he's going to croak! He's cuckoo as a clock, and ravin' about his mother!"

"Where is he?"

"Here at old Lady Ryan's. Me and the Rat give him our room. Doc' says he ought to have a nurse, but Gawd A'-mighty, I've already pawned my ticker and the coat off my back! He aint got a cent!"

"I'll be right out!"

"Will you—"

"Right away. I'll get a taxi!"

And in an unbelievably short time the Fiddlin' Doll, her curls brushed back from a white face, and her slim form still in her entertainer's dress, was in their midst. In two minutes she had borrowed an apron from Mother Ryan, sent everyone from the room with the exception of the doctor, and was listening intently to the latter's instructions. Thereafter she took full command.

THE customers at Henri's Petite Place wondered what had become of the Fiddlin' Doll as the evenings passed, one after another, and there was no one to smile at them over her violin, and whisper: "Beat 'em today, Mister?"

But the Information Kid, Henry the Rat or Frenchy Bonville could have told them. For eighteen long days and nights the powers of darkness encompassed the mind and soul and body of the Boy Plunger. It was the child of the regiment, the "Madelon of the race-track," who fought for the youth with the dark eyes and the sensitive mouth, paying with her savings, and snatching what rest she could on a cot in Mother Ryan's parlor.

The distorted feverish brain of Larry Beveridge was a sad patchwork of shattered hopes and youthful ambitions gone astray. Gradually, from the hot, mumbling lips of the Boy Plunger, the watcher by his bedside reconstructed the story of the family in a fashionable suburb of Philadelphia—the art studies in Paris, the boyish escapade that led to the quarrel with his father, the disinheritance, the effort to recoup in the stock-market, the mother pleading for his return—and then *this!*

The day came when Doc' Trevelyan, staff physician of the Jockey Club, shook his head.

"Better try and find out who his folks are and send them a wire," he advised.

So the Information Kid, accompanied by a police officer, went to the hotel where the Boy Plunger had been stopping, and searched through his effects. They found a bundle of letters, each signed "Mother," and the engraved address, "Haddon Hill." But the telegram that was sent out that night by the Information Kid remained undelivered, for the Beveridges were even then traveling over the country, trying to pick up the trail of their lost son.

Early in the morning the crisis came—an hour during which only gossamer threads held the Boy's soul to his struggling body. Then the Angel of Life banished her shrouded sister, the fever broke, and Doc' Trevelyan, reaching across the bed, shook hands with the Fiddlin' Doll.

"Well," he whispered, "it only remains now to be seen whether our young friend *wants* to get well. I don't know what he's got to live for! No answer yet from his folks?"

Trixie shook her head. One small hand went mechanically to the pillow, patting it smooth under the closely shaved head. Cool fingers lightly touched the perspiring forehead. The physician watched her curiously.

"Humph!" he said. "Well, it beats me! Daughter, you look all in; better get some sleep. I'll be back a little later."

But the battle was by no means over. Again the days and nights unfolded in Mother Ryan's boarding-house, and Larry Beveridge, slowly convalescing, kept his face turned to the wall. The flesh was willing, but mind and spirit balked. Then one evening the Fiddlin' Doll brought out her neglected violin, and sitting in a shadowy corner of the room, played "*Warum*"—played it as the great Paladini had said she might learn to play it some day.

"Forget the fingers! Play with the heart and brain. *Sing*, little one, *sing!* Let the tone *sing!* Ah, *Dio*—thou hast the gift, but where is thy heart?"

The Boy Plunger stirred.

"Trixie—"

"Yes, dear."

"That piece of your own—the Gypsy—"

Obediently she raised her bow in the wistful, elusive melody of "The Romany Rose," then switched off into "The Harlequin's Serenade," and emerged finally in the rollicking "Roll 'em High!" An hour later he was asleep, with a smile on his lips.

THREE weeks passed, and Henry the Rat buttonholed the Information Kid.

"Say, how long is this benefit performance goin' to keep up?" he demanded. "Ever since that horse done his 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' we been doin' nothin' but support people. Aint this guy ever goin' to get well? Is he stallin' on us? Huh? What?"

"Don't bother me," pleaded the Kid, "I got a headache now from tryin to dope it all out. The only sure bet on the card is that Trixie's fell for him. He's painting her picture, and she comes up to pose every afternoon. That's all he can do, aint it? His folks are off him, and he aint strong enough to hustle—"

The Rat was disgusted.

"Painting pictures! What'll that bring him? You're the wise guy that was going to hand the Doll a good thing; you was going to pick one out for her! What a bust you are!"

"Say, listen," said the Kid earnestly. "do me a favor: will you please take a runnin' jump at yourself?"

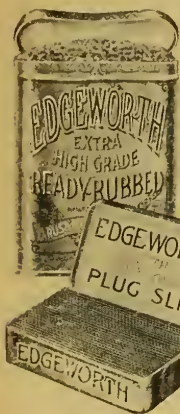
The breach between them threatened to become serious, but it was healed with dramatic swiftness, when they were all at Mother Ryan's one morning, watching the Boy Plunger at work, while the Fiddlin' Doll, violin in hand, posed by the window. Even the Rat could see

He smokes a meerschaum pipe fifty years old

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thinks no other pipe can
compare with it**

We have run on the case of three generations of pipe smokers preferring the meerschaum pipe to all other pipes. Not only that, but all three generations smoked the same meerschaum pipe (in turn, may we be allowed to add).

For further details we refer directly to the present owner of the ancient pipe.



"Dear Sirs," he wrote us. "I have a meerschaum pipe originally purchased and smoked by my grandfather. When he died, he willed it to my father, who smoked it continually throughout his lifetime.

"When the pipe came to me, I was a little dubious about accepting the family responsibility of keeping up the tradition. I tried several brands of tobacco in the pipe and they all made me

sick. Then someone suggested Edgeworth.

"From that day to this I have smoked no other tobacco—no other pipe.

"Give me the old family meerschaum and a little blue can of Edgeworth and I can get all the enjoyment out of smoking there is any time of day or night.

"Perhaps I'm prejudiced, but that's the way I feel about pipe smoking. And that's the way I intend to feel as long as you continue to make Edgeworth."

Well, we can reassure our correspondent on that point, for we intend to go on making Edgeworth just as long as there are smokers who would give up smoking if they couldn't get Edgeworth.

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So if you haven't tried Edgeworth, send us your name and address and we will immediately forward to you generous helpings of both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Ready-Rubbed.

For the free samples, address Larus & Brother Company, 42 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va. If you will also include the name and address of your tobacco dealer, it will make it easier for you to get Edgeworth regularly if you should like it.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.

that this picture was something beyond anything he had ever believed possible. It stirred him to the depths of his muddy little soul. The alchemy of the Boy's talent had transferred to canvas an idealized portrait of Trixie Carroll. Light, streaming through a church window, cast a halo about the curls and glorified the piquant features. In the foreground there was a suggestion of kneeling figures with upturned faces. Henry thought he recognized the Information Kid, Frenchy Bonville and himself. While he was struggling to comprehend the artist's idea, there came a sharp knock on the door. The handle turned, and in stepped Dr. Treveyan, smiling broadly. Behind the physician appeared an aristocratic old gentleman with a gold-headed cane, and a little old lady with a lavender turban and a black silk dress.

The Boy Plunger achieved his feet.

"Larry!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"Larry boy!"

"Son!" cried the little old lady.

LET us draw the curtain! Consider only what transpired that evening in a box at Henri's Petite Place, when the senior Beveridge forced himself to what he considered an unpleasant task. He had heard much of the Fiddlin' Doll from Dr. Treveyan, more from the lips of his son. He was profoundly grateful, but—he did not wish these children to make a mistake for which both might be sorry. Romance that blooms in a sick-room is often a fragile flower.

"You needn't say any more," Trixie told him. "I—I understand."

"Thank you," said the old gentleman. "I'm afraid it's my boy who will not understand. He is the one who has been sick."

The Fiddlin' Doll toyed with her knife and fork.

"I'd have married him if you hadn't shown up," she admitted, "but now—well, I agree with you the conditions are changed. He's going back to a different world. He must be made to understand. Suppose you leave that part of it to me?"

"God bless you," said the old gentleman. "I hope I'm not making a terrible mistake."

"No," said Trixie. "I think, if I were in your place, I would look at it the same way. He will be a great artist, and you know the boys call me 'Madelon,' I'm a sort of sweetheart to them all. I've always got quite a kick out of it." She was close to breaking down.

The old gentleman blew his nose violently.

"My dear, Dr. Treveyan tells me you have a great gift for music. I find you possessed of other qualities that I did not anticipate. I can see there are some things that can never be repaid; but you must not place us under too heavy an obligation. You are still a child. May I—that is, would you—ahem! Confound it, my dear, what I am trying to say is merely this: you have helped my son a great deal; may I not help you a little?"

The Fiddlin' Doll slumped thoughtfully in her chair. Before her eyes floated the picture that the Boy Plunger

was finishing. If she could ever live up to that!

She drew a deep breath, and made her decision.

"There is a man in New York who told me to come back to him when I had learned certain things, and he would teach me to play the violin. I think I've learned them. I'd like to go back to Paladini. I'd like to start tonight. I could write Larry. It would be—easier."

Beveridge Senior drew forth a wallet.

"Two hundred will be enough," she told him. "That's what I'd have earned in the eight weeks I was away from my job. No more—please! I can always make enough in the nighttime—"

"God bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "Two hundred—two hundred? Why, my dear child—at least—"

The look in her face checked him. He peeled off two one-hundred-dollar bills, and handed them over.

"Thanks," she acknowledged. Now, if you'll excuse me, I guess I'd better run along and pack. Ask my mother to kiss Larry once for me—that's something that I've—never done—"

IT was balmy December, and the bang-tails were running at Tijuana, which lies just over the border in old Mexico. Once more Henry the Rat and the Information Kid were perched on the rail by the quarter-pole, basking in the sunshine, and discussing the case of the Fiddlin' Doll. The Kid had finished reading aloud a letter that had come that morning from Los Angeles, inclosing a number of newspaper clippings. The Rat was very much impressed.

"Well, what do you think of that!" he marveled. "Orpheus Circuit, huh? Why, say, boy, that's a fast track, aint it? She's stepping in strong company! Are all them clippings about her? What do they say?"

The Information Kid glanced over the printed reviews.

"'Miss Beatrice Carroil,'" he read, "'the talented young virtuous—h'm.'"

He paused, and frowned. "What's the matter with that?" demanded Henry. "She was always straight as a string."

"It aint 'virtuous,'" corrected the Kid. "It's 'virtuoso.'"

"French for the same thing, I guess," said Henry. "What's she say in the letter about comin' to San Diego?"

The Kid read again the last paragraph of Trixie's missive:

"And so I'll be in San Diego soon; and on opening night I'll have the tickets for the bunch. It's the one thing that I've always looked forward to, the thing that made it possible for me to work so hard during all these months. Come to see me, just as you used to in the old days at Henri's and I'll play my heart out.

"Yours as ever—Trixie."

Henry threw away his cigarette.

"Will we all be there?" he asked. "Kid, this is one time I'm going to be right up in the Judges' stand!"

The Information Kid nodded thoughtfully.

"Me too! We'll all be on hand—all except the Boy Plunger."



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They were silent a moment. "Well," said Henry, "of course I've always panned you about that; but between you and me, I was pulling for him too! Luke le Blanc tells me that Larry turned down a lot of money for that picture of the Fiddlin' Doll. Seems like he's made just as good in his line, as she has with the fiddle. But there's something wrong. He wanted to marry her, and it sure looked like she loved him. I don't get it!"

"Same here," agreed the Kid. "Figuring horses is a cinch, but if any guy can tell what a Jane is going to do, or why she does it, I'll inform the cockeyed universe he's good! What's that thing workin' down the back-stretch?"

"North Shore—old Dailey's colt. I'm minin' him."

THEY were terribly shocked when the great day came and they saw Trixie Carroll. She looked frail and tired. The bloom was gone from her cheeks, and there were dark circles under the once merry eyes. They met her in the lobby of her hotel; and laughing and crying, she embraced them all, striving by the very abandon of her greeting to convince them time had wrought no change. But they were disconcerted none the less. The Information Kid did his best to make the reunion a merry one. He laughed and joked, and related all the gossip of the track. Trixie joked and teased and questioned. But gradually the strain told. They fidgeted uncomfortably, and finally excused themselves on various pretexts after assuring her the theater would be filled that night with her friends. Later they held a conference.

"My Gawd!" said the Information Kid. "Do you think she's got the con?"

"Didn't cough none," the Rat reminded. "Maybe she's just trained off, or perhaps we imagine there's something wrong."

Frenchy Bonville spoke up.

"Imagine nothin! I know what's wrong with her; she's lonesome! Chances are she hasn't been to a track, or seen nobody she likes since the day she run away. Janes and horses are just alike on some things. You fellows remember what happened to that Arlington filly when they shipped her from Kentucky to Canada, where she didn't have no darky stablehands to baby her. Near died on 'em, didn't she? And say, Kid, what did Lord Roberts do when they took the dog away from him that was his pal, huh?"

"Frenchy wins," acknowledged the Kid. "Well, we'd better give her the big hand tonight. How about goin' down and buyin' a loving-cup with all our names on?"

The Rat threw up his hands despairingly. "More dough! Well, all right. Better get some flowers while you're about it—get pink roses; she likes 'em best."

Out of the simplicity of their hearts, they did all these things. They surrounded her with a hundred and one little proofs of their devotion and sympathy. They turned out that night, "all prettied up and ready for the races." They appropriated the first five



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rows, filled them with her friends, and earnestly assured each other that no performer that night would come within a quarter of a mile of the reception they planned for her. Never for an instant did they guess they were saddling more weight on the Fiddlin' Doil than she could be expected to carry. As the Information Kid says, it takes a wise man to figure a Jane.

And Trixie, walking out from the wings to realize her one fond dream, knew at that moment she was doomed to failure. For she was a woman first, and an artist afterward. She felt her self-control deserting her. She fought back hard against the flood of pent-up memories, and fought in vain. The sea of faces flickered and fell away.

Once more, Trixie Carroll was a Fiddlin' Doll at Mother Ryan's boarding-house, playing "Warum" in the shadowed corner of a bedroom for the benefit of a boy whose face was turned to the wall.

The dreamy, measured utterances sobbed on—calling, calling. But the moment came when the tones began to waver. She did not see the puzzled faces of the men in the orchestra pit, nor the frown on the face of their leader. She did not realize that her own accompanist was trying vainly to carry her on. She did not even know that she was faltering—stumbling wretchedly through the most exquisite of themes.

The music drifted off into the plaintive little melody of "The Romany Rose."

Her accompanist spoke, beseechingly: "Miss Carroll—Trixie!"

"Yes, dear," she answered. "Yes, Larry!"

And, stumbling blindly forward, she collapsed into the footlights!

The Information Kid and Henry the Rat led the rush; close behind were Frenchy Bonville, Luke le Blanc, and a dozen others. They gained the sidewalk and sped around the corner to the stage entrance. Some one was already there, arguing with a stubborn doorkeeper and a special officer.

"You?" panted the Information Kid. "Me!" said Larry Beveridge. "Help me get past these fools!"

"Come on!" said the Kid.

THEY charged football fashion, and a moment later were behind the scenes, floundering over piles of rope and stage properties.

Behind them clattered half of the Tijuana betting ring. A badly rattled stage-manager, in shirt-sleeves, bellowed his protests.

"Git out, git out! G'wan back! Can't a girl faint without bustin' up the show? She's in her dressing-room. I sent for a doctor—"

"S-all right—s-all right," the Kid assured, shoving Larry forward. "This guy's a doctor, and I'm his assistant. Show us her room, and then g'wan away."

When the Fiddlin' Doll opened her eyes in a four-by-six dressing-room, the Information Kid and the Boy Plunger were at her side. She recognized the Kid first.

"What—what happened?"

"Nothin' much," he assured her. "You were out in front and goin' along good when you took a little spill. It don't mean nothin'—except that maybe you need a runnin' companion, little pal. Nearly everyone does. Now, if you'll listen to your brother—the very best bet on the card is this young doc'—"

She looked up then at Larry Beveridge, and recognized him.

"Why, Lar-ry! Where on earth—oh, you shouldn't be here!"

"Honey," pleaded the Boy Plunger, "it's no use; you'll have to save me all over again. I couldn't paint another picture. Dad told me the truth three days ago, and I've been traveling ever since. Please, dear!"

The Information Kid gazed down at Miss Trixie Carroll a moment and what he read in her eyes caused him to rise hastily to his feet.

"Say, listen," he stammered. "I think the Paddock Judge out there wants to talk to me. You two don't mind if I leave you alone a moment?"

Trixie smiled through her tears. Outside the door the Information Kid encountered the impatient Henry.

"Well," said the Rat, "how 'bout it? What's the word?"

The Kid stuck his thumbs in his vest pockets, spread his fingers and grinned triumphantly.

"Weather clear, track fast," he reported. "It's all over but the wedding-presents!"

"Wedding-presents!" said Henry. "Wedding-presents? Well, all right! But I tell you right now it's the last bit of jack they're gonna get outa me!"

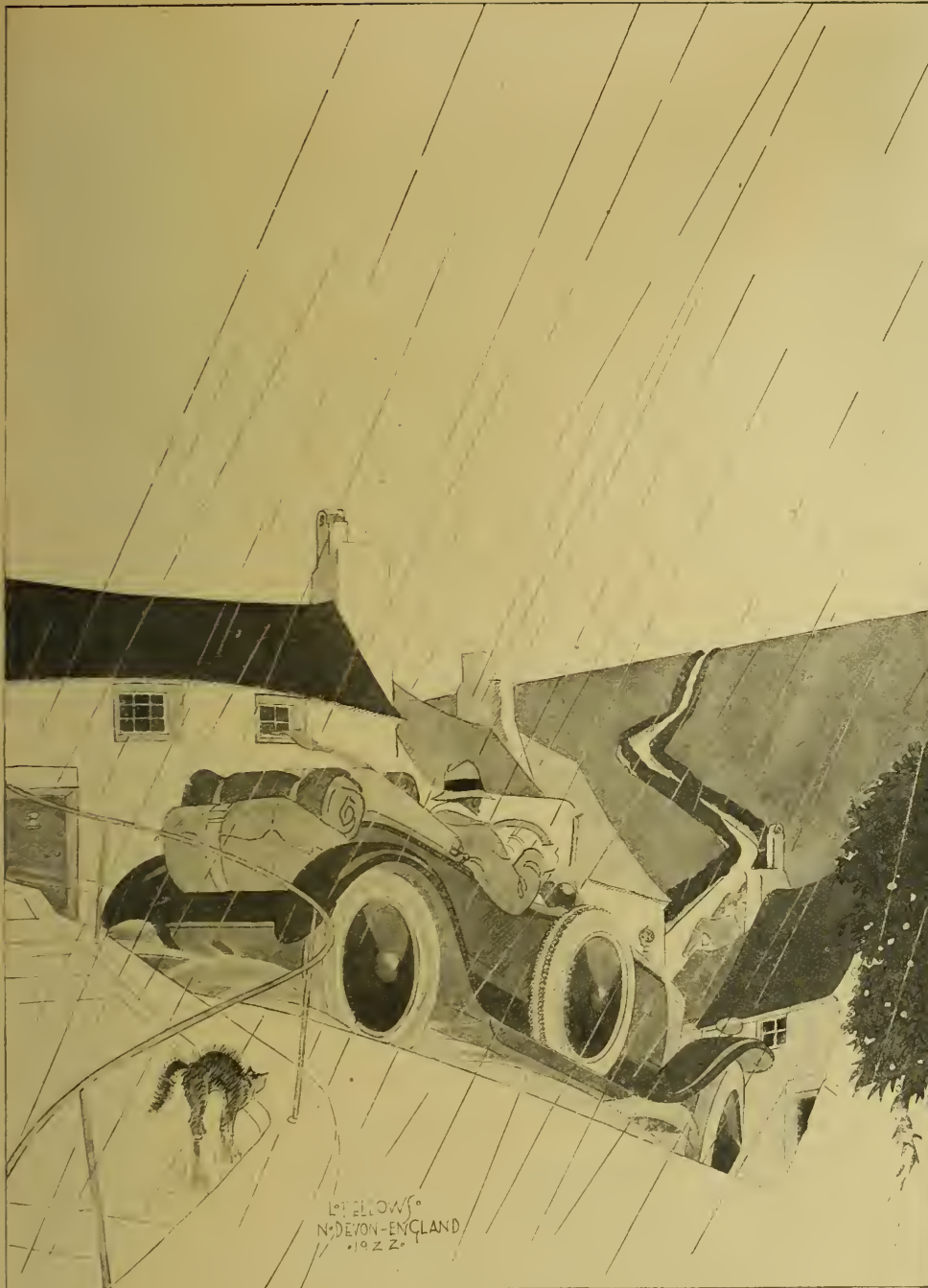
SO the Fiddlin' Doll and the Boy Plunger were married on Christmas Eve at San Ysidro in the little "church of the mud," which was jammed to the doors with all the gypsies of the turf.

The Information Kid, in the capacity of Official Starter, acquitted himself nobly. He thought of everything, even to sending Henry the Rat around with a collection-plate for the benefit of Padre Fernandez. First there was a brief program. Trixie played "Noël" as no one had ever heard it played before, while Froggie Miller, a little hunchback jockey with the voice of an angel, sang the words. Then the Information Kid shooed the principals up to the barrier, and finished it all off with a grand march. Trixie was still trying to hug everybody when the Boy Plunger finally whirled her away in a taxicab.

The Information Kid and Henry the Rat watched them go. Then the two hustlers headed slowly for the lights of their boarding-house. Over to the left the Mexican mountains showed green under a new moon. The Rat lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply.

"Well," he sighed, "that's what I call a grandstand finish! But oh, boy, I know now what it means to be left at the post!"

The Information Kid put a comforting arm around the shoulders of his fellow-hustler. "Never mind, pal," he consoled. "That's just the way it figured all the time. You and me, Henry, run best in the mud, and tomorrow's another day!"



PARRACOMBE HILL*

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*Drawing by Laurence Fellows, Devonshire, England

LEGERDEMAIN

(Continued from page 37)



The freshness and charm of youth

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Why are such women the rare exception rather than the rule?

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go to Weinberg and tell him you want me. That's the kind of a man I am—no hard feelings."

"None here, either," I told him. "But I hardly think we'll meet again."

"Your belly's filled now. Wait till you're hungry again."

"I will," said I. And with that I walked from the apartment to find myself a moment later in Washington Square. I looked at the great clock on the Judson Tower. I could still keep my word to Mrs. Gannon. I did. Then, with two dollars left of the five that I had received from Weinberg, I climbed, more easily this time than last, to my room.

I sat down upon the bed and reviewed the last hour. And as I thought of how a cheap criminal had carried me to his lodgings, fed me, patronized me and insulted me, I was sick with shame. A man of my education and breeding, who had sunk so low in the social scale that he was open to such an insult, who was as unable to cope with the elementary facts of life as I was, was unfit to live.

It was a harsh judgment which I rendered against myself, but a just one. Incompetents clutter up the path of progress. Society, in making civilized life difficult for the incompetent, is enacting natural decrees; for nature, before society began, destroyed the incompetent. A sudden determination came to me. I had parted with the last possession that had a marketable value. Of course, I had my overcoat, but freezing was not preferable to starvation.

BUT why starve or freeze when there was an easy alternative? That is, the alternative would be easy if I were in full possession of my faculties. But if I became hungry to the point of starvation again, my faculties would be impaired, my will be gone. I could see myself begging of passers-by, even, possibly, rummaging in refuse-pails for a bone or a crust, like any famished dog.

The alternative, of swift and simple self-destruction, was infinitely preferable to such degradation. I must not let myself descend to a depth where I would lack will to adopt that alternative. I would eat again—already my stomach cried for more food, so long had I gone hungry—then walk to the water-front and rid society of one of its unfit.

I rose from the bed and opened my suitcase. I was sure that there was nothing in it that would identify Mrs. Gannon's missing lodger as John Ainsley, but I wished to be positive. Pride forbade that even after I was dead, persons who once had known me should know the humiliation of my end.

I closed the case and sat down once more upon the bed, to gather all my strength. As I sat there I thought of the man who had fed me. The display of money which he had made was assurance that he was an extremely successful criminal, probably one of those "super-criminals" who are created by the police to cover up their own incompetence.

I laughed at the idea. This man, whose name I did not know, was nothing but the most mediocre sort of person. Beyond a vicious cunning, he possessed no mentality at all. The reason for his success lay in the fact that the men opposed to him, the police, were also mediocrities. Imagine a man of real intellect devoting himself to the stupid career of crime-detection! The idea was absurd. Graduated policemen were the detectives who protected society against the schemes of such as my fur-collared friend. And while a policeman may be morally and physically an exceptional person, mentally he must be on the level of a laborer.

The supercriminal existed only in the newspapers. In reality he was such a person as my fur-collared friend. And the limitations of that person had been made clearly evident to me tonight. He knew his limitations himself, and had asked my aid to overcome them. Why, if I chose, I could be a supercriminal, a real one, not a myth invented to please the writers of newspaper headlines and their readers.

It would serve society right if I turned against it. I was a gentleman, a man qualified to act as arbiter in matters of taste and culture, a man admirably familiar with the arts. Yet the world passed me by, and preferred to bestow its honors and rewards upon a glorified grocer or a vendor of pig-iron.

It had taken ten generations of aristocratic forbears to produce me. While I did not profess to own the creative instinct, nevertheless, by sheer virtue of my family traditions, I was qualified to judge the works of creative artists and say: "This is good; that is bad."

I understood the art of good living; such as I were meant to set an example to the struggling and aspiring yokelry. Such as I were produced upon this earth to guide and instruct the common people. We were not meant to battle in tawdry ways for the gross material things of life. The supreme achievement of evolution is the gentleman; and society permits a gentleman to starve. I can conceive no harsher indictment against society.

Then I smiled at my own heat. I had had my opportunity to become a criminal earlier this evening, and had refused it. I had no intention of changing my mind, and accepting the offer of my fur-collared friend.

So, then, let me die, as a gentleman should, without repinings, or anger, or sneers, or other vulgarities. And let me die, as unfortunately I had not recently lived, upon a full stomach.

There were places in New York where one might still dine, frugally it is true, but amid clean surroundings, in an atmosphere of breeding, for the small sum that still remained to me. Such a place was Carey's, an Italian table-d'hôte restaurant south of Washington Square. Dinner could be procured there for a dollar and a half; with twenty-five cents for cigarettes, there would still be a



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quarter for the waiter. I regretted that the check-boy in the coat-room would be forced to get along without a gratuity from me. With my stomach filled, puffing at a cigarette, I would stroll leisurely to the west, coming at length upon a dock on the North River. After that—who knows?

There was no need to say anything to Mrs. Gannon. Tomorrow or the next day, finding my room unoccupied, she would rent it to some one else; I had paid her for a week in advance, and she would consider my departure something in the nature of an unexpected profit. There was not the slightest danger that she would report my absence to the police. She would confiscate my poor suitcase and its meager contents, and gain still another petty profit.

So I walked downstairs, much stronger than when I had done so on my way to visit Weinberg, but still weak and hungry again. In the hall little Peter met me.

"When you goin' to make a penny disappear for me, Mr. Ainsley?" he demanded.

I smiled at him. "I'm going to make something bigger than a penny disappear, Peter," I told him.

"When?" he asked.

"Pretty soon," I replied.

"Will you let me see you?" he asked.

"You'll know about it," I assured him.

SMILING at my *double-entendre*, I left the house. And as I walked toward Carey's, my resolution grew stronger. If a man can't live as a gentleman should live, why live at all? Life is rather unendurable at best; only comfort and luxury mitigate its severity. I laughed as I passed rows of tenements. What fools these people were to continue in the prison of life! A tragically humorous thought occurred to me: suppose that these people who lived in these grimy tenements, and in similar or worse habitations all over the world, should decide to quit the bitter struggle for mere existence? Suppose, instead of going on strike, or starting riots, or turning Bolshevik, they chose by lot a certain number, and that certain number immediately killed themselves? On the next day, another number would kill themselves, and the remainder would declare publicly their intention of following the suicidal example. In a week or two society would be so alarmed that it would be offering palaces on Fifth Avenue to the poor if they would merely consent to live.

It was, I flattered myself, a quaint conceit, as sane as most revolutionary nostrums, and I was smiling as I entered Carey's. I was still smiling as I finished a very satisfactory meal, and leaning back in my chair, consumed my eighth cigarette. Life was not a complex thing, after all. At least, if one didn't find it simple, one simply stepped out of its absurd complexities.

For instance, that girl who sat across the narrow room from me would be indubitably better off if she joined me on my stroll to the dock than if she remained with the gross beast who was her dinner companion. For she patently showed that he disgusted her. Pretty, extremely so, with black hair and blue

How to Be At Ease Wherever You Go!

ALL around the social clock—dinners, teas, parties, at the theatre, the dance, the hotel! Wherever you happen to be, with whomever you happen to be, you will be calm, well-poised, at ease!

When you receive an unexpected invitation, you will know how to acknowledge it. When you meet an old acquaintance, you will know how to introduce him, or her, to your friends. When you are traveling, you will know exactly how much to tip the porter, how to register at the hotel. When you are at a dance, a party, an entertainment of any kind, you will be a "good mixer"—your calm, unruffled, charming personality will attract people to you!

No, this is not a fairy tale. Thousands of men and women have already found it to be true. As soon as you know the right thing to do at the right time, the right thing to say, write and wear on all occasions, you gain new poise, a fine new dignity. You will astonish your friends with a new charm of manner. Your very personality will assume that grace and ease, that wholesome, attractive charm that appeals to people everywhere—that will make you respected and admired no matter where you happen to be.

Know the Right Thing— and Do It!

Too many people are satisfied to guess at what is right, and they wonder why they are so frequently subjected to humiliation. It is humiliating to take olives with a fork when everyone knows they should be taken with the fingers. It is humiliating to mumble some awkward, unintelligible phrase when one is introduced to some notable person. It is humiliating to make blunders at the dance, the reception, the theatre.

Let etiquette be the armor that protects you from embarrassment. Let it tell you the right thing to do, say, write and wear at all times, under all circumstances. Just think what it will mean to you to know always the right thing to do or say, to know that you are doing or saying the right thing, that you are not making a mistake! Why, you will never be uncomfortable in the presence of strangers, never ill-at-ease, never embarrassed! Your fine poise of manner, your calm dignity will open many doors that had once seemed closed to you.

Every day in your contact with men and women problems of conduct arise. Shall a man's name or a woman's be mentioned first in making introductions? How shall asparagus be

eaten? May the bride who marries for the second time wear white? How soon should a gift be acknowledged? One never knows when a question such as these must be answered—and answered instantly. Why not be prepared, and so avoid embarrassment.

What Etiquette Means to Men and Women

No one can do without etiquette. You may think you can—but something within you tells you you must have it. Heed that urge! Intuition is greater than anything we can possibly say in this announcement. There is not a person whose manner will not become more gracious and charming, who will not gain a new poise and dignity, through knowledge of the rules of good conduct.

It is not for just a week, or a month, or a year that etiquette will help you. It will be an "unseen friend" throughout life. Through its silent, ever-present influence you will be brought into contact with the men and women you want to meet, the men and women who can mean a great deal to you. You will know how to create conversation, how to make yourself agreeable, how to be well liked.

As a host or hostess, you will be clever in the art of serving and entertaining. As a guest, you will be welcomed and liked. Everyday, everywhere "all around the social clock," etiquette will make you happier, more charming, more appealing to the men and women with whom you come in contact.

There are two ways to gain the poise that will give you a charming personality. One way is to mingle with people of fine society for years, learning the right thing to do and say on all occasions at the expense of mistakes and embarrassment. This is a discouraging, time-wasting, unsatisfactory method. The other way is to learn at once, through the medium of experts who have spent a lifetime studying the subjects, all the rules of good conduct—the etiquette of dinners, travel, weddings, speech, dress. In this way you know what is right and you avoid mistakes and embarrassment.



At the dance, the theatre, the dinner—wherever you go and with whom you happen to be, poise and ease of manner are extremely important. Embarrassment results in mistakes—and mistakes cause greater discomfort. A fine, calm, unruffled manner prepossesses people in your favor, makes them want to know you and be with you.

It was for the purpose of giving poise and new charm of manner to those men and women who have neither the time nor opportunity to mingle with society, that the Book of Etiquette was prepared. This two-volume set, famous as the most complete and authoritative work on the subject, has already helped thousands of men and women gain the impressive charm of manner they desired.

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- what are the obligations of a person who receives an invitation but cannot accept it?
- how should a woman be introduced to a group of people?
- should a slice of bread be bitten into, or broken into small pieces and conveyed to the mouth with the fingers?
- should a woman who is a guest at a houseparty "tip" the servants? should a man?
- what should tall people avoid in dress? What should short people avoid?
- what are the duties of a hostess on an automobile party, a tennis party, a golf tournament?
- may the woman who stops alone at a hotel receive masculine visitors?



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eyes and, I guessed from what appeared above the table, a charming figure, she belonged to youth, not to bloated age. And the fact that her eyes were hard and mercenary made no difference. They were so merely because advantages had been denied her. I could discern that the attentions of her companion sickened her.

Yet though I could see her shrink at the touch of his flabby hand upon her own, she did not push it away. She smiled, and apparently answered terms of endearment with verbal caresses. Unquestionably he was rich! Doubtless she was to share his wealth. Well, I was glad to be about to leave a world where such things were endured.

I raised my hand to beckon to my waiter. Then I dropped it, for into the room came my fur-collared friend, advancing to the table where sat the couple who had excited my disgusted interest, greeting them cordially, being hailed delightedly.

I wondered if these were part of the gang which I suspected must be associated with him. Then, noting a meaning glance exchanged between him and the girl, I knew that while she might be an associate of his, her gross companion was, if not already a victim, destined to be one. I postponed my departure. I had two cigarettes left; amusement would go well with my last tobacco. And inasmuch as my acquaintance of the early evening had turned his back to me as he sat down, there was no danger that my presence would interfere with his plans—provided, of course, that he had any plans, and that I had not misinterpreted the pregnant glance between him and the girl.

AS I watched the three, the gross man produced a little box from his waistcoat pocket. It was the sort of box that would contain a ring, and the sight of it evoked memories. I wondered that I had not recognized the huge-featured man before. For years ago I had more than once entered his jewelry establishment on Fifth Avenue. I knew him to be Daragon, one of the most famous jewelers of America, and one of its most notorious *roués*.

He had changed greatly since I had seen him striding pompously through the aisles of his fashionable establishment. Added years of loose living had brought more flesh and that dead pallor to his face. But I recognized him; the sight of the little cardboard box had aroused remembrance. I had bought trinkets in my day.

So, wondering what might be the meaning of Daragon's presence in the company of a self-confessed crook, I watched them. I saw the girl open the little package. I saw her hands tremble as she unfastened the string that tied it. I saw her lips part in a gasp of delight. I saw her turn to my friend of the earlier evening and address words that, from her manner, seemed to be appealing.

I saw my acquaintance reach for the box; though I could not see his face, I knew that his eyes were shining with ill-suppressed desire. And then, as I saw his right hand drop into the pocket of his coat, I knew what he planned to do, even before I caught a glimpse of the white

Why he wanted to know her

THERE was no special reason for his coming to this dance, and then, in the brightly gleaming lights he saw her! Slender, dainty, radiant, she stood out from among all others like a softly flushing rose.

She was turned slightly from him when his eyes first found her, and he watched eagerly for a chance to see more clearly.

Suddenly, as if his gaze had drawn her, she raised her graceful head and looked at him. Was it possible that anything could be so sweet?

The faintly glowing color of her round cheek, melting into the cream of throat and shoulder. The pure whiteness of the low, broad brow, the coral of curving lips—she was like a delicate miniature on ivory.

For a breathless second he watched her, then hastened to his hostess. "Who is she?" he whispered, drawing his friend quickly toward her.



She was like a delicate miniature on ivory

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However attractive you may be, it is possible to make yourself lovelier if you use the complete "Pompeian Beauty Toilette."

First, a touch of fragrant Pompeian Day Cream. This is a vanishing cream that, when worked well in, is a protection for the skin and a delicate foundation to which powder adheres evenly, and from which it will not easily rub off.

Then, apply Pompeian Beauty Powder. It makes the skin beautifully fair and adds the charm of a delightful perfume.

Now a bit of Pompeian Bloom.

Lastly, dust over again with the powder in order to subdue the Bloom. And instantly the face is radiant with added youth and beauty.

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Mary Pickford, the world's most adored woman, has again honored Pompeian Beauty Preparations by granting the exclusive use of her portrait for the new 1923 Pompeian Beauty Panel. The beauty and charm of Miss Pickford are faithfully portrayed in the dainty colors of this panel. Size 2 1/2 x 7 1/4 inches.

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2. Sample of Pompeian Day Cream (vanishing).
3. Sample of Pompeian Beauty Powder.
4. Sample of Pompeian Bloom (non-breaking rouge).
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How Youth Can Spoil Youth

By MME. JEANNETTE

Today I sat opposite a young girl in the street car. She had charming, piquant features and a wealth of dark brown hair—but, oh, her complexion!

The skin about her neck and her temples was sallow and dark, while on her face she had powder and rouge of the shades that should be used only by the fairest blonde.

How I did long to sit beside her and say, "My dear, did you look in the mirror before you came out? Don't you know that it is really tragic to spoil your pretty face as you have done today?"

For that is just the point. The proper, the correct way to use rouge and powder is the studying of your own particular type, and the deft accentuating of the color nature gave you.

Just take this girl, for example. Her complexion, from what I could see, where she had neglected to powder, must have been naturally dark.

But a good vanishing cream, such as Pompeian Day Cream, carefully used over face and neck would have softened and prepared the skin for the powder and rouge to blend naturally. They would not have stopped abruptly in the irregular lines shown on this girl's face.

Then the powder. She should have had the rich, creamy Rachel Beauty Powder that Pompeian has prepared for this dark type. And for rouge, Pompeian Bloom, the dark shade made especially for brunettes.

Here was a girl whose features were really lovely and who could very easily have been called a beauty—if she had used a little thought. There is no great knowledge or skill needed to make the best of oneself. Practical common sense in choosing good, pure creams and powders that are the correct shades, and a little care in the way they are used is all that is required.

Pompeian Orange-Tinted Rouge is charming at all times, and you will find it particularly good for daylight use.

Lip stick, too, plays an important part in improving the appearance. If the shape of your mouth is good, follow its curves with the lip stick. If the lines are not good, draw the lip stick from the inner side of the lips to the outer edge, and blend with the finger tips. Pompeian Lip Stick is absolutely pure, prevents chapping, and its shade is delightfully natural.

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object that he drew from the pocket. He planned to substitute one box for the other.

I smiled with amusement. Also I appreciated his cunning. Unquestionably he had made purchases from Daragon. Probably he had let the jeweler understand that the purchases were gifts for his sweetheart. Then he had permitted Daragon to meet his lady. The lady had smiled upon the jeweler. Daragon had seen an opportunity to combine business with pleasure, the sort of pleasure that appealed to him. And it was not unusual that, in trying to close a bargain, he should bring a jewel from his store. And the girl had been waiting for him alone; her seductions were to lull Daragon's suspicions, if any might be aroused.

I saw my friend's head shake in negation. Argument, presumably over the price of the trinket, seemed to arise. The girl pleaded with her lover. Oh, it was all well staged.

THEN, deviously, my crook shook his head. He pushed the box across the table, as though the incident were closed. Daragon argued a few minutes, seemed to make concessions which were not accepted, then slowly wrapped up the box and tied the string around it. He placed it in his waistcoat pocket. I wondered how they planned to get it away from him, to substitute the box which, underneath the table, the crook held in his right hand.

Then I saw. My friend the crook turned in his seat and pointed toward the door. Daragon looked in that direction. The girl's hand shot out; deftly it flicked from his pocket the box which he had just placed there. No one but myself was placed so that the action could have been seen. I waited for the next move, which must be the substitution of the other box.

But although the crook handed the girl the other box, Daragon's attention was not held by the incident near the door, which was nothing more than an altercation between two guests of the restaurant, an altercation arranged, I suspected, for the sole purpose of affording time and opportunity for the robbery of the jeweler.

He began to argue with the crook. His hand reached for his waistcoat pocket, to produce the jewel. But the girl had not had time to effect the substitution. She went dead white as Daragon leaped to his feet, overturning his chair as he did so. For his suspicions, never more than slumbering, I imagined, awoke to full activity.

Then, before he could attract the attention of the head waiter and the manager, I rose from my chair and walked swiftly to their table. I had no particular sympathy for the girl and her crook companion. But I had even less for Daragon. For while I watched him, I remembered some of the unpleasant tales that had been current about him in the years before the war. The girl was a thief, but Daragon was a filthy beast.

I gained their table in three strides. "You dropped something on the floor," I said. I spoke to Daragon, but I looked squarely at the girl. If she had the quick wit of her kind, I could save her.

She had it; as I bent over, groping be-

neath the table, her hand touched mine and slipped into it a box. In her excitement her shaking fingers relaxed their grip of the second box. I got that too, and would have been at a loss how to proceed, but for the fact that, leaning over until her face was close to mine, she whispered frantically: "The first one, the first one."

I slipped the second box swiftly into my pocket, arose and handed Daragon the first one. He took it from me, and immediately untied and opened it. He sighed with relief.

"Much obliged," he said. "For a minute I thought—damn it, I didn't think! I *know* that I put that box in my pocket, and it couldn't have fallen out."

"I picked it from the floor," I reminded him.

"It didn't fall there," insisted the jeweler.

"Then how did it get there?" demanded the crook.

"I don't know," said Daragon. "If I did, I'd call the police."

"What do you mean?" demanded the crook.

"I don't mean anything; I don't have to mean anything, do I? But that box didn't walk out of my pocket," snarled the jeweler.

"Are you insinuating—" began the crook.

Daragon interrupted him. "When a fifty-thousand-dollar diamond ring leaves my pocket, I can insinuate all I damn' please. If you don't like it, lump it. I was a fool to bring it down here anyway. My store is the place for me to do business."

"Better be careful," warned the crook.

"Don't worry about me. You said you'd give me forty thousand; you said you'd bring the cash here. I said I wanted fifty."

"Well, what about it?" demanded my host of the earlier evening.

"This much about it," cried Daragon. "I get suspicious, and you get sore. Well, if I'm wrong, I'll apologize. Produce forty thousand in cash, and I'll give you the ring. You'll prove your good faith, and I'll prove my regret." He waited a minute. I thought, considering the vast amount of cash that the other man had shown me earlier in the evening, that he might be able to produce forty thousand. But if he could, he evidently did not choose to do so. "I guess that will hold you," sneered Daragon. "If I didn't hate scandal, I'd call the police."

HE turned on his heel, gave me a grudging nod of thanks, and walked out of the restaurant. I stood a moment smiling at the crook.

"You certainly do need me," I laughed. Then, though having recognized me, he would have detained me, I walked over to my table. What did I, who was about to die, have in common with such a person? The thanks of himself, or of his pretty feminine companion, would not do me any good.

I paid my waiter and walked to the check-room. I will confess that I was slightly embarrassed at my inability to tip the coat-boy. But I need not have been; for Daragon, just donning his overcoat, saw me and seemed to regret his lack of courtesy. He handed the coat-boy an extra coin.

"Let me do that much," he said. "—even though you did me a shabby turn."

I stared at him. "What do you mean?" I asked.

We were at the cloak-room entrance now. Daragon jerked a fat thumb toward the dining-room.

"Don't you think I had that crook's number? It was the girl I wanted. I guessed their game, and played the come-on simply to get her where I wanted her."

"And where was that?" I asked.

He grinned. "She's stuck on him. But I figured that if I caught them with the goods, she'd forget how stuck she was on him if I didn't prosecute. Get me?"

"I do," said I coldly.

"I suppose she dropped it, and you saw it fall. If you hadn't stepped in, I'd have had them dead to rights. Oh, well, a man can't get everything he thinks he wants."

"No," I agreed.

I stared at him; if the crook was low, and the girl was evil, this man was worse than either. And such as he lived and enjoyed living, while I, a gentleman born and bred, was about to die!

A SENSE of the monstrous injustice of life came to me. That injustice could be remedied by money. For instance, that jewel in Daragon's pocket could be turned into thousands of dollars. Even I, a gentleman, had heard, in recent months of poverty, of "fences," those men who buy the loot of thieves; I even knew where one or two of them resided. The skirts of poverty brush the feet of criminality.


I was about to die, because I had neither productive nor constructive brains. But perhaps I had the third kind, a destructive brain. If my fur-collared friend could make a success of crime, despite the paucity of imagination which his clumsy scheme for robbing Daragon had disclosed, what a tremendous success I could achieve!

Honor? Adherence to it led me to the gutter, was about to lead me to the river!

Daragon stepped aside to let me precede him through the restaurant door. I exercised the only talent that I had, sleight-of-hand. I substituted the second box, which the girl had given me, for the one that lay in Daragon's pocket.

I nodded farewell to him—to more than him: to all the past that lay behind me. And I kissed my hand to the future. I was nothing within the law; I would be the greatest living figure outside the law. I would make the supercriminal something more than the figment of a policeman's imagination. I would bring to my new profession the brain of a gentleman, certainly fitted to cope with the intellect of a detective. I would bring to my new art the culture of an aristocrat. I would raise it from the sordid level to which such people as my fur-collared friend repressed it. I smiled cheerfully as I set out to dispose of the diamond ring gained by my legerdemain.

"The Club of One-eyed Men," in which Mr. Roche cleverly describes the next adventure of a gentleman turned rascal, will appear in the forthcoming April issue.



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Immy on one occasion. But she answered him:

"Papa! Don't be ridiculous! A girl can't discriminate. I can't hurt a poor boy's feelings just because he can't carry his liquor as well as the rest. Besides, I'm the hostess."

Her father cast his eyes up in helplessness at such a creed.

So the dance went on. Some old prudes were shocked, but the rest said: "A party is a party," and continued merrily.

Dear old Mrs. Piccard said to Patty:

"You're lucky in having only two carpets ruined, my dear. I had three destroyed at my last reception. But it's nothing to what went on in the good old days, if the truth were told. My father was with General Washington, you know. And really! Papa was with the army that night when General Washington himself danced with General Greene's wife for three hours without sitting down. Those were the heroic days, my dear! And drinking! Our young men are comparatively sober."

Finally the more merciful guests began to go home, leaving the dregs behind. Young men who would doze and make mistakes at the counting-houses the next day, lingered as if it were the last night of earth.

There was torture for RoBards in Immy's zest, in the look of her eyes as she stared up into the unspeakable gaze of some notorious rake. Yet Immy kept her head through it all, flirted, plotted, showed the ideal Arabian hospitality in her dances. But no one made a fool of her.

Keith, however, was overwhelmed. It was his first experience with unlimited champagne, and he had thought it his duty to force it on his guests and join them in every glass. It was disgraceful to leave a heeltap. When he could no longer stand up or dance, he had to be carried upstairs, moaning: "It's a shame to desheret gush."

A boy, and drunk! And weeping, not for being drunk but for not being the last man drunk!

The world was ready for the Deluge! The American nation was rotten to the core and would crumble at the first test.

THIS dance at the RoBards home was typical, rather more respectable than many. All over town, dances were held in dance-halls where the middle classes went through the same gyrations with less grace, and in the vile dens of the Five Points where all were swine.

Patty was too tired to speak or listen when the last guest was gone. She could hardly keep awake long enough to get out of her gown.

She sighed: "I'm old! I'm ready to admit it. I'm glad I'm old. I'm never going to try to pretend again; I don't want ever to be so tired again. If anybody calls me tomorrow, I'll commit murder. In God's name, will you never get those stay-laces untied?"

RoBards drew out a knife and slashed them, and they snapped like violin strings, releasing the crowded flesh.

WALLS— (Continued from page 63)

Patty groaned with delight, and peeling off her bodice, stepped out of the petticoats and kicked them across the floor, then lifted her nightgown and let it cascade about her, and fell into bed like a young tree coming down.

Chapter Thirty

THE rest of the family might sleep its fill on the morrow, but RoBards had to go to court. Getting himself out of bed was like tearing his own flesh from the bones. He could hardly flog his body and mind to the task. If it had not been for the new shower-bath the Croton River brought to his rescue, he could never have made it.

The house looked positively obscene in the morning light, with the wreckage of the festival, and no music or laughter to redeem it. Cuff and Teen were sullen with sleepiness and the prospect of extra toil. They emphasized the fact that the dining-room carpet was too sticky and messy for endurance. RoBards' breakfast was served on the drawing-room table.

He went to court to try a case for a strange old female miser, Mrs. Roswell, whose counsel he had been for many years.

While he dealt with Mrs. Roswell professionally as if she were one of the shrewd old merchants of New York, he treated her personally with all the courtesy he displayed for more gentle females, and she was woman enough to love that. Miser that she was, she made him take higher fees than he ordinarily charged, and they saved him again and again from despair in the face of the increasing expense of his home.

In Patty's desperate eagerness to fight off retirement from the ranks of youth, she relied more and more on the dress-makers and hat-makers. She developed a passion for jewelry and she spent great sums at the daguerrian galleries. She would sit in frozen poses for five minutes at a time trying to obtain a plate that would flatter her sufficiently.

Immy fared little better there, for all her youth. And her costliness increased appallingly, for she must keep pace with the daughters of wealth. When she went shabby, it reflected on her father's love or his success, and Patty could stifle his fiercest protest by simply murmuring:

"Hasn't the poor child suffered enough without having to be denied the common necessities of a well-bred girl?"

This stung RoBards into prodigies of extravagance, and Immy's wildest recklessness took on the pathos of a frightened child fleeing from vultures of grief.

He could not even protest when he saw that she was taking up the disgusting vice of "dipping." Snuff-taking had lost its vogue among the beaux, and only the elders preferred it to smoking tobacco.

But now the women and girls were going mad over it. In the pockets of their skirts they carried great horn snuffboxes filled with the strongest Scottish weed. Stealing away from the sight of men, they



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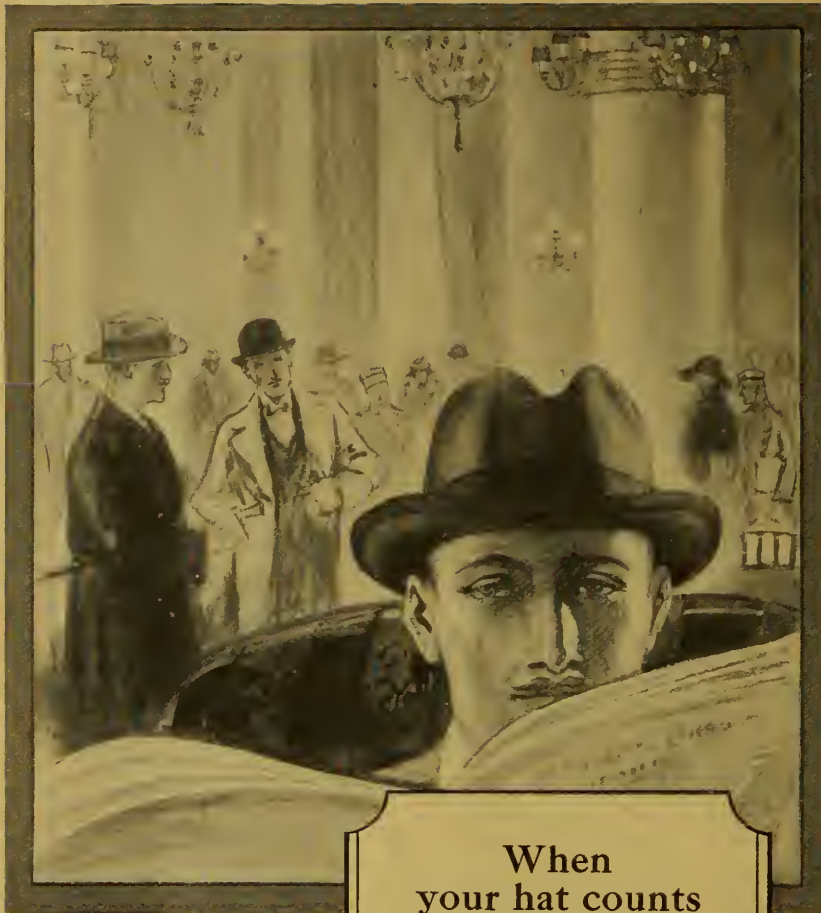
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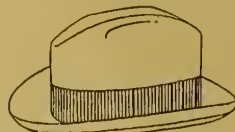


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would spread a handkerchief over their laps, open the boxes, and dipping the odious mixture on a little hickory mop, fill their pretty mouths with it and rub it on their teeth. They seemed to take some stimulus from the stuff, and the secrecy of it added a final tang. All the men were arrayed against it, but their wrath gave it the further charm of defiant wickedness.

What was getting into the women? They would not obey anybody. Since Eve had mocked God and had desired only the one forbidden fruit, they seemed determined to enjoy only what was fatal.

AND the books they read! RoBards came home one evening to find Immy in tears and Patty storming about her like a fury. When he intervened, Patty said:

"Would you see what I caught this child, devouring! Sitting with the gas blinding her and her eyes popping over this terrible story by that man Hawthorne! The title alone is enough to make a decent girl run from it. 'The Scarlet Letter.'"

RoBards shook his head. He did not read light, popular fiction. The affidavits he handled, were fiction enough for him.

Patty drew him into another room and whispered the plot of the story.

"They ought to pillory the author and sew a letter on his lapel," Patty raged. "No wonder the people of Salem put him out of office and drove him out of town." And Patty added:

"I found Immy crying over it! Crying her heart out! What can we do to save that child?"

"Ah, what can we do," RoBards groaned, "to save ourselves!"

There was something in his look that checked Patty's ire, made her blench, shiver and walk away. Perhaps she was thinking of—of what RoBards dared not remember.

That night RoBards was awakened from sleep by a bewildering dream of some one sobbing. He woke and heard sobs. They had invaded his slumber and coerced the dream.

He sat up and looked about. Patty, undressed and freezing, had glanced into the purloined romance; and it had fastened on her. She was weeping over *Hester Prynne* and her child *Pearl*, and *Dimmesdale*, the wretched partner in their expiation.

When RoBards drowsily asked what had made her cry, she sat on the edge of his bed and read to him from the story. Whether it was the contagion of her grief or the skill of the author, he felt himself driven almost to tears. He flung a blanket about Patty's quivering shoulders and clung to her, wondering at this mystery of the world—that lovers long dead in obscurity, and lovers who had never lived at all, should be made to walk so vividly through the landscapes of imagination that thousands of strangers should weep for them.

Or was it for their woes that one wept? Or for one's own in the masquerade of other names and scenes?

THE tenderest scenes of devotion and shared sorrows alternated in the RoBards household with wrangles so bitter that murder seemed to hang in the air.

Money was the root of most of the quarreling.

When RoBards was about ready to give up and sink like a broken-backed camel under the incessant rain of last straws, there came a wind out of heaven and lifted the bills like petals swept from a peach tree.

Old Mrs. Roswell was found dead in her bed one morning. RoBards grieved for the poor old skinflint, and wondered how he would get along without her fees. Then her last will was turned up, and in it she bequeathed to him ten thousand dollars in gold, and a parcel of land which she had bought in when it was sold for taxes. It lay out beyond the Reservoir on Murray's Hill, an abandoned farm.

But RoBards was to learn that wind-falls from heaven bring no permanent rescue. Patty was incensed at the thought of devoting any of that unforeseen ten thousand dollars to the payment of bills for worn-out dresses and extravagances of the past. She had given a ball for Immy on her nineteenth birthday in the desperate hope that the girl would capture a husband before she began to fade, but though there were lovers enough, none of them seemed to account her a sufficiently attractive match.

AND this was imputed as a further proof of RoBards' failure as a father. All the summer of 1853 Patty complained of the smallness of the house at Tulip-tree. The children growing up required separate rooms. They had guests, and there was no place to put them. When Immy had two visitors, and one of Keith's college friends came out to spend a week with him, the two boys had to clear a room in the hayloft. They made a lark of it, but it humiliated Patty, and she swore she would never go back to the place until RoBards added a wing to it.

To add a wing would mean the opening of the foundation and the demolition of the chimney, and the thought terrified RoBards. He had grown so used to the presence of Jud Lasher there that only some unexpected proposal of this sort wakened him to the eternal danger of a revelation all the more horrible for its delay.

Patty found so many places for the spending of his ten thousand that she could decide on none. But the politicians smelled RoBards' money, and he was visited by an affable ward-heeler with a suggestion that he accept a nomination for a judgeship in the Superior Court.

Though RoBards was revolted at the thought of receiving the ermine from hands soiled with such dirty money, his heart longed for the dignity of a judgeship, and he knew that he could never attain the bench without the consent of the politicians. Once aloft, he could purify the means by the purity of his decisions.

So he gave his consent and promised to contribute the necessary funds for the campaign. And that fall he won the election. On January first he was to mount the throne.

Patty made all manner of fun of her politician, but she took pride in his vic-



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tory and thenceforth began to call him Judge. It was a change from the ancient "Mr. RoBards," a little less distant, a little more respectful.

But RoBards noted that Immy seemed indifferent to his success or his failure. She pretended enthusiasm over his election, but her smile died almost before it was born. She was distraught, petulant, swift to anger and prompt to tears. She wept at nothing.

She took no delight even in gayety. She refused to go to dances. She denied herself to callers.

Even when snow came and brought what the foreigners called "the American pastime known as sleighing," and the bells thrilled the muffled streets with fairy jubilation, she kept the house. But the mere hint of calling in a doctor threw her into spasms of protest.

One evening when the winter night overlapped the afternoon, there came a tempest of sleet and snow, and RoBards had to call a hack to take him home from the office. He was lashed as with a cat-o'-nine tails as he ran from the curb to his door.

And what should Patty say to him when he entered the hall in a flurry of sleet, but:

"We've got to go up to Tulip-tree at once—tomorrow."

"Why? What for? For how long?"

"I don't know for how long, but we must lose no time in getting Immy out of town."

Chapter Thirty-one

ANOTHER exodus! But they were scapegoats now, fleeing into the wilderness with a mystic burden of guilt, anonymous guilt, for Immy would not speak.

Complete was the contrast between that first flight from the cholera and this fleeing where no man pursued, but all men waited. Then David and Patty RoBards were part of a stampede, striving to save their romance from the plague. Then they were bride and groom; now they carried with them a daughter, unforeseen then, but older today than her mother was when she married RoBards. But Immy's bridegroom was where? Was who?

In that other journey to Tulip-tree Farm the streets were smothered with dust and the city stifled under a rainless sky. Now there was a fog of snow. Everybody walked mincingly, except the children who rejoiced to slide on their brass-toed boots or on the sleds that ran like great prong-horned beetles among the legs of the anxious wayfarers.

The RoBards trio was glad of the snow, for it gave concealment. Immy was silent, morose, and with reason enough. To her father and mother speech was also impossible, thought almost impossible. If they had been taking Immy's dead body up to a Westchester burial, they could hardly have felt more benumbed. Only, if she had been dead, the problem of her future would have been God's. Now it was theirs.

The gamble of it was that they could not foreknow the result of this journey,

whether it would mean one more life, or one death, or two. In any case, RoBards must hasten back to his legal duties as soon as he had placed Immy on the farm. Patty must stay and share the jail-sentence with her for—how long, who could tell?

AT the railroad station they met friends, but satisfied them with a word about the charm of the country in the winter. The train plowed bravely through snow that made a white tunnel of the whole distance. The black smoke writhing in the vortex of writhing white seemed to RoBards to express something of his own chaotic thoughts. Suddenly Patty leaned close to him and brought him down to realities. She muttered:

"You must get the Albesons off the farm, somehow."

"How?"

"I don't know. You're a lawyer. Think up something. They must not stay there. They must not suspect. They know too much as it is."

"All right," he sighed. He realized the shrewdness of her wisdom, but the problem she posed dazed him. The rest of the way he beat his thought on an anvil, turning and twisting it and hammering till his brain seemed to turn red in his skull.

What simpler thing than to ask them to leave his farm? But they were such simple souls that they would be as hard to manage as sheep. And they must be sent away for a long time.

The train took them all the way to Kensico now. There was trouble about getting some one to drive them over the unbroken roads, but at length they found a man to undertake the voyage. The horses picked their way with insect-like motions, and went so slowly that the bells snapped and clinked instead of jingling. The runners of the sleigh mumbled and left long grooves in the white.

At last they were at Tulip-tree. The snow had blurred the landmarks, and the driver had to wade thigh-deep to reach the gate, and excavate a space to swing it open.

The Albesons had neither seen nor heard them come, and the pounding on the door and the stamping of feet gave them their first warning.

They were so glad of the end of their solitude, and put to such a scurry to open bedrooms and provide fires and supper, that they had little time for questions. Mrs. Albeson embraced Immy with a reminiscent pity, and praised her for putting on flesh and not looking like the picked chicken most the girls looked nowadays.

This gave RoBards his first idea, and he spoke briskly:

"She's not so well as she looks. Too much gayety in the city. Doctor says she's got to have complete rest and quiet. Mrs. RoBards and I are pretty well worn out, too; so we decided just to cut and run. Besides, I didn't like to leave the farm alone all winter."

"Alone all winter?" Albeson echoed. "Aint we here?"

"That's what I came up to see you about. I have a client who lent a big sum of money on a Georgia plantation, slaves and crops and all. He's afraid he's been

swindled—afraid the land's no good—wants an honest opinion from somebody that knows soil when he sees it. So I'm sending you. And I'm sending your wife along to keep you out of mischief."

"But Georgia! Gosh, that's a million miles, aint it?"

"It's nothing. You get the railroad part of the way. And it's like summer down there."

The farmer and his wife and Patty and Immy all stared at RoBards, and he felt as if he were staring at himself. The odd thing about it was that the inspiration had come to him while he was on his feet talking. He thought best when he was on his feet talking. That was his native gift, and his legal practice had developed it.

While he had sat in the train and in the sleigh and cudged his wits, nothing happened. Yet all the while there was indeed a client of his anxious about a remote investment. He only remembered him when he began to talk.

The Albesons were more afraid of this expedition into the unknown than if they had been asked to join the vain expedition Mr. Grinnell had recently sponsored to search the Arctic Zone for Sir John Franklin and his lost crew. But RoBards forced his will upon theirs, and after a day or two of bullying carried the two old babes to New York and across the ferry and put them on a New Jersey Railroad train.

AND now he had exiled the two most dangerous witnesses—at an appalling expense. But if it saved Immy from bankruptcy, it was an investment in destiny. RoBards had nothing more to do but wait, tell lies to those who asked where he had hidden his wife and daughter, and wonder what might be the outcome of all this conspiracy.

In the meanwhile he was installed as Judge, and Patty was not there to see! Keith was in Columbia and much puzzled by the absence of his mother and sister, and his father's restlessness.

On one of RoBards' visits to Tulip-tree, Patty said with a dark look and a hesitant manner:

"David, I've been thinking."

That word "David" made him lift his head with eagerness. She went on:

"You remember how good Doctor Matson was when poor Papa died? How he helped us— I was wondering—don't you suppose if you asked him now—he always liked Immy, you know—and—if you appealed to him—"

RoBards groaned aloud with horror.

"Hush! In God's name! Would you ask a judge to compound a felony—to connive at murder?"

"Oh," Patty sighed, "I forgot. You used to be a father, and now you are a judge."

The little laugh that rattled in her throat was the most bloodcurdling sound he had ever heard.

Its mockery of his ignoble majesty pursued him everywhere he went. He heard it when he sat on the bench and glowered down at the wretches who came before him with their pleading counselors. It made a vanity of all dignity, of justice. And what was "justice," indeed, but a crime against the



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helpless? First their passions swept them into deeds they did not want to commit; then other men seized them and added disgrace to remorse.

Which was the higher duty—the father's to fight the world for his young, or the judge's to defend an imaginary ideal against the laws of mercy? His soul was in utter disarray and he found only shame whichever way he turned. He went back to the country perplexed to a frenzy.

Patty greeted him with such a look as a sick she-wolf would give the mate that slunk about the den where her young were whimpering. She would not let him see his daughter.

He retreated to his library and was too dispirited to build a fire. He stood in the bitter cold and stared through a frost-film at the forlorn moon shivering in the steel-blue sky above an ice-incrusted world.

ROBARDS was shaken from his torpor by a cry, a lancinating shriek, by cry upon cry. He ran like a man shot full of arrows, but the door was locked and Patty called to him to go away. He went back to his library as an old horse returns to its stall from habit.

He paced the floor and stood at the window, guiltily observing the road to see if anyone had heard the clamor and come to ask if murder were being done. But no one moved. Even the shadows were still, frozen to the snow. Not an owl hunted; not a field-mouse scuttered. The moon seemed not to budge. She was but a spot of glare-ice on a sky tingling with stars.

The room was dead with old air. His brow burned. Clutching the whimpering child to him, he flung up the window and gulped the fresh wind that flowed in. The jar of the casement shook down snow, and it sifted across the sill to the carpet.

On his sleeve a few flakes rested and did not melt. Their patterns caught his attention. The wonder of snow engaged his numbed mind.

The air had been clear. And then suddenly there was snow. Out of nothing these little masterworks of crystal jewelry had been created, infinitesimal architecture beyond the skill of the Venetian glass-spinners or the Turkish weavers of silver. And now the flakes were blinking out, back into nothingness.

The snow had come from nowhere in armies. Each flake was an entity, unlike any other flake. And then the air had recalled it! This baby was but another snowflake. It had come from nowhere—or from where? Whither would it go if it died? For die it must, sooner or later. Invisible, visible, invisible!

What was the soul—what was the body? Who decreed these existences? How could any imaginable god build every snowflake, sketch every leaf, decide the race, the hue, the figure of every animal, bird in egg, child in woman?

If this human snowflake had been taken from a waiting multitude of unborn angels, why had God sentenced this particular soul to life imprisonment in this particular child of dishonor?

If the child died, where would it go? To hell if it were not baptized first. That was sure, if anything was sure. Yet if it were not of the elect, it would go there anyway, in spite of any saintliness of its life.

If it lived, it would join the throng of illegitimate children. Of these there were a thousand a year born in New York alone!

And what would its future be? It might become a thief, a murderer. It might be sentenced to death for crime.

If RoBards continued his career as a judge, he would have many death-sentences to pass. This child might come before him some day.

This snowflake ought to go back to the invisible. Its existence was God's crime against his child. Well, he could be a god himself and by the mere tightening of his fingers about that little wax-doll throat, fling it back at God, rejected, broken—a toy that he refused to play with.

If God wanted to punish him for it forever—why, what of that? He had committed one murder already and was already damned, no doubt. And even God could not increase infinite torment or multiply eternity.

He laughed at the infernal mathematics of that conceit. He felt as haughty as Lucifer challenging Jehovah. Yes, he would force his way into that birth chamber and do his terrible duty.

The onset of this madness set him in motion. He had not realized how long he had stood still before that open window and that bleak white desert, where it had now grown too cold to snow, too cold for a wind—grim cold like a lockjaw.

WHEN he turned to pace the floor, his legs were mere crutches, his feet stump-ends. It hurt to walk. He stood still and thought again.

Yes, yes! All he had to do was to close his hand upon that tiny windpipe. It would be no more than laying hold of a pen and signing a warrant of arrest, a warrant of death. The same muscles, the same gesture. It would not be murder, simply an eviction—dispossess proceedings against an undesirable tenant, a neighbor that would not keep the peace.

With one delicate act of his good right hand he could rescue Immy from a lifetime of skulking, at the same time save this poor little innocent doomed petitioner from slinking crying down the years. He could save Patty from a lifetime of obloquy and humiliation. He could save his own name, his ancestors, his posterity and the integrity of this old house—all by one brief contraction of his fingers.

With a groan of joy in the magnificence of this supernal opportunity to be a man, a father, a god, he rehearsed the gesture, put his hand to the imaginary baby's throat.

He drove his will into his fingers. But they could not bend. His hand was frozen.

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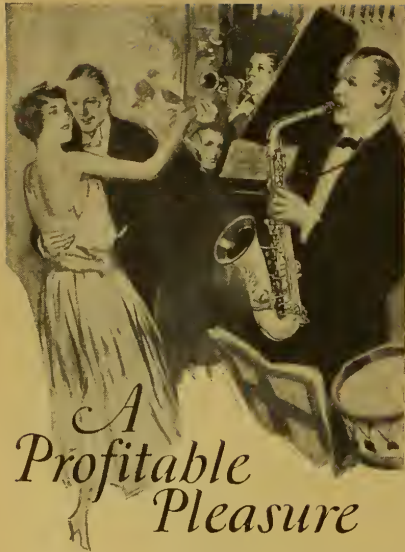
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CULTIVATE YOUR MUSICAL BUMP

THE OWL

(Continued from page 82)

Harden searched the editorial columns. Nothing there to account for the rector's congratulations. He did not want Grant congratulating him, anyhow, he thought irritably. His church ought to come off that downtown corner and take a site in the residential district.

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me while I look into this," he said, and hung up the receiver. He pressed his desk button.

"Get me the last edition of the *Ray*," he snapped to the girl who appeared. Then he lifted the receiver and told the telephone girl to summon Henderson at once. In another moment Bainbridge was on the line. Bainbridge was organizing the street-railways deal, and Harden did not permit him to show himself around the building. Bainbridge's tone was full of suppressed fury.

"What's the meaning of this street-car stuff in today's paper? Have you gone crazy? The *Ray* makes me out a crook."

"I haven't seen today's paper. Call me in half an hour."

"Haven't seen it? When it says that the consolidation is an attempt to finish the throttling of the people. There's a crazy man loose in your office."

"I can't discuss this on the wire. Come around and see me."

Harden snatched the paper from the office-boy's hands and shook it open to the editorial page. He read only one or two sentences of the leading article; then his hand flew to the telephone.

"Get me Chandler at the *Ray* in a hurry."

WHEN the city editor answered, Harden had difficulty in speaking. He had finished the editorial by then.

"How is the edition? I want to stop the presses."

"They stopped five minutes ago, Mr. Harden. We are off for the day unless they start again. There's a big jump in street-sales, and the press-room is holding the crew for another run. We've sold two thousand extra already, for some reason."

"Not another paper goes out. Send downstairs, go yourself and—"

He paused. He knew it was no use. The whole edition, and thousands of extra papers were in the homes, broadcast. Hanging up the receiver, he read the article again to appraise the extent of the mischief, unconscious of the presence of Henderson, who had come in unannounced and was standing across the desk.

"The *Ray's* editorial page from now on will be for free, frank and honest discussion of city affairs," he read. "We shall not go to Russia or Korea for topics. There is enough evil in our own city to keep this paper busy for months to come. We cannot lay down the program in detail at this time, but the *Ray* intends to fight for the tenement-bill, clean milk and above all, transportation-reform. It will expose the traction monopoly with all the forces of modern publicity, backed by unlimited funds—"

Harden looked up and saw Henderson. "Where did this damned thing come from? Who wrote it? How did it get into my paper?"

"I don't know, sir. What are you talking about?"

"This editorial!" shouted Harden, putting a pink finger on the offending paragraphs.

"Oh, editorial? How should I know?" Henderson's tone was cool, and his manner to the owner was insolent. "I don't read the editorials."

"You don't read the editorials?" Harden sat back in his chair and regarded his young managing editor with amazement and anger. Here was a new type of newspaper man. Meanwhile Henderson sat down on the other side of the flat-topped desk, lighted a cigarette and picked up the paper.

"No, I don't read them," he observed. "You have always taken charge of them. You can't have two bosses on a thing like that, and I have enough to do to look out for the news. It's my end that's getting you your circulation and your advertising. Your editorials are no good."

Henderson ran through the article; then he tossed the paper on the desk and grinned at his employer.

"That's the best thing the *Ray* has ever printed," he said. At that moment he looked as young as a schoolboy to Harden, but the next his eyes had changed until they were cold and menacing, and his curved mouth straightened into a line. He leaned across the desk.

"Are you going to follow it up?" he asked.

"That's nothing to you!" Harden exclaimed. "I want you to get the man who wrote that and bring him here. I want the satisfaction of firing that gentleman myself."

"You can't do anything to him." Henderson's voice was velvety, although he felt a great rage rising inside.

"I can't, eh? I'll ruin him in the newspaper business."

Henderson flared up at that.

"Look here!" he said. "Don't you know that this thing is done and that you might as well burn your plant down as try to crawl from under—*now*? You've got to stand for it. Clegg has shoved you into a damned good thing."

"Clegg! That's the man, eh? He is the one who did this? Revenge, eh? He wandered out to my house last night looking like a tramp—wanted to talk policy, asked for more money. I told him to see you about the money. I thought he was crazy."

Henderson thrust his hands into his pockets, for he felt a strong desire to use them on his employer's neck.

"No use to talk that way, Harden," he said quietly, fixing the other with his eyes. "You've done all you'll ever do to Clegg."

"Have I? Even if he's already quit, I'll fix him with other papers."

"Clegg's dead!" Henderson informed the owner of the *Ray* bluntly.

Harden's forehead was a mass of per-

spiration-beads that rolled down his face and into the corners of his thin-lipped mouth.

"Dead?" he repeated dully.
 "Yes; you killed him," Henderson added; then he went on slowly: "Mrs. Clegg telephoned to me just before I left the office. Clegg went home today and collapsed. Crumpled up—died! And nobody there with his wife and a child that may die at any moment unless she gets skilled nursing. I saw him when he came in this morning; I saw he was all used up. And I said to myself, 'The old man's killing Clegg,' and let it go at that. I didn't realize the job was so nearly done."

Henderson turned away abruptly and strode to a window, where he stood staring down at the street. Finally he turned again to the figure at the desk.

"There's only one way you can square yourself. Take the program that Clegg has left you, and carry it out. I can get you a man to do the work; and you've got to pay Mrs. Clegg for the start her dead husband has given this paper on the right road. That's final. The *Press* wants me. I can take this story over there. They'll fall for it—hard. It sounds like blackmail, but I'm going to see this thing through. Do you come through, or do I go to the *Press* tomorrow?"

THERE was no answer from Harden. He sat crumpled in his chair.

"I had Clegg's doctor on the wire," Henderson went on. "He gave me the old boy's last words, something about being an owl when he wanted to be an eagle, and something about saving the *Ray* and saving you from making a big mistake. He didn't say much. It was his heart that took him off at the last."

Still no reply from the man at the desk, who had become little and old.

"I'll tell you what Clegg said to his wife," Henderson continued, "—that it had been worth while to be a newspaper man, that younger men would benefit from his work. I didn't know what he meant until I came over here and saw that editorial. Now I know."

Harden rose unsteadily.
 "Come and see me tomorrow, Henderson. Don't do anything about leaving the paper. I want you to stay. I can't talk about this any longer today." His voice wandered off into flatness.

Henderson stood very close to him. Enough of his original rage remained to give him, still, a surplus of confidence.

"How about this guy Bainbridge? I saw him stick his face in the door only two minutes ago. He is waiting to see you."

"Never mind about him. I'll take care of him. What do you know about Bainbridge?"

"I know all about him. I'm loaded for him. What are you going to do about him?"

Harden tried to smile, found it no use and laid an appealing hand on the younger man's arm.

"You tell Bainbridge as you go out. Tell him I can't see him. Say to him that what he reads in the *Ray* goes from now on."

"You mean that?"
 Harden nodded. "I mean it. You put a man on the editorials who can carry



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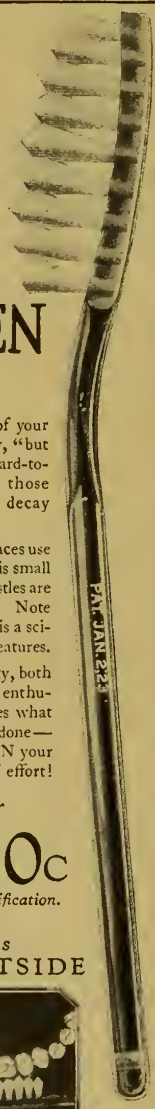
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out our new program alone. I'll be too busy to supervise his work. And you might send a photographer and a reporter out to get some human-interest stories on the slum-elimination project."

In one stride Henderson crossed the room and flung open the door. But a sharp word from Harden stopped him.

He looked back. The little old man was standing behind his desk, straining forward as though afraid his editor would escape before it was all perfectly clear.

"Make Bainbridge understand," he said. "Whatever he sees in the *Ray* from now on—goes. And, Henderson, leave me Mr. Clegg's home address."

ROLLO PODMARSH COMES TO

(Continued from page 57)

don't speak of her like that!" Mrs. Willoughby reproved him.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't blame her, I suppose. No doubt her motives were good. But the fact remains—"

"Rollo, you're too absurd."

"But the arrowroot tasted rummy."

"I never knew you could be such an idiot," said his exasperated sister with sisterly outspokenness. "I thought you would think it quaint. I thought you would roar with laughter."

"I did—till I remembered about the rummy of the arrowroot."

Mrs. Willoughby uttered an impatient exclamation and walked away.

ROLLO PODMARSH stood on the tenth tee, a volcano of mixed emotions. Mechanically he pulled out his pipe and lit it. But he found that he could not smoke. In this supreme crisis of his life, tobacco seemed to have lost its magic. He put the pipe back in his pocket and gave himself up to his thoughts. Now terror gripped him—anon a sort of gentle melancholy. It was so hard that he should be compelled to leave the world just as he had begun to hit 'em right.

And then in the welter of his thoughts there came one of practical value—to wit, that by hurrying to the doctor's without delay, he might yet be saved. There might be antidotes.

He turned to go—and there was Mary Kent standing beside him with her bright, encouraging smile.

"I'm sorry I kept you so long," she said. "It's your honor. Fire away, and remember that you've got to do this nine in fifty-three at the outside."

Rollo's thoughts flitted wistfully to the snug surgery where Doctor Brown was probably sitting at this moment surrounded by the finest antidotes.

"Do you know, I think I ought to—" "Of course you ought to," said Mary. "If you did the first nine in forty-six, you can't possibly take fifty-three coming in."

For one long moment Rollo continued to hesitate—a moment during which the instinct of self-preservation seemed as if it must win the day. All his life he had been brought up to be nervous about his health, and panic gripped him. But there is a deeper, nobler instinct than that of self-preservation, the instinctive desire of a golfer who is at the top of his form, to go on and beat his medal-score record. And little by little this grand impulse began to dominate Rollo. If, he felt, he went off now to take antidotes, the doctor might possibly save his life; but reason told him that never again would he be likely to do the first nine in forty-six. He would have to start all over afresh.

Rollo Podmarsh hesitated no longer. With a pale, set face, he teed up his ball and drove.

IF I were telling this story to a golfer instead of to an excrescence—I use the word in the kindest spirit—who spends his time messing about on a bowling-green, nothing would please me better than to describe shot by shot Rollo's progress over the remaining nine holes. Epics have been written with less material. I would speak of his iron-shot on the dog-leg hole, the masterful plonk with the brassie which put him pin-high on the twelfth, his approach-putt on the fifteenth. But these details would, I am aware, be wasted on you. Let it suffice that by the time his last approach trickled onto the eighteenth green, he had taken exactly fifty shots.

"Three for it!" said Mary Kent. "Steady now. Take it quite easy, and be sure to lay your second dead."

It was prudent counsel, but Rollo was now thoroughly above himself. He had got his feet wet in a puddle on the sixteenth, but he did not care. His winter woolies seemed to be lined with ants, but he ignored them. All he knew was that he was on the last green in ninety-six, and he meant to finish in style. No tame three putts for him. His ball was five yards away, but he aimed for the back of the hole and brought his putter down with a whack. Straight and true the ball sped, hit the dish, jumped high in the air, and fell into the hole with a rattle.

"Oh!" cried Mary.

Rollo Podmarsh wiped his forehead and leaned dizzily on his putter. For a moment, so intense is the fervor induced by the game of games, all he could think of was that he had gone round in ninety-seven. Then, as one waking from a trance, he began to appreciate his position. The fever passed, and a clammy dismay took possession of him. He had achieved his life's ambition, but what now? Already he was conscious of a curious discomfort within him. He felt as he supposed Italians of the Middle Ages must have felt after dropping in to take pot-luck with the Borgias. It was hard. He had gone round in ninety-seven, but he could never take the next step in the career which he had mapped out in his dreams—the money-match with the lumbago-stricken Colonel Bodger.

Mary Kent was fluttering round him, bubbling congratulations, but Rollo sighed. "Thanks," he said. "Thanks very much. But the trouble is, I'm afraid I'm going to die almost immediately. I've been poisoned!"

"Poisoned!" "Yes. Nobody is to blame. Every-

thing was done with the best intentions. But the fact remains."

"But I don't understand."

Rollo explained. Mary listened pallidly.

"Are you sure?" she gasped.

"Quite sure," said Rollo gravely. "The arrowroot tasted rummy."

"But arrowroot always does."

Rollo shook his head.

"No," he said. "It tastes like warm blotting-paper, but not rummy."

Mary was sniffing.

"Don't cry," urged Rollo tenderly. "Don't cry."

"But I must. And I've come out without a handkerchief."

"Permit me," said Rollo, producing one of her best from his left breast-pocket.

"I wish I had a powder-puff," said Mary.

"Allow me," said Rollo. "And your hair has become a little disordered. If I may—" And from the same reservoir he drew a handful of hairpins.

Mary gazed at these exhibits with amazement.

"But—but these are mine," she exclaimed.

"Yes. I sneaked them from time to time."

"But why?"

"Because I loved you," said Rollo. And in a few moving sentences which I will not trouble you with, he went on to elaborate this theme.

Mary listened with her heart full of surging emotions which I cannot possibly go into if you persist in looking at that damned watch of yours. The scales had fallen from her eyes. She had thought slightly of this man because he had been a little overcareful of his health; and all the time he had had within him the potentiality of heroism! Something seemed to snap inside her.

"Rollo!" she cried, and flung herself into his arms.

"Mary!" muttered Rollo, gathering her up.

"I TOLD you it was all nonsense," said Mrs. Willoughby, coming up at this tense moment and going on with the conversation where she had left off. "I've just seen Letty, and she said she meant to put you out of your misery, but the chemist wouldn't sell her any poison, so she let it go."

Rollo disentangled himself from Mary. "What!" he cried.

Mrs. Willoughby repeated her remarks. "You're sure?" he said.

"Of course I'm sure."

"Then why did the arrowroot taste rummy?"

"I made inquiries about that. It seems that Mother was worried about your taking to smoking, and she found an advertisement in one of the magazines—'The Tobacco Habit Cured in Three Days,' by a secret method without the victim's knowledge. It was a gentle, safe, agreeable method of eliminating the nicotine poison from the system, strengthening the weakened membranes and overcoming the craving, so she put some in your arrowroot every night."

There was a long silence. To Rollo Podmarsh it seemed as though the sun



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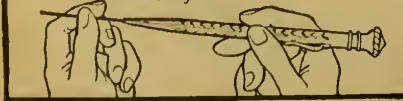
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had suddenly begun to shine, the birds to sing, and the grasshoppers to toot. All Nature was one vast substantial smile. Down in the valley by the second hole he caught sight of Wallace Chesney's plus fours gleaming as their owner stooped to play his shot, and it seemed to him that he had never in his life seen anything so lovely.

"Mary," he said in a low, vibrant voice, "will you wait here for me? I want to go into the clubhouse for a moment."

"To change your wet shoes?"

"No!" thundered Rollo. "I'm never

going to change my wet shoes again in my life!" He felt in his pocket and hurled a box of patent pills far into the undergrowth. "But I *am* going to change my winter woolies. . . . And when I've put those dashed barbed-wire entanglements into the clubhouse furnace. I'm going to phone to old Colonel Bodgers. I hear his lumbago's worse than ever. I'm going to fix up a match with him for fifty cents a hole. And if I don't lick the boots off him, you canbreak the engagement."

"My hero!" murmured Mary.

Rollo kissed her, and with long, resolute steps strode to the clubhouse.

MARRIAGE AND MISTER MUNGO

(Continued from page 85)

"You mean *blanched*."

"Yes, blenched, never even blenched, old fellow. He simply replied, with the most superb dignity: 'Mr. Toomuch, my intentions are strictly honorable.' And before he could say another word, the old wuffian bellowed out that *his* intentions were strictly honorable, too, and that they were never to allow old Mungo across his threshold again; and with that he hit him a knock with his bwoot of an embrella and pitched him down the steps and followed him down and hit him again and flung him out the gate!"

Filgate ceased to stare at me with a note of exclamation in each eye. I directed a dull and boring gaze upon Filgate.

Filgate sighed and continued:

"Well, that was his second attempt at getting married, old fellow. He was so shaken he had to take a week of his holiday to get over it. He spent nearly all the time with Plain Jane, and bay Juve, she was splendid; she comforted him like anything. She pointed out that quite a large number of fathers were perfect old bwoots about their daughters getting engaged, and poor old Mungo said he saw where he had made the mistake, and started out at once to look for a girl who hadn't got a father.

"Well, he found one, old fellow. Her name was Laura Larder, and her mother was a widow. Bay Juve, old fellow, you never saw anyone catch fire so quick as old Mungo did over Laura. He showed me some of his letters to her, and I assure you most solemnly it was a mystery to me they didn't go off in your hand. Bay Juve, you never could have imagined such a tragedy. All through her not having a father, too—that was the terrific part of it.

"The mother was out for another one, if you follow me, old fellow, and when poor old Mungo came along, she went all out for him. Poor old Mungo hadn't an idea of it. All he felt was that, after his experience with that old bwoot of a parent at Streatham, the wise thing was to pay every kind of attention to the parent in this case. So he did; and Laura's mother took the attentions in the wrong way; and all of a sudden poor old Mungo realized what was up, and what a perfectly frightful position he'd landed himself in. Once he realized it, he got into such a state that every single word

he said to the mother sounded to him like a proposal of marriage. He was in such a whirl and such a tremor that he scarcely knew what he was doing, and at last the most fearful thing happened. He proposed to Laura, choosing a day when the mother was out, and she accepted him; and then, as he was leaving, he unexpectedly ran into the mother in the garden, and what with being flustered and frightened and one thing and another, in trying to tell her, it seems that in some extraordinary way he proposed to her too. Anyway, she took it for that, and accepted him, and he tottered out of the gate somehow, and there he was, engaged to both the daughter and the mother!

"You know, he went straight up to Highgate pond to chuck himself in—and did, too, the splendid old fellow; and a bwoot of a dog followed him to rescue him, a great big bwoot of a retriever, and kept on biting him when he tried to sink; and people collected on the bank and cheered; and at last he had to get out, and was arrested, by a wuffian of a park keeper, not for being in the pond himself—that was the cruel part of it—but for permitting a dog in a bathing pool.

"There were two most positively awful letters waiting for him when he got home next day, from Mrs. Larder and Laura, and a little later they arrived with a couple of most frightful horsewhips, to horsewhip him. Fortunately poor old Mungo was in bed then, with a high fever, and they couldn't. He was ill for weeks, and he'd ebsileetly have died if Plain Jane hadn't come and nursed him night and day."

AGAIN Filgate urged me with his eye; again I discouraged Filgate with mine. Not, however, discouraged—

"Well, there you are, old fellow," continued Filgate. "That was three times he'd tried like anything to get married; and as soon as ever Plain Jane had set him on his legs again, and comforted him and advised him, he went straight off again and found another girl. She—"

At this point, "Filgate," I interposed firmly, "are you sleeping here, at the club?"

"Oh, no, old fellow. I live—"

"Well, no more am I. Is there much more of it?"

"Ew, rather, old fellow. Rather! Why, that's only three. He tried seven times, altogether. Must you really go? Bay Juve, I wish you wouldn't. I do wish you'd just hear about the others, old fellow. There's a most awful lot of wubbish talked about how any man can find hundreds of girls to marry if he really likes, and poor old Mungo's case just shows what wubbish it is."

I REMEMBERED that this appalling rigmarole had been unloaded on me because I had sternly taken Filgate to task for remaining unmarried. This is the heavy, superior tone that I always present to Filgate, and I was not going to let him escape by means of the misfortunes of the miserable Mungo. I spoke:

"Far from being rubbish, Filgate, what is said about the ease with which any man can find a suitable mate is only proved by the story of your friend Mungo. Here was this foolish fellow chasing about after this girl and after that girl and after the other girl—after no fewer than seven entirely unsuitable girls; and all the time his obvious mate, his ideal partner, is under his very nose. Here is a sterling and estimable woman, to whom he takes all his troubles, all his afflictions, who listens to them, who comforts him, who, with complete and devoted self-abnegation, advises him—"

"Well, but dash it all, man—" said Filgate.

"Be silent, Filgate. I mean, of course, this sterling character, this typical woman in the highest and best sense of that beautiful word, to whom you so unworthily and flippantly give the name of Plain Jane. Plain Jane! What if—"

"Well, but dash it all, man—" said Filgate.

"Silence, Filgate! What if she is not superficially beautiful? Let me tell you Filgate, that beauty is a dross, a froth, a negligible film, a useless and a perishable possession. It is character that matters, character, soul, spirit. That is the jewel a man should seek in his mate, Filgate, and that is the jewel this Plain Jane has so dazzlingly exhibited before the prurient eyes of your misguided friend—"

"Well, but dash it all, man—" said Filgate.

"Do not argue, Filgate. Do not seek to bolster up your own shirking of the married state by pitiful evasions for your friend Mungo. I feel most deeply and profoundly for this Plain Jane. Had you, Filgate, a spark of imagination, you would be acutely moved, as I am acutely moved, to picture this fine girl's desolation as time after time this Mungo brought his rejection to her, and time after time left her to seek—"

"Well, but dash it all, man, he couldn't marry Plain Jane."

"Why? Why not? Why, sir? What was there about Plain Jane that—"

"Why, Plain Jane's his sister, man. Didn't I tell you that?"

"No, Filgate, you most certainly and emphatically did not tell me that. Another time you start one of your infernal yarns, perhaps you'll have the common intelligence to— Dash you, Filgate— Good night be dashed—"

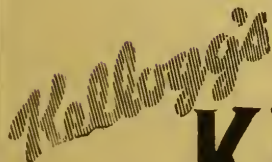


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FIRES OF AMBITION

(Continued from page 43)

her profile eagerly. "And I'd be the one creature in the world who'd understand that you might be wrong by devilry but not by inclination."

She smiled at him. "You've guessed it, Joe. There's a little devil driving me—a little red-headed Irish imp of a satan—to find out all that there is in the world for a creature to know."

"You know what I believe a woman was meant for, Mary," he said.

"And maybe I don't agree with you," she flashed around at him with a touch of spirit. "Marriage, yes—when the time comes, Joe Bass—if the time comes; but a place in the work of the world, whether it comes or no. I'm not so delicate that I want to sit by the fire yet awhile."

He regarded her soberly.

"There'll be a fire for you to sit by, Mary," he said gently, "not right away, but soon. Maybe it will only be a gas-log, but there it will be, if you'll only come sit by it."

Her fingers in his tightened, and then relaxed as she took her hand slowly away.

"No, Joe. You mustn't be asking me that."

"Why not? It's the one thing I want most in the world—a home with you in it."

"Dear Joe! Please!"

"But you do care for me a little, Mary," he said vibrantly. "You know you always did care for me—a little."

THERE was a silence, and when she turned to him, she gave him both her hands again, and a look that glowed with a new warmth to the old affection.

"I do care for you, Joe, more than for any other man in the world," she said, "but not enough to marry you." She took her hands back and leaned forward upon her elbows, her gaze on the group of sculpture before her. "I want to be honest with you, Joe. I've got to be honest with you. You've got to understand what is passing in my mind. I can't marry you. I wouldn't marry you even if I loved you enough to—and I don't. I've got to grow, Joe. So have you. It isn't marriage that would be the best for either of us. You've got a career ahead of you, and there mustn't be any strings tied to you, even if I was worth tying them—"

"I'll take that risk."

"I wont—for you or for me either. I always said that you knew me better than anybody else in the world, better even than I knew myself; but things have changed with me—God knows whether for better or for worse. I've made the venture out into the world, and I've got to go on with it alone. I've got to get knowledge—that's culture—books, music, pictures. I'm hungry for them—and money. I've got to have money too; no one ever amounts to anything in New York unless he has money—a place in the world not bounded by the keys of a typewriter or a desk, or even—don't let me hurt you if I say it, Joe—or even a fire to sit by."

HE sat motionless, his expression falling slowly into the severe lines of the Daniel Webster countenance of which she had spoken.

"And after all that," he asked, "what?"

She turned to him slowly, a little disconcerted.

"After that—" she repeated blankly.

"Will there be happiness?" he asked slowly.

She was silent, apparently gathering her resources. To Joe Bass, all her slender frame seemed to become rigid with intention; and her words, when she spoke, were incisive and definite.

"I can think of no happiness that doesn't contain all of those things," she finished.

He made no reply. And they sat thus for a time of silence, Mary with her gaze afar and Joe in an attitude of deep thought, frowning at her profile. She stirred under his gaze, moved restlessly on the bench, then diligently studied the group of sculpture before her. An attendant came into the room, gave them a glance and passed on; but only Mary was aware of him. Joe was full of love for her, but he said no word to let her know how much what she had said had hurt him. It was Joe who first rose from the bench, looking at his watch.

"I think perhaps we'd better be going, Mary," he said quietly.

She rose and stood beside him, suddenly melted again by the pain in his eyes. And she glanced quickly to the doors right and left. The attendant had passed on. They were quite alone.

"Joe, I—I want—if it would make you happy—I'd like you to kiss me, Joe."

He stared at her for a moment as though he hadn't understood, and then caught her quickly in his arms and touched his lips to hers. She pushed him away at once, her color rising.

"There! Will you believe me now that I care for you?"

"Mary! Mary me."

"No. I marry no man, Joe, until the time comes. But until then, no man shall have what you have had. Come. It's dark already."

And so, both silent now, and subdued, they went slowly out into the Avenue which stretched, like the ambition Mary typified, from sordid beginnings through the rush of business to the region where they now walked, a place of quiet, elegance and riches.

And Joe, with the memory of her lips still on his own, had no heart for the hard things he might have meant to say to her. He had waited long and hoped always. He could still wait and hope.

Chapter Nine

BUT as a second winter passed into spring, Mary found to her confusion that her well-devised plan to put her experience with Reginald Cheever down to the account of profit and loss was less easy than she had thought. For Mr.

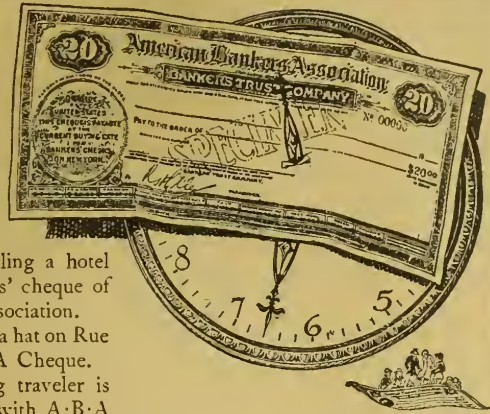
Cheever, instead of being properly rebuffed by the incident of the pin, showed unmistakable evidences of desiring to continue their relations upon whatever conditions Mary should impose. These purposes on Mr. Cheever's part did not at all fall in with Mary's plans. For the present, at least, she had nothing more to learn from the night life of New York, nor from Mr. Cheever. Music was what she wanted, pictures and books and the company of Alan Wetherby and his cultured friends who could help her to the things she wished to know. And so, much to Mr. Cheever's mystification, she spent most of her evenings in her room in the boarding-house, reading and studying the books on art which Wetherby had loaned her. She went with Miss Barnes to Carnegie Hall for the symphony concerts, and with Joe Bass in the topmost gallery of the Metropolitan to hear "Tosca" and "Madama Butterfly."

She found it difficult at times to find excuses to avoid Mr. Cheever's continued attentions. She had, it seemed, created the impression in his mind that the affair of the taxicab had put a new complexion upon their relations; one which justified her new attitude of indifference and independence. And while this was not the precise truth, since she had determined even before that event that their affair had gone far enough, she let him believe that she might have cared for him more if he had not been guilty of this mistake in judgment, which she found a convenient refuge from his further attentions. But he sent her roses and candy, and since she forbade him to join her on the street, paid her an honorable call at the boarding-house, where she received him in the front parlor, sharing his company with that of Miss Barnes, her friend from the shop, that of Mr. Wishart, who operated a chain of boot-blackening "parlors," and that of Mr. and Mrs. Pooley, who owned and ran a woolen-goods shop.

MARY hoped that this experience would effectively cure him of his infatuation; it was several months before he came again, and then she happened to be out dining again with Alan Wetherby, in whose company she had found and continued to find new sources of interest and inspiration. At his apartment, the next fall and winter, she met unusual people, painters, musicians, playwrights, an editor or two, among whom she sat and listened, absorbing like an empty sponge all that they had to give her. She had little to give in return but her beauty and her attention, but to them this seemed enough. It was not long before she had accepted an appointment to pose one Sunday morning at the studio of Wilkes Harbison, the portrait-painter whose specialty was lovely women. But most of all she still liked her employer, who was at once her mentor and father confessor. One day of spring after business hours, she told him of her imprudence in ignoring his advice about Reginald Cheever, of the incident in the taxi, and of her subsequent difficulties in keeping this persistent young man at a distance.

Wetherby gave her his whimsical smile. "Perhaps you thought I hadn't guessed the truth about Cheever. I've known from the first that you had discarded

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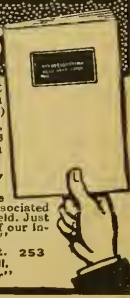
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my advice. I should have known it even if I hadn't guessed it by Mrs. Despard's excessive cordiality to you in the shop."

"You've noticed that?" asked Mary calmly.

"You have much to learn about women of Mrs. Despard's type," said Wetherby. "Your crime is that Mr. Cheever should dare to prefer you to her. Your still greater crime is in refusing the attentions of a man she has already accepted. He was good enough for her, but not good enough for you. In either event you are doomed to make an enemy. And I can assure you that Mrs. Despard is no mean enemy for any woman to have."

"I'm sorry for that," said Mary slowly. "But I won't lose any sleep over it."

"You remember I told you that your face was a dangerous asset," he remarked.

"But I've got to have a face, and it's better to have it nice-looking than plain. You told me I wouldn't be working for

you if it had been ugly. And isn't that enough to make me satisfied that I have it?"

THERE was just the suggestion of a caress in the lowering of her voice.

He leaned back easily in his chair. "All right. But you needn't waste your blarney on me. I succumbed long ago." He leaned forward suddenly and regarded her intently. "I might as well tell you what's on my mind, Mary. I've been intending for some time to have a serious talk with you."

He lighted his cigarette with the deliberateness that always characterized him.

"If I had thought in the beginning that you were a fool, I wouldn't have wasted any pains over you. I've always flattered myself on my judgment of human nature—especially feminine human nature. On it I've based my whole success in life. I



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knew from the first moment when I talked with you that you had possibilities for Madame Denise. You were young, handsome, and naturally stylish—which satisfied my esthetic sensibilities. But better than these, you were useful, intelligent and ambitious. Another girl might easily have lost her head over the admiration you’ve received. You didn’t. So far as I know, you haven’t even made an enemy among the women in the shop—which, on the whole, is rather remarkable. You’ve been with me now nearly two years. I hope you’re happy here.”

THERE seemed to be a question in his tone.

“Happy, yes. You ought to know that, Mr. Wetherby. But I couldn’t say I’d be satisfied always to remain a dress model.”

He nodded approval.

“I think I told you that I prided myself on my knowledge of feminine character. I haven’t studied you all this time for nothing. Your personal ambitions are simply enormous. If I can keep you with me, your ambitions for yourself will possibly become ambitions for Madame Denise. You are imaginative. You have taste—a sense of color. I may as well confess that your suggestions have already been of use to me.”

“They are only what I have learned from you,” she put in quietly.

“Plus a little something of your own, that none of my other girls have shown. Perhaps you thought I hadn’t noticed these things. Even Miss Benner, who prides herself upon her knowledge of my art, has spoken of it—”

“I’m very glad,” said Mary gratefully. Praise was always sweet to her ambitions. It had always been a tonic to her ambitions. “I’ve tried very hard to learn everything I could about the business—especially the last designs from Paris. They fascinate me. But I can’t see why Madame Denise shouldn’t originate as well as Paul Poiret—American styles for American women—”

“Exactly. That has always been my idea. But I will always get the benefit of what is being done in Paris, before I make my own models. Then we shall be sure we are right. I want you to know, though, that I feel that you yourself have become of value to me—that you will have a greater value. You are only twenty-two—or is it twenty-three?—but you are much older than your years.”

“Sometimes I believe I am a thousand, Mr. Wetherby,” she said.

“All women are a thousand,” he laughed. “They’re full of the wisdom of the ages. But wisdom isn’t intelligence. If you were only wise, you might be excessively uninteresting. But you’re not wise. You’re merely intelligent, and I need you to help me in this business. In short, we have reached the point, my dear, where your taste and originality have a greater value to Madame Denise than your looks.”

HE leaned back in his chair and spoke with a new deliberateness which gave his words more weight. “I am going to speak to you in the closest confidence, Mary, my dear. I have taken a real liking to you, a liking based somewhat, I’ll

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admit," he added with a smile, "upon your personality. But my liking and confidence are not without selfish motives. I want to be sure that the traditions that I have established here will be capably carried on. Mrs. Leavitt is merely a saleswoman, perhaps because she was born a lady, the best saleswoman in New York among our class of people; Miss Benner is a dressmaker capable of carrying out efficiently any suggestions that are given her. But she is perfectly helpless without the suggestions. Neither of them is an executive by nature. If I died tomorrow, I don't know who would take my place. I think in a few years the business would deteriorate and possibly go to pieces for lack of a guiding hand." He sighed, and shrugged the idea aside. "I've got to train some one to step into my shoes—some one who will develop along the lines that I have indicated. You are very young. All the better. You'll have a longer time to learn in. I don't see why that some one shouldn't be you."

"Oh, Mr. Wetherby! Do you really mean it?"

"I do. I think you have every quality for success, if you will only continue to learn as you've done already. Indeed, I don't see whom else I can rely on unless it's you."

Mary did not move, and only sat staring at her clasped hands, a little pale, a little tense, but glowing within with the excitement of the possibilities that he suggested. Her voice, when she spoke, trembled ever so little with humility.

"I—I'm glad you think I'm worthy. I'll do anything you say. I'll try very hard to do what you wish."

"Good!" said Wetherby cheerfully. "Then we will begin at once upon the great experiment. You shall have a salary adequate to your position—as a beginning. And this summer you shall go abroad with me to Paris—"

"To Paris!"

IT seemed to Mary that she had been listening as in a dream to this tale of her own good fortune, but the word *Paris* aroused her to an actual sense of her new importance in Wetherby's scheme of things. Paris! Paris! The wonder of it!

"But Miss Benner," she said, as she remembered that the forewoman had gone abroad with Wetherby only last year. "What will Miss Benner say?"

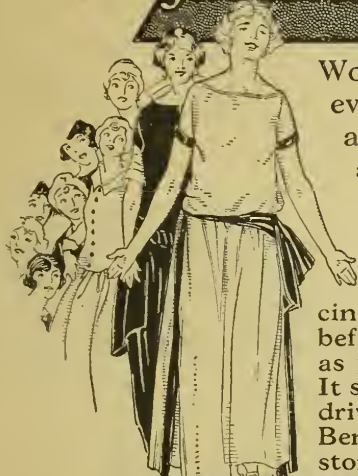
He extinguished his cigarette in the ash-tray, his brows tangling. "Miss Benner will, I think, say nothing. She is of that sort. And she is aware of her own shortcomings. This, under the circumstances, is a blessing. I shall raise her salary. I think she will be satisfied."

Mary was silent for a moment. And then:

"I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Wetherby," she said quietly.

"Oh, you needn't do that," he replied with a laugh. "I'm going to make you earn your pay. If you're going to take my place, you'll have to work very hard the way I've worked—not at the fashions alone, but at every form of culture that will help your sensibilities to beauty; and I,"—he rose and shook his slender shoulders more comfortably into his

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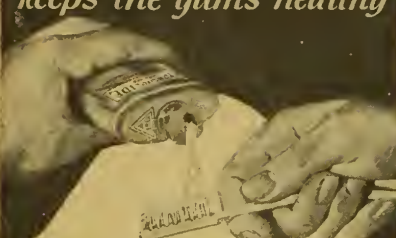
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He laughed. Mary didn't. It is doubtful even if she heard him. Already her mind was planning adroitly for the future; she had not dared to hope to go so far so soon.

“Of course I accept, Mr. Wetherby,” she said slowly. “It has been wonderful, what you've done for me. I will try to justify your good opinions. I *am* ambitious. If I don't succeed in what you want me to do, it won't be because I don't try. I've been thinking of ways to increase the number of your customers,” she finished with a smile. “You know there are women in New York with taste so depraved that they prefer Lucille Dunois and Madame Gaillard—the beautiful Mrs. Knorr, for instance, Mrs. Vanderhorst, the Gordon-Knights.” She paused and raised the knuckles of one hand to her chin in an attitude of meditation. “I wonder whether my entrance into certain of these houses on a purely social basis wouldn't be helpful to Madame Denise.”

Wetherby glanced at her shrewdly, his lip quivering in a smile. He read her mental processes without difficulty.

“I should like to see you try your experiment,” he commented. “Things have changed, of late years. Society has gone into trade. Why shouldn't trade go into society?”

“I hadn't thought of these distinctions,” said Mary, frowning.

He laughed and turned aside. “Perhaps they aren't so real as they used to be.”

“I am not afraid to try,” she declared.

THE conversation ended there, but all that night and the next day, Mary turned her problems over in her mind. Her second step upon the social ladder had been achieved with such ridiculous ease! Already, in less than three years! She was now, to all intents and purposes, a manager of the concern; but what Mr. Wetherby said about social distinctions troubled her. He had visualized for her the unattainable, a fiction that she had never recognized. He had set a boundary to her ambitions—a thing that had no existence for her.

But she was not long deterred. Her plans took definite form a few afternoons later when Mr. Cheever called her up and asked her to go for a motor-ride. She had refused him often lately. This time she accepted, for a week ago she had seen in the social columns of a newspaper an account of the garden-fête to be given in June at Wyanoke, the Vanderhorsts' estate in the country. So now the arrows of Mary's destiny seemed to point unerringly upon the course that she should take.

Cheever stopped for her at the shop, and even before they started, Mary lost no time in bringing the conversation to the topic which was most in her mind. She had always wanted to see the inside of Mrs. Vanderhorst's studio. Mrs. Vanderhorst *did* receive visitors, didn't

she—the public, even, who wanted to see her collections. Mr. Cheever knew her so well. He had often said how much Mrs. Vanderhorst liked to meet new people, people that were interesting or interested. It would be lovely of Mr. Cheever if he drove her out to Wyanoke and they just dropped in informally for a few minutes at the studio of the talented lady.

After a moment of incertitude, Cheever assented. He didn't much care where they went, if Mary would only go with him. If Ruth was not busy, she might consent to see them. No harm trying, at any rate.

MARY'S luck held. When they drove up to the studio, which had been added to a wing of the house, Mrs. Vanderhorst's model was just leaving. Cheever sent in his name by a maid; and she sent out word that he should come in for tea. He did not think it necessary to mention that he had a companion.

They found her in an armchair, her painting-smock well smudged with the labors of the day, smoking the cigarette of relaxation and accomplishment, her half-finished tea on a tabourette beside her.

“Well, Reggie—of all people!” she greeted him. “What on earth—”

“We were just driving by and thought we'd stop in. Miss Ryan—Mrs. Vanderhorst.”

Mary emerged from the shadows as their hostess rose, offering her hand.

“Miss Ryan—oh, of course. Delighted! —Tea, Stryker. Wont you sit down?”

“I'm so afraid we're intruding,” said Mary quietly, “but I'd heard so much about your work—from Mr. Harbison—”

“Oh, you know Wilkes? Nice boy, isn't he? And so very successful!”

“Yes, very.”

Mary felt Mrs. Vanderhorst's gaze fasten upon her, puzzled and intensely curious. At least she hadn't made a negative impression. She was soon to realize the positive quality of Ruth Vanderhorst's appraisal, for the puzzled look vanished in a ringing laugh.

“Miss Ryan—Reggie's Miss Ryan,” she said with a mischievous glance at Cheever. “I've heard of you—from Phil Despard. I think.”

And then as Reginald Cheever signaled to her, she made a quick transition which removed Mary's awkward moment. “My dear child, you are very nice-looking. Hener would have adored you. *Vrai type irlandais, n'est-ce pas?* Surely Wilkes is painting you. He's a fool if he isn't, if you'll let him.”

“He has done my portrait—for the Academy.”

“I'm simply furious at Wilkes for seeing you first,” declared Mrs. Vanderhorst, “—furious at you too, Reggie, for not bringing her out to me before. You *will* pose for me, though, wont you, my dear? That hair against that gray-green Japanese embroidery, just as you're sitting. *Ravissant!* Wont you—sometime soon?”

“I should be delighted—any time,” said Mary.

Mary had planned the first part of the conversation with some care, but it was

now quite out of hand, though going much to her liking. She hadn't understood the mention of Mr. Despard's name, a man whom she had never met. She thought it advisable for the moment not to be too curious. And Mrs. Vanderhorst's precipitancy gave little opportunity to question.

The maid brought forward a silver service, which she placed conveniently by.

"Of course any friend of Reggie's is a friend of mine. Two lumps? Lemon? It's really very nice of you to come in this way. I like to meet people when I'm dirty. It's more—er—intimate somehow, closer to the soil. I like people who work. You work for your living, don't you?"

"I'm a dress model," replied Mary coolly, "with Madame Denise."

She had decided on that confession long ago, but there seemed little about her of which Mrs. Vanderhorst wasn't aware.

"Reggie, you're a fearfully canny person—and just a trifle selfish, keeping Miss Ryan all to yourself—"

"Hang it! I wish I could," he said frankly. "This is the first time I've seen Miss Ryan in a month. She's the most exclusive person I know."

"I hope she won't exclude me," said their hostess.

"I think Mr. Cheever exaggerates. I'm very busy."

"I'm sure you know how to manage him. He's been riding on a loose snaffle for so long that he doesn't understand the curb."

THE terms were foreign to Mary, but she understood their significance and thanked her hostess with a smile. Mrs. Vanderhorst had, it seemed, a prescience all her own. Mary admired her. She breathed deeply and seemed instinct with large motives. However little Cheever may have cared for the accuracy of her vision, he only laughed.

"I'm sure," he said gallantly, "that Miss Ryan could drive me any way she choose—if she would only drive me at all."

Mary thought that she liked him better at that moment even than when he had been suffering the martyrdom of the boarding-house parlor.

"Maybe it's better for me to be driving than you, Mr. Cheever," she said quietly.

"You see how it is, Ruth," complained Cheever in mock hopelessness. "I've lain down, rolled over, played dead, jumped through—and now she tells me that I'd better still keep on doing all those things."

"Quite right," said Ruth approvingly. "The triumph of mind over matter."

"Oh, I say!" said Mr. Cheever.

They had a laugh at that, over their tea, but there was a little too much of the truth in his confession to be so lightly regarded. At least Mr. Cheever was beginning to think so. But he was secretly delighted at Ruth Vanderhorst's interest in her visitor. It was an indorsement of his own good taste, and the approbation of Ruth Vanderhorst was worth having.

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THE POM AND THE PARROT

(Continued from page 31)



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were calling—even if she didn't understand Italian. It was "Earthquake! Earthquake!" And she remembered reading of the terrible ones they'd had here, and how one almost destroyed the city of Messina, not so very long ago. And the driver had shown her what it had done, for that matter, coming out the day before.

The square was full of people when she got there—rushing around and calling out and shrieking "*Madommal! Madommal!*" and falling on their knees. They were all dressed, or nearly all, she saw, except her. For they get up at an outlandish hour there, in those country places—everybody.

And then all at once a second shock came, and back of her one building went down—a very old and rickety one, or so it looked, as it was falling. It didn't fall out, the way you'd expect, and topple over, but it went right down straight. And then where there had been a building, there was just a rough pile of stones, with white dust blowing up over it.

And at that, naturally, Spinks Beaufort came out a little farther into the square—as soon as she could walk straight. But the rest all hurried over to the other side of the place where the church was. And every new one that came running, fell forward on his knees—just naturally, like a sea-bird lighting on the water. And some of them were walking on their knees toward the church—not getting up at all. And all the women and a great many of the men were calling:

"*Salve mi! Salve mi! Madonna mia!*"

And before she knew it, hardly, a half-dozen men had plunged through the church door, which stood open, as it always did, and were coming out with a kind of platform on their shoulders with an image on it—a red and blue and ivory image with a gold crown on its head. And they started marching with it—the others getting up from their knees and following slowly, shouting and praying and crying.

"Did you ever see anything like that in your life?" said Spinks Beaufort to the Pom, for she stood there so fascinated that she forgot even to be afraid—forgot she was the only one who was standing and wasn't following, and praying. But then she looked around, and—no, there was one other, a man, who stood a little ahead of her, a young man who looked as if he were laughing at the others marching.

They were going, she saw now, in a certain direction. There was a priest at the head of the line, in a perfectly gorgeous gown; then came the red and blue image—the saint, she supposed it was, like those she'd read somewhere, they have in every town in Italy and Sicily and such places. And then, after it, came all the rest, crying and praying and shouting! All were going this one way, out from the open square, or the main

side of it where she was, and in back of the chapel. And every man, woman and child was in it—except the one man, who stood there grinning, and herself.

She looked at him, and he at her, it seemed, at just the same time. And when he did, though he didn't stop laughing, a most terrible expression came into his face! Then he looked away.

She started forward then. She thought she'd go herself and join the procession—just as soon as she saw that face! But when she did, she saw that he moved too—edged over between her and the others, and she had to stop—pretend she wasn't going that way, after all. They were both pretending, she could see, with their eyes on each other side-wise.

"This wont do, Pompom!" she said under her breath. And she stood still, pretending indifference, thinking all she could, and as fast. For the procession across the square, she saw, would be around on the other side of the white chapel before long—and the backs of everybody left on their side of the square were turned toward them already. And everybody, the whole town, was there now. The rest of the place was just empty.

SO she thought the best thing to do would be to walk around him very deliberately toward the procession, as if she hadn't noticed him before. But when she did, after a quick look he walked directly ahead of her, where she'd have to go, and stood there grinning. She saw now who he was. It was the man with the strange smile on his face whom that other man, the handsome one who she thought might have been a nobleman, had stopped fighting the night before.

And now, looking closer, she saw a terrible thing about him. She saw it wasn't a smile at all that gave him his expression. It was just a scar—a horrible healed cut at the corner of his mouth.

She stopped still then—and started to call out to him: "You let me by or I'll scream!"

And then, of course, she didn't; for she saw at once how silly it would be, how things really were; and her heart stopped still. He couldn't understand English—she was certain of that. And as for screaming, what good would screaming in English do—when everybody in the place, all, were screaming and praying at the top of their own voices?

"Steady, Pompom. Steady!" she said, clutching him to her—both him and the parrot. For in addition to hearing nothing and seeing nothing but it, if, the procession now was just about disappearing behind the white chapel—maybe going right around it, maybe not; she couldn't tell! She saw it would be useless to try and catch it.

"We've got to run—that's all, Pom-

pom," she said to herself and the dog. "We've got to keep on pretending we don't see him—and then dash away!"

The man was still quite a little way from her, with his face kind of turned forward—watching, she thought, as she was, to see when the procession would finally disappear.

So she did now the only thing she could think of. She walked along the edge of the square, humming to herself, as if not thinking about him at all, although he kept out beyond her, edging along too—kind of stalking her, without pretending to—till they should be all alone! But her idea was that suddenly, when she could, she'd see some place she could dart into, and disappear. For she'd been quite a runner in school.

"It isn't true. It simply isn't true. Pompom!" she kept saying to herself and the dog to steady herself—watching for her chance. For the earthquake seemed to be over now—or had for some minutes. And she would rather take that chance, anyway, than this. And then suddenly her time came. She saw he was looking away a second—and she dashed around the corner into an alley.

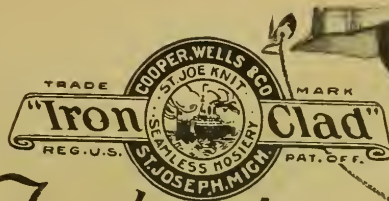
IT was a canary-colored alley, a faint, pale, lovely color, like so many of the houses in the place. On one side there were only two houses—deserted. She could see that, from just looking at them. And on the other side was a kind of blank stone wall, with one or two small windows, high up—the back of the stables of the little hotel, she thought it must be. And at the farther end was a bright vermilion cart with two wheels. And then, looking beyond that, her heart stood still; for the alley ended up against a kind of little cliff on the hill the town was built against. She had thrown herself right into a trap!

She peered in at the first door of the two houses as she ran by, and saw that there was certainly nobody there. And then she darted in the second door, which was open too—and stood there perfectly still, in the empty place, listening for footsteps.

"If we ever get out of this alive, Pompom," she said, whispering, and her heart beating a tattoo against him, "we'll reform. We'll never do anything wild again!"

And the Pom looked up and trembled against her, for he was scared stiff by the whole proceeding. And Saladin, the parrot, changed claws on his perch, for she had him under her other arm still, kind of crooked. So she straightened his cage up—and just then she heard steps running into the alley, and the man with the scar on the edge of his mouth went by, peering here and there—evidently not having seen her go in, and not quite sure whether she had run into the alley, or one of the houses on the square.

He hurried out to the end of the place, looked all over—and back again. And after a minute at the opening of the alley, he plunged into the door of the house next to hers. And that, of course, was the worst thing possible, for she knew the next move would be for him to come in there. She looked back into that dark smelly little black cave of a house behind her—and fled.



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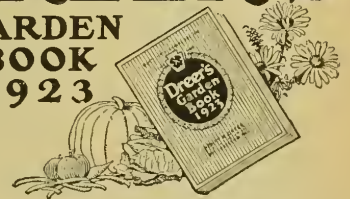
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IT wouldn't do to run back by that door where he was—or she thought it wouldn't, anyway, for he might be coming out any time. And it struck her if she could dart down to the end of the alley and hide herself anywhere, he wouldn't come back, for he'd looked there already. And just then she saw that blood-red cart with the high wheels again—and she gathered up her ivory negligee again and flew for it.

She was still hanging onto Pompom and the parrot. It had never occurred to her to drop them. In fact, she couldn't now, without giving herself away. But it was terribly hard to run, holding them and the skirt of her negligee at the same time. And just before she got to the red cart, her foot caught in the hem of the skirt, and she stumbled and almost fell.

She caught herself luckily before she went down, and she didn't drop either the Pom or the parrot, but something almost as dreadful happened. For one of her Morocco slippers came off, right almost in the middle of the alleyway. She couldn't stop for it. She had to rush on. And in a minute she'd whirled in back of the red cart and sat cowering behind the tipped-up body, listening—and this man rummaging through the houses for her.

"We're loot, Pompom! That's all. Just loot!" she whispered to the dog. For that was the only term she could think of.

If she could only hide there until he got out, or they got through their crazy panic and stopped marching around, she thought she could escape, for she was hidden by the body of the wagon. Only there, almost in front of it, she knew, was that red slipper. If he saw that, it was all over! She peered out, just a fraction of an inch from behind the big high wheel; and there it sat, right in the center of the cobbles. And just that minute the man with the scar on his mouth came out from the doorway and looked up and down the alley—and started to go out.

And then he turned once more, for a final look—and saw it!

He came rushing over then, as fast as he could run—and grabbed it up and looked at it, and looked around! And just then Saladin, the parrot, gave a squawk. She'd tipped him almost upside down in her excitement, and it made him mad.

And then Spinks Beaufort stepped out from behind her wagon.

"Go away from here," she told the man as cool as she could. "Go away or I'll scream!"

And she thought while she said it: "How perfectly silly! Nobody can hear me!"

The rest were all out there still, of course, marching around, yelling. And nobody would notice her or understand what she called, if they did hear her. Her Pom was the only living thing, apparently, within uncounted miles, that had ever heard English.

BUT she started to scream just the same, when he came running at her, with her slipper in his hand—and that dreadful grin on his face that was made by a cut extending out from his mouth.

And when he came, and she screamed, he called out something, and held out both his hands like claws—to show her he would strangle her if she kept on screaming. And then she stopped, and stared at him.

"What is it?" she said, her voice almost gone. "What do you want?" And looking down and seeing her bare left foot, she drew it back under her negligee.

He wasn't looking there, though, but at something else. She was still holding the dog and the cage pressed hard against her, and she thought he was looking at them.

"Questi—questi!" he said.

"What?" she said, looking down, for she didn't think he would want either one—the dog or the parrot. "Not this? Nor this?"

"No. No—no!" he said hurriedly, and pointed again, coming nearer.

And now she saw what he was after—her rings! She was almost relieved when she saw what it actually was. And she started putting her hands together to take them off.

THEY were wonderful rings. They must have been worth ten or fifteen thousand dollars, anyway. Some were her own, but mostly her mother's! She started to take them off for him; and the first one she put her fingers on was her mother's engagement ring—the one her father thought so much of.

And she just drew her hands apart involuntarily when she touched it.

"No," she said suddenly, without thinking even. "No. I won't!"

And stood up, facing him.

He could understand the meaning, even if he couldn't understand the language; and he must have been in a hurry, for he didn't wait any longer. He grabbed her hand himself, and when he did, Pompom, like a little fury, snapped out and bit him.

It couldn't have been anything serious.—though it brought the blood,—not much more dangerous than a mosquito-bite. But it surprised the man for the minute. He drew back his hand, and then he reached out again, mad, and made a grab for Pompom, wanting to wring his neck, probably. And Spinks Beaufort partly threw him, and he partly sprang away. And Saladin in his wicker cage fell on the cobbles—and rolled along and lay on his side screaming and trying to get up. And she stood there alone facing him—this man with the scarred mouth—shouting, "No—no—no!"—and stamping with her one red slipper on the cobbles.

She stood there in that deserted canary-colored alley, beside that blood-red cart, with the parrot squawking, and Pompom barking at the man's heels; and all the time she kept thinking, saying over and over to herself:

"Loot! Loot—just loot!"

And then suddenly the man flashed out something from his belt, and she saw it was a long knife—that same one, probably, he had pulled out the night before.

He grabbed her left hand where her mother's big ring was, and held it with his left hand, and brought up this huge knife in his right. She was starting to beat him with her right hand, but then she stopped, for that knife, you could see, was terribly sharp.

She stopped pounding, but she still

clenched her left hand, not intending to let her rings go. And then he looked up at her and said something very low. She didn't understand the words—but she understood the motion he made, well enough. For he had brought that terribly fine edge of the knife up to her fingers, threatening to cut her.

Pom was snapping at his heels still, but the parrot had righted himself, and sat still for the minute, surprised and sulky. She could see all this like a picture—as if it didn't concern herself at all. But all the time she was saying over to herself, "Loot! Loot—just loot!" and she thought of things she'd read about, what men do to get women's rings—how they cut them off, in battlefields or sieges or things like that, if they have to get them in a hurry. And yet she just couldn't let him take them off. She couldn't have unclasped her hand now if she'd wanted to. Instead she let out a terrible scream in English:

"Help! Help!" And she thought right away: "How foolish—how perfectly idiotic, when nobody can hear me!"

And then she thought she was crazy. For it seemed as if she heard some one calling—up over her head somewhere, way off:

"Where? Where?"

He didn't hear it apparently—the man trying to get her rings. For he went right on threatening and starting to prick her fingers with the end of that awful knife.

But she answered just the same, thinking all the time she was probably crazy, hearing voices in the air.

"Here! Here!" she shrieked.

And when she did that, the man pressed a little harder with the edge of the knife, his eyes close up to hers, showing the white rings around them, threatening her. She got the warm smell of vile tobacco on his breath!

Just that minute a man dropped over the sort of low cliff or ledge above them at the end of the alley. They both turned, and the Pom scampered to one side. She looked, and there was that man of the night before—the one she thought might be a noble or something. She was saved—or thought she was, at first!

THE minute he struck the ground, however, she saw that something had happened. He had twisted his leg or something in that jump, and fallen. And when he started to get up again, she saw he was hurt. Then she saw, or thought she saw, he was unarmed—and that other man had a knife! It was in his hand, she saw, where it was held suspended near her hand, when he turned, surprised. And she was quicker than he was, probably, in seeing things. At any rate, suddenly—she had no idea why—she leaned down and bit the grinning man—sunk her teeth in the brown wrist that held the knife.

She didn't understand how or why she did it; she never did! She must have been just crazy—like a wild woman. All she knew was that the blood came, and he cursed or something, and she heard the knife drop on the cobbles. And quick as a flash she kicked it away with her foot with the red slipper on it.

And that was all; for now suddenly, with a yell, he jumped away from her



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and toward the other man who was still lying on the ground—and kicked. And she saw what he was doing. She saw the other man was pulling a pistol out of his pocket—was trying to! But he was too late. For the foot of the man with the gashed face hit his arm and kicked the pistol out his hand—and it went clattering on the alleyway cobblestones like the knife.

And now Spinks Beaufort saw the danger wasn't over, by any means. For the new man—that one who had come to help her—was clearly quite a little hurt. His leg was apparently twisted from his jump, and his right hand, that had held the pistol, was badly hurt too. But he was up and had grabbed the other man, never theless. They were struggling, rolling around the alley together, and the Pom dancing around them—and she herself, standing off, with the pistol she had caught up in her hand, wondering what she could do with it, whether she could hand it to the man who was fighting for her—but not being able to do a thing.

THEY were struggling, it looked now, both of them, in one direction—rolling over and over; and she could see, now it was too late, what they were after. It was that knife lying on the cobbles.

"What a fool!" she said to herself. "What a fool I was not to take it!"

But it was too late now. The man with the torn mouth had it. And though the other man was still fighting for it, he seemed to be getting the worst of it.

She danced around, crying, "Here. Here!" and trying to slip that pistol to him, and then seeing how foolish it was. For of course he couldn't let go for a minute of that hand of the other man with the knife. If he did, he was gone!

And all at once, as if something had wrenched and given way, her man went over on his back, and that beast with the scarred mouth sat over him with that knife up.

It was a second—the fraction of a wink. But she saw everything perfectly plain. There was just one thing for her to do. She must shoot—kill a man herself—or see one killed.

"Stop!" she screamed. "Stop!" And she jumped forward and pushed the muzzle against the back of that man's head, where he sat astride of the other one, bringing his knife up.

She was excited—but not afraid. She saw everything, clear and distinct, like a very clear picture—the parrot trying to sit straight in the overturned cage, looking very serious and savage and mad; Pom-pom snarling and prancing and snapping around the two men, like a bloodthirsty microbe; and the grinning man's arm coming up with the knife—and the other man's strength going!

"Stop! Stop!" she was screaming. "Or I'll kill you!"

She thought he might stop, with that pistol-muzzle at the back of his head, and she wouldn't have to shoot; but he didn't. He was too excited, perhaps, or triumphant, seeing the other man was practically through. He just kind of rolled his head to avoid her and drew his hand way back with the knife. And she prayed and—fired!

HE rolled over, off the other man—her friend. And she sprang back—perfectly still. For she saw what she had done. She had killed a man!

The other man, that handsome one who had risked his life to save her, stumbled up onto his feet in a minute—and came toward her. But she didn't see him—for she had shut her eyes—tight, tight! And she was staggering. And the next thing she knew, she was holding onto him, crying:

"Oh—oh! I've killed a man. I've killed a man! I'm a murderess!"

"Nota quite. Nota quite. Mabbé," he said.

And when he said it, she sprang back from him, her eyes wide open.

"You speak English!" she cried out. "You speak English."

"Yes'm. I do. Yes'm," he said.

And she started to step back and take hold of him, some way. For it was like a voice from heaven,—like the miracle they were expecting from that red and blue and gold saint,—hearing English when she had thought there wasn't anyone for miles and miles who could speak to her.

"Wait. Joost a min'," he said, holding her from falling. "Look. See!"

And she looked down for the first time—forced herself to—to see what she had done—expecting to see him lying there, with a big hole in his head. But it wasn't there. There was blood, a little, in his hair, when he lay there first, face down. And now just as this man beside her who stood steadying her, said to look, the body lying there rolled; and her man, reaching out, started to push it with his foot, and then kicked it.

She gave a jump then away from him, for it seemed horrible to her. And she called out when he started to do it a second time. But then she stopped. For when he did this, the man on the cobblestones jumped up all at once like a rabbit—and ran and ran and ran out through the alleyway.

"Then I didn't kill him. I didn't kill him, after all!" she called, catching at the other man's coat again.

"No," he said, trying to explain to her. "No. You only maka scratch on the outside. He turn his head maybe whena you shoot. So you only maka senseless."

"That was it," said Spinks Beaufort. "That was just it."

And she saw now that his eyes were turned from her and were watching the man with the scarred mouth run wildly out of the end of the canary-colored alleyway. He ran in the funniest way, crooked, zigzagging back and forth—afraid of being shot at, evidently. And all at once the man with her burst into a laugh—half a laugh and half a cry of triumph.

"Run. Run! See'm run. How fun! he maka him look!"

And she laughed too—she couldn't help it—till the man disappeared around the last canary-colored corner.

NOW suddenly she remembered that they were alone together in that alley, and she thought what she had on, and how she must look, in that satin negligee. And she looked down and saw that red slipper over beside him where the man with the scar had dropped it.

And she started to hop over to it, remembering her bare foot finally.

"No—no. Stop. Wait," he called to her—and leaned down and picked up the red slipper, and handed it to her with a gesture like a prince—and then turned his back while she put it on her foot.

"We'd better go back, hadn't we?" she said to the man. For the noise of crying and calling was less in the square.

"I go—yes. I thinka so," he said.

And now she gave a little cry—for she saw how terribly lame he was. She had forgotten ail about that twist he had suffered when he jumped to save her.

"Oh, you're hurt," she cried. "I'm so sorry. You're hurt!"

But he was terribly brave about it.

"Tha's noth! Tha's noth," he said. "Like what we alla got there in war."

"Listen," she said. "You do this: you lean on me. I'm terribly strong, really. I may not look so. But I am! And you can take the parrot, if you want. And we'll go together."

FINALLY she got him to do it—made him. But she never saw a man in all her life so kind and so courteous and so considerate. Yet she was a little afraid all the time to ask him questions—about who he was, or anything. But finally she had to ask him—something!

"You speak English so well!" she said—though that wasn't quite true, either. "You speak English so perfectly—where did you learn it?"

"New York," he said.

"New York!" cried Spinks Beaufort, stopping and staring. "Why, that's where I come from!"

"Yesa ma'am, I know. I see," said the man. "You Newa York. Me also, one time—teel I coma here for Italia to fight the war."

"New York!" she cried. "But where? What part?"

"My biz," he said, "always down—waya down in cit'. By the beeg reech man, by the Walla Street."

"Near Wall Street," said Spinks Beaufort. "Why, my father is in Wall Street every day."

And they stopped walking on the cobblestones, and faced one another again.

"Your fath'," said the rescuer of Spinks Beaufort. "What, then, is hisa name? What you calla him?"

"Beaufort," she told him. "Ledyard Beaufort."

"A beeg, beeg, talla man," said the handsome man, gesturing with his left hand until he almost upset Saladin. "Beeg and tall?"

"Yes. Yes!" said Spinks Beaufort—just as excited as he was.

"I know heem. I know heem. Mr. Beaufort. I know heem. He come alla time in place where I work. There in biga build' by Wall Street. He coma alla time to the barba' shop, where I am," said the man, waving Saladin again in his excitement.

"Oh!" said Spinks Beaufort, catching her breath—and then going on, at last, when she could control herself. For after all, he was just as nice as he could be!

"Oh, isn't that wonderful And where are you now?"

"Upa there," he said, waving the parrot now toward the end of the alley, be-



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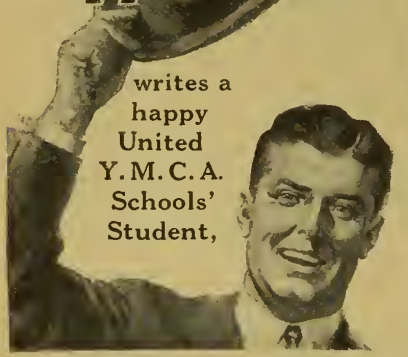
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yond the rocks. "I hava the vin'. I maka the grape. I buy the land with the mon' from New York. I coma down from there, when the earthaquek, he come to the town. And I heara you call."

"Oh," said Spinks Beaufort. "And you saved my life."
 "Oh, yes—why not? I sava you—eef I can!" he said with his nice white polite smile again. "But your fath—is he here also, too?"

"Yes," said Spinks Beaufort, looking at him—almost as excited as he was once more. "Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it wonderful? He'll be here in Messina tomorrow."

"Then I taka you, I taka you back to heem, with my wag'. I goa with you," said the man who had saved her—just as polite as ever—the same grand way of bowing, even on only one foot.

"Come on now, mees, please," he said. "We go back now to the *albergo*."

They turned the corner and crossed the square. Nobody paid any attention to them, for though the earthquake was all over and they were all making less noise, yet they were all standing and kneeling the other way—toward where the bearers were, putting the red and blue and gold saint back into its chapel—until another earthquake or something else came, and scared them wild again.

"You like New York?" she said, to make conversation.
 "I lika—yes," said Mr. Tintoni. "Yet not so good as here."

"I'm crazy over it," said Miss Spinks Beaufort. And then suddenly she shuddered—and tried to cover it up.

"Aren't you, Pompom?" she said bending her head down.

But he just looked back and yawned. He was as sleepy as could be, after all that excitement.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

(Continued from page 73)

then what a girl of your kind was doing in this quiet part of the map. I'm wondering still."

"It's very comfortable at the Lowells'. Like you, I find this country a safe refuge."

"Do you expect me to believe that you've run away too?"

"Exactly what I've done—run away. From men—men like you! I live on 'em."

"An ambiguous statement," said he, studying her.

"And when I get sick to death of 'em, I run away and hide."

"Only to find one waiting for you."

"It was a severe shock," she confessed.

"Well, have I confirmed your darkest suspicions?"

"Suspicions?" he protested. "I assure you I hadn't any—"

"Oh, yes, you had. Your wondering about my good clothes and exotic appearance was a little obvious. My heretical views on morals produced the usual result."

"Not at all. I don't know just what you're trying to make me believe about you or why, but I don't believe it, anyway."

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MISCELLANEOUS—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

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"You know, you're not really so bad in some ways," she approved him with her slow, lurking smile. She dropped to the bank of a rivulet which crossed the path, thereby excessively annoying a song-sparrow who had set up housekeeping there and who indulged in some shrill personalities on the subject of trespass. He threw himself down beside her and began absently to pick violets and toss them into the stream. "You're not very clever about lots of things, but you've got a queer kind of nice insight," she continued.

"About you? I've never pretended to be clever enough to understand you."

"Yet you've rather a reputation for understanding women—or anyway, for understanding how to attract them. Though perhaps," she teased, "that comes natural to you."

"Forbidden ground," he warned. "Play fair. Besides, I don't understand you a bit." He fell back upon banalities. "You're so different."

"All men tell all women that they're different, don't they? And so they are, if men only understood. But you've got the solution of me at your disposal whenever you want to use it."

"The letter, you mean?"

"The letter," she assented, throwing a dandelion-head at the protesting song-sparrow. "That's why I left it on your mantel, to relieve the pressure on your brain if your curiosity became unbearable." Her voice deepened to a mysterious and melodramatic tone. "It tells all," she said hollowly.

"I don't like reading other people's letters."

"It isn't other people's. It's mine. I wrote it."

"But it's addressed to a man."

"What of it? He's got another one, since, that he likes much better."

"Who is this Humphreys beast, Elsie? You're not engaged to him, are you?"

"Worse. I'm enslaved to him. He has me in his power!"

"Can't you be serious even about this?"

She jumped lightly to her feet. "Go home and read the letter if you want the full explanation."

"Just what I'm afraid of. Explanations end things."

"Things end anyhow, in this mortal world."

"I don't want this to end."

"What do you want?"

"Just for it to go on," he said slowly.

"For how long?"

"I'll be reasonable. Say, a lifetime. A year from now, if I come—"

"A year from now," she interrupted, chuckling, "you'll be thanking the kindly gods that you haven't compromised yourself further. Also, you'll be furious at me. But that won't take a year to happen."

"More mystery. Is that in the letter too?"

"Everything is in the letter, if you can read a little between the lines. Here comes Myra to meet me. Good-by."

"Tomorrow?" he asked anxiously.

"Of course, tomorrow."

Suddenly she looked sorry as she turned away from him.

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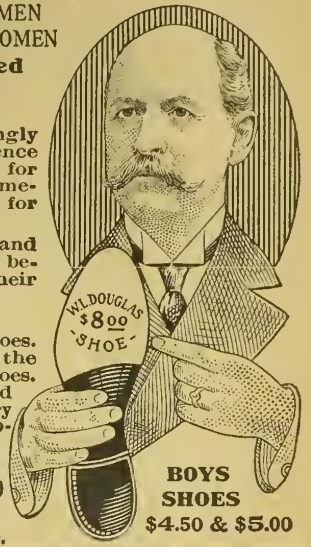
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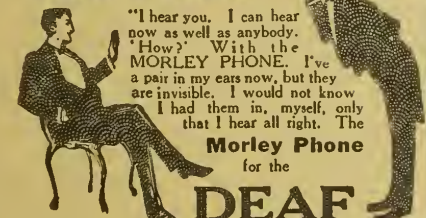
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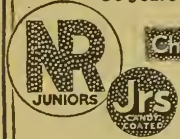
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"THIS is Thursday," he reminded her. Tea and the day's work were over. Miss Lester was lounging in the window-seat looking extremely lazy and content. Fleming was established in the big chair, looking, as usual, at Miss Lester. The letter to Fowler J. Humphreys, untouched, mysterious and demure, still presided over the scene.

"What of it?" she asked.
"Your day to be serious."
"I said 'alternate Thursdays.' How do you know this is one?"

"Must be. Last Thursday you were frivolous as a cricket."
"Unimpeachable logic. What do you want me to be serious about?"

"Me, naturally."
"Egotist!" She hesitated. "Well, I suppose you're entitled to it. I might start with a confession."

"What have you got to confess about?"
"The rescue episode in which you played the hero part."

"Yes; I know," he said indifferently. "All a put-up job on your part, wasn't it?"

She stared at him, for once taken aback. "How did you know that?"

"I'd seen you in swimming a couple of days before, so your realistic struggles for my benefit didn't impress me much."

"And you never said a word about it! This man isn't as simple as one might suppose from his appearance," she confided to the universe at large. "What was the idea?"

"Oh, come! What was your idea?"
"To attract your interest."
"You succeeded."

"And to hold it just enough to keep going. I needed you in my business."

"Yet our relations haven't been exclusively businesslike."

"Not my fault. It would have been so much more convenient for me if you'd been a boatman or guide or farm-hand, so that I could have paid you—"

"You've paid me—in your own coin."

"It's been a one-sided bargain, though. When I work, I have no conscience about other people, not an atom—though I'm capable of being sorry enough afterward."

"I don't want you to be sorry about anything in our friendship," he said.

"And I don't want you to be. But you will."

"That's up to you entirely, Elsie."

She gave a little gesture of dismissal. "Oh, what's the use! When you make love to me in that indirect way of yours, I feel so helpless. It's worse than the other way."

"I have to do it one way or another. It's so much on my mind. Don't you really think you'd better marry me and settle the whole thing?"

"No; I certainly don't. It wouldn't be fair. What would you think if I told you I wasn't marriageable?"

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"I'd think you were already married." "I've told you I'm not."

"Then I'd think that you've been married and never got over it."

"Bad guess again."

"Who's the man?"

"There isn't any special man. Didn't I tell you that the only use I have for men is to live on them?"

"No; you didn't. But I suppose I know what you mean," he said slowly.

"Do you?" she murmured in an uninterpretable tone.

"It wouldn't make any difference. You see, I'm not precisely in a position to set up standards for others. Most men aren't."

"Most men aren't fair enough to admit it. But it would make a difference later."

"Besides," he continued equably, "I don't happen to believe it. Whatever you are, I know you're not that kind of girl. And whatever you may have done, I know that it's left your character and self-respect untouched. That's enough for me."

For the first time her eyes avoided the challenge of his, and there was trouble and doubt in them. "But it oughtn't to be," she protested. "You're not running true to type. You ought to be conventional in your ideas about the kind of woman to marry."

"Therefore you've been trying to disillusion me by the shock process. Is that it?"

"I hate you when you pop out at me with some unexpected cleverness like that," she fretted. "Why must you be so—so unreliable? Why can't you be just noble-looking and stupid and—and useful?"

"I'm afraid I'm not going to be useful to you much longer. The Carrs want their cottage next week."

"Oh! Where shall you go?"
"Somewhere beyond reach of detectives and process-servers. Europe, I think. Will you come along?"

"Proving how unconventional you can be, on occasion?"

"No. I mean it."

Still she retained her look of questioning amusement. "That's what is generally regarded as an improper proposal, isn't it?"

"It's a matter of definition."

"You're being subtle, now." She leaned forward to him. "What about Minna Dulancy?"

"I'd forgotten about her for the moment."

"You forget easily, don't you? Suppose he divorces her; aren't you going to marry her?"

"So long as they don't catch me, he hasn't a chance to win his suit."

"What puzzles me," she observed, gazing at him thoughtfully, "is how a man of your traditions and training could deliberately involve a woman in such a risk. Morality aside, it's a question of fair play and decent consideration for a woman's name."

HE made no reply. He was staring out of the window past her at nothing.

"Aren't you a little ashamed, Martin?" she persisted.

The line of his lips tightened and hardened upon an obdurate silence.

"No; you aren't," she answered herself. "I've known that all along. It's my business to know faces, and those new lines in yours mean tiredness and strain and pig-headedness. But they don't mean shame or remorse. What's the answer, Martin? You can trust me, can't you?"

"I can't trust you to believe me."

"Slush!" she retorted. "Don't you see

that I'm trusting you not to have done anything really rotten?"

"Well, then, I haven't," he burst out. "But I've been a fool, and for all practical purposes that's worse. I can tell you what I couldn't tell a judge and jury." He recounted the details of a ghastly mischance which had twisted an innocent-enough adventure into the guise of deliberate guilt. She took it under thoughtful consideration.

"Why couldn't you tell a judge and jury?" she inquired at length. "It seems a straight-enough story, and provable in the main points."

"Well, I haven't told you quite all," he said reluctantly.

"Then tell me at once. I'm safe."

"Yes; I believe you are. You see, that evening, she was with the other man, the one she really cares for. If I clear her with myself, I damn her absolutely with him. And I can't do that."

Her eyes were soft upon him. "Did you care an awful lot for her?"

"No. It was only a casual flirtation on both sides."

"And now you're going to pay her debts by going into exile. Poor boy! Never again will I be arrogant in my judgments and assume that a beauty man can't have character."

SHE jumped to her feet and began pawing over her portfolio. "Speaking of beauty, don't you want a souvenir?"

"A picture of you?" said he eagerly.

"Very pat, sir. No, something far more ornamental." She produced a small card-board upon which was a sketch of him asleep on the beach. "A memory impression," she said. "Con amore! Like it?"

He looked from the picture to her in surprise and distrust. "This is no student work," said he. "It's a very skillful bit of drawing. Even an ignoramus like me can see that."

She dropped him a curtsy. "Inspiration," said she demurely. "I'm glad you like my little keepsake."

"Keepsake? Does that mean that you're going away?"

"It does. Tonight! Carrying the rest of my artistic booty with me—that is, if you'll permit me to take them with me?"

"They're not mine; they're yours. Do whatever you like with them. Where are you going?"

"You say I may do what I like with them?" she queried, ignoring his question. "Do you mean it?"

"Of course," he replied impatiently. "What does it matter?"

"Just as a formality, do you mind putting that in writing? It's possible that I could sell some of these and make a little honest money."

"Oh! All right!" He caught up a bit of cardboard and scribbled on it. "You're very particular all of a sudden. Will that do?"

"Beautifully," she answered with subdued satisfaction. "You are a dear! I almost wish I could go to Europe with you. But—other engagements." She laughed.

"Why are you going so suddenly?" he demanded.

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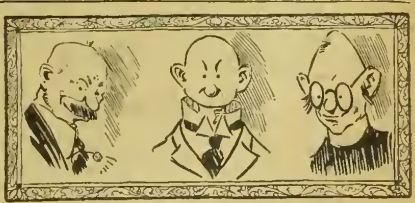
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told you that it was to get away from you?”

“No, for I shouldn't believe it.”

“It's true, though. I'm through with trickeries and evasions so far as you're concerned, from now on.” Her tone was somber.

“When shall I see you again?”

“Ah—who knows? Haven't I made it clear to you that you probably won't want to see me again when you get back?”

“Don't be absurd. Is that the way you feel about me, Elsie?”

A subtle change darkened her face. “Do you want the truth? Better not.”

“I'll take it.”

“You want me to be serious. Very well; this is deadly serious. I never want to see your face again.”

“You say that as if you hated me,” said he, appalled.

“No; I don't hate you. There's lots about you that I'm going to miss terribly. I'm almost in love with you, in some ways. But I just never want to see your face again. I'm sorry; but there it is.”

“But why? Why? Why?”

She pointed to the mantel. “It's all there,” she said. “Read the letter. And please don't think me rotten and hate me. Good-by and good luck.”

SHE hesitated for a moment, then went to him and kissed him on the mouth with cool, untrembling lips.

“No; you're not to come with me,” she forbade.

She went out. Martin read the letter.

MR. FOWLER J. HUMPHREYS,
c/o Humphreys Art Agency,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Humphreys:

No. No. And again No. I will not draw you four characteristic Elsie Lester studies within the next two weeks, of superb, alert, upstanding, clean-cut, one-hundred-per-cent American, irresistibly handsome young manhood. I will not draw you one half of one per cent of any such revolting animal. I don't want even to think of them. I am resting my soul. I am on vacation from all those vanities. If I met one in the road, I should drive frantically to town and buy vitriol to throw in its noble face. That's the way I feel about it! For at least a month longer I don't intend to associate with anything nobler-looking than a bug, or more upstanding and clean-cut than an earthworm. I hate with a bitter and enduring hatred all masculine facial beauty, splendor and nobility, and when I think that I've got to go back to making my living from it by and by, I feel seasick. How you found out my address I don't know, but I should like to murder you with slow tortures—something like tickling your nose with a camel's hair brush—for trying to tempt me with a top price when you know I'm worn out and ought not be working. Oh, Lord, how I hate to pass up that five thousand from the Neverwilt people. But I can't, I sha'n't, and I won't.

Yours profandy,

ELSIE LESTER.

P. S. Anyway, I couldn't get a model up here if I wanted one, thank Heaven.

After reading this twice over Mr. Martin Fleming made four observations closely reasoned and connected:

“So I was the model!”

"Also the goat!"
 "No wonder the poor girl hated the sight of me!"
 "Just the same, it was a scaly trick, even for five thousand."
 A scaly trick it was. But the full enormity of it was not to dawn upon him until later. In his ignorance of advertising matters, he quite missed the significance of the allusion to the Neverwilt Shirt. He went forth into exile serenely unconscious that Fame was tuning up her loudest trumpet for his return.

THE troubled record now achieves a four-months' skip. Mr. Martin Fleming, also troubled, had done the same. In the interval, things happened. The Dulaney divorce-suit was won by the defending wife. The Neverwilt Shirt blazed forth in universally advertised splendor, and never was there pictured a prouder, nobler-browed, more upstanding, squarer-jawed, leveler-eyed, more completely and appallingly pulchritudinous young hundred-per-center that was he who bore upon his manly bosom the various and impeccable perfections of that candescent garment. Even Elsie Lester was ashamed of him. Which, considering that he was her greatest success and had brought her floods of orders at unheard of prices, even for her, constituted a monstrous ingratitude.

She was working upon one of the resulting commissions, centering artistically upon a shaving-brush of revolutionary merits, when her secretary entered the studio. The secretary was a last-year's college graduate who regarded her employer with inextinguishable amusement tempered by admiration.

"There's a glum, male voice on the phone wishing to talk with you," was her message.

"Tell it I'm busy."
 "I did. It says it'll keep calling all day till you're not."
 "Oh! Does it? What does it suppose itself to be?"

"All it will say is 'Representing the Neverwilt Shirt.'"

"Ugh!" gulped Miss Lester. "All right. I'll talk to it."

She went to the phone in the anteroom. "Well?"

"Is that Miss Elsie Lester?"

"Oh!" said Elsie Lester in a tone expressive of several emotions combined at high pressure. "I never was so glad to hear anybody's voice in my life," she added unguardedly.

"Really!" said Martin Fleming. Then, after a pause: "That isn't what I expected to hear."

"It isn't what I expected to say."
 "Would you be equally glad to see me?" Elsie winced. "Ah, that's different," said she. "I don't know."
 "I do."

She played for time. "You spring a mean surprise," she observed. "You told my secretary it was somebody representing the Neverwilt Shirt."

"Well, if I don't represent the Neverwilt Shirt, I'd like to know who does," he returned grimly. "I represent it on at least a million signboards. I'm not blind, Elsie."

Hastily she veered to another subject. "Have you been back long?"

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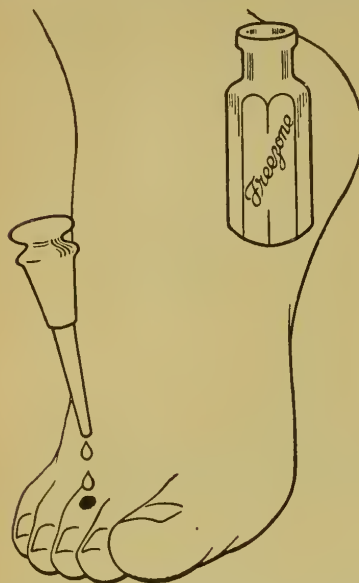
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"Since yesterday."
"And you are well?" she queried brightly.

"Very—except for a liability to nausea whenever I get into a public conveyance or pass a board fence. I understand perfectly now how you feel about my face. I only wish I could get away from it."

"Oh, don't, Martin!"

"Did you expect me to like it?"

"N-n-n-no."

"Then why in the name—"

"Let's not talk about it now. We've so much else to talk about. Some other day—"

"What other day?"

"Any other day. I'd love to have you call me up every day and talk for hours."

"Still, you can't very well sketch me over the phone, you know," he reminded her malignantly.

"I don't think that's fair," she complained, "especially when I'm being so glad to see—to hear you. . . . I went back to the Lowells', Martin—late in the summer."

"Did you?"

"Yes. It was awful. I couldn't stand the loneliness."

"And what do you expect me to say to that?" The voice was uncompromising.

"I don't know—nothing. You're very difficult." She sighed audibly. "I suppose I'd better ask you to come and see me. Only—"

"I'll come and see you," he declared crisply, "in my own good time. Good-by."

"Well!" said Elsie Lester in surprised indignation to the telephone-instrument; but it only answered after a blank pause: "Did you get your party?"

found it difficult. Nevertheless she nursed that enduring grievance which every woman feels against the man who, having once been in love with her, is under suspicion of no longer being so.

On a stormy November morning she was busy on a portrait sketch in crayon of a motion-picture hero. He was quite gloriously handsome and fervidly self-conscious about it, and she hated every line in his winsome face as she worked upon it. Nor was there any relief in his conversation, which was exclusively about himself and his triumphs. Surcease from exasperation did come, however, in the form of the sprightly young secretary who broke in upon the sitting to inquire: "Boss, have you got a model ordered for this morning?"

The artist shook her head. "No, Denny. No appointment."

"Well, there's something outside that looks as if it had dropped out of the early part of Wells' 'Outline of History.' Shall I let it in?"

Before answer could be made, the caller provided the decision by entering. For one dazzled moment Elsie could think of nothing but private theatricals: "Enter First Viking (Martin Fleming) with Air of Owning the Universe." He seemed to have added at least a foot to his previously adequate stature, and a yard to his formerly impressive breadth. She felt that the additional proportions were probably necessary in order to carry the truly superb beard which covered two-thirds of his face.

"How do you do, Elsie?" he said as he came forward and shook hands.

In some manner she contrived to effect an introduction to the secretary and the Adonis of the screen. The latter, after a brief consideration of the situation, which had become patently tense, performed a tactful fade-out, followed by the former. Elsie strove to collect herself. For the moment she could bring her mind to nothing but a groping after a memory, lost in the mists of childhood. Then suddenly it came to her, rose-hued and poignant, that most magnificent and appealing figure of all personified romance, Jean de Reszke as *Lohengrin*, bidding farewell to stricken *Elsa*. There he stood before her again, the glorious dream magically come to life, and she wondered dimly if this too were to be a swan-song. When her Viking spoke, it was to say in commonplace and polite tones:

"I hope you've been quite well?"

"I have, thank you. Would you mind sitting over there and being a stranger until I get used to you?"

He took the chair which the hero of thirty million adoring females had vacated, and let his eyes wander about the high-ceiled studio. "What are you making famous now?" he asked. "Chewing-gum, men's hosiery, or tennis-rackets?"

"That was Ralph Rayburn that you drove out."

"Was it? Still in pursuit of profitable beauty, I see."

"Don't be petty, Martin." She had taken her working seat before the easel, and absently picking up a bit of chalk, was dabbing nervously at the cardboard with it.

MARTIN'S own good time stretched from days into weeks, and from weeks into months. Meanwhile his face, as interpreted by the Elsie Lester art, impinged upon her existence from all sides. Above the implacable correctness of the Neverwilt Shirt it smiled winsomely at her across tête-à-tête supper-tables, gazed loftily at her from the public rostrum, or flaunted its weariful perfections in the front of opera boxes for her sickened consideration. Never, she was convinced, had any advertised commodity been so widely smeared across the surface of civilization as was the garment sported so gallantly by her unfortunate and unwitting volunteer model. In desperation she offered to do an entirely new set of drawings if the company would retire the features of Martin Fleming from public view, only to receive the flattering and dismaying assurance that the company intended to retain the series of pictures, so unprecedented had been their success, as a permanent hallmark for all their linen.

"I'll never be able to look him in the face again," was the artist's dismal reaction to this.

As time went on, it appeared possible that she might never be called upon to undergo this ordeal. Instead of relieving her, this caused her an illogical annoyance. While willing to admit her shabby treatment of Martin Fleming, she considered that he was now treating her even more shabbily. Had she been called upon to explain why, she would have

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The Director, School Department
THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE
33 West 42nd Street New York City

HE smiled. "Of course if you can use me professionally," he observed with sardonic courtesy, "I'm delighted to be of service, as always."

She pointed the crayon accusingly at his altered face. "What ever did you do it for?"

"If you are inferring that it was on your account that I changed myself, I'll have to disillusion you. It was purely on my own. A necessary screen from the public eye! Thanks to your artistic accuracy, I found myself, on my return from Europe, a bit too conspicuous locally for comfort."

"I'm sorry," she murmured.

"I could stand having the fellows at the club call me 'O.d Neverwilt.' I even refrained from murder when the gate-man at the office got absent-minded and addressed me as 'Mr. Schurtz!' But when giggling girls on subways took to pointing me out to each other, and Fifth Avenue bus-conductors did rubberneck stunts on me for the benefit of the other passengers, it got to be a bore."

"I never meant to make it such an exact likeness," she pleaded feebly. "I—I hoped people wouldn't recognize—"

"Oh, come, Elsie! Be honest, at least—if you can," he added dispassionately.

"If I can! I suppose you mean it was dishonest in me to use you for the Neverwilt ad's."

"Well, what do you think yourself?"

"You gave me permission—in writing," she defended.

"That was the crookedest part of the whole thing—just a deliberate trick!"

"How was I to know that you'd be so simple as not to understand?"

"You're only making it worse. I told you I knew nothing about the art-game. To impose upon ignorance such as mine—"

"What did you come here for?" she cried. "Just to abuse me?"

"If you like. I'm going to give myself the satisfaction of telling you a few things that you may not know about yourself. You cold-bloodedly set out to make me fall in love with you—"

"I didn't! I mean, you didn't. If you did, it was your own fault. You were lonely and bored, and there was nobody else around to flirt with, and you ought to be grateful to me for filling in the time," she asserted hardily.

"We'll cross that off against the five thousand you made out of it. I've got to admit that you trapped me neatly. You see, I'd never run up against your type before. The regulation vamp I could understand, the kind that plays the game for the thrill there is in it, and at least takes the chances of the game herself. But this cold-blooded business of working a man on a business basis—well, it's a good deal like a flapper marrying an old man for his money—only, after all, the flapper does pay, in her way."

A LITTLE subdued gleam crept into Elsie's eyes. "You asked me to pay. Have you forgotten the invitation to Europe?"

"It meant nothing. Just an experiment."

"And I suppose the other invitation meant nothing too?"

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"Asking you to marry me? Oh, yes; that meant all it said."

"Tell me something, Martin. Would you rather have married me or taken me to Europe with you?"

"I'd rather have married you. That's what you want me to say, isn't it?"

"Yes; I'm conventional enough to want that sop to my pride. But you would have taken me to Europe if I'd have gone, wouldn't you?"

"Probably."

"As a matter of curiosity, didn't the moral question enter into it at all with you?"

At that he broke out. "You're a noble example of the higher morality, aren't you! Oh, I'm certain enough that you're technically correct, though you did try to trick me at one time into believing that you hadn't always run straight—"

"Disillusionment by the shock process," she murmured, interrupting.

"But the game you played with me was ten times rottener and crookeder than any slip in conventional morals."

"I know it," she said quietly. "What then?"

"Nothing." He strayed across the room and stood looking out over the wind-swept roofs.

"Have you said all you've got to say to me?"

"No. I love you."

"I wish you wouldn't be so—so unexpected," she complained.

He made no response. He did not even look at her. Had he done so, he would have seen the sullen-sweet mouth crinkle a little at the corners, the shadowed eyes grow unsteady. But her voice was quite controlled as she said:

"After all, it was only an echo. Martin, would you mind very much—just for old days—turn your head just a bit this way—there!"

"What am I to appear as this time? Proof of the efficacy of old Dr. Snooks' Hair-restorer?"

"Don't be malignant. This is for myself. I like the Viking effect. It mitigates your otherwise flawless beauty."

"Who's doing echoes now?" he countered, and added at once: "Damn my flawless beauty!"

"There! You've gone and moved."

"I see your memory is good," he said grimly. "Well, to continue: I'm going to move more in a minute."

ELSIE'S memory was good—too good! It brought back to her with fateful accuracy the immediate sequence. The crayon broke under her nervous fingers. Her voice broke a little too. But she was in the control of the current now. The sway of the long-dead and magically reversed months was about her. "Please! You'll spoil a good hour's work if you do," she heard herself repeat.

And now he began to understand. His voice grew tense as he said:

"I'm coming over there and take away that silly board of yours and kiss you."

"Wait ten"—here she broke the spell of memory for a desperate correction—"seconds," she finished with a gasp.

Even that was too long! It seemed to her that the last word had not passed her lips, when those lips were no longer her own. She released them to whisper tremulously:

"Was that like a plaster cast?"

"Elsie," he said, "would you prefer to tell me before or after we're married what you meant by saying that you weren't marriageable?"

She swept her hand around the splendor of the studio. "All this! I thought I had too much of my own to be marriageable. How could I find a man who would be willing to leave me all this? How do I know that you will?"

"Oh, I'm not so stupid as I look, dearest," he chuckled. "And that's an echo, too, though not quite an accurate one, is it? You can go on painting all the beauty-men you like. I'll never have to be jealous of them."

"Beauty? Pooh! It's all in the eye of the beholder, anyway." She thrust him gently away to arm's-length. "I'm almost afraid to tell you so now, but you're really handsomer than ever."

THE SAND PILE

(Continued from page 78)

a riot at the mines. Holding Buddy close to her heart, she strove to mumble inchoate prayers for Mercer's safety.

Suddenly she realized that, as he seemed to gain ground, he faced a greater danger. What if he should kill Torrens? Would that not be the most terrible of all the catastrophes which would befall them? He'd hang for it! "Tom," she pleaded, "let go! Don't strangle him that way. Let him go, I tell you!"

Her cry rose to frenzy, and Buddy, maddened by the struggle, beat against her with all his power; but Mercer, unheeding, drove on to the victory which would overwhelm his enemy and give him the freedom for which he had already risked so much.

"Let him go!" Winnie cried again as she saw his hands tighten on the other

man's throat. Suddenly as Mercer brought the Warden up against the wall, Buddy leaped from her sheltering arms, darting toward the swaying men. In his rush he kicked the table, and it overturned. With the crashing of the glass and a spurt of flame, the lamp went out. As she threw a strip of carpet over the blaze, the room went into blackness.

If the blaze had diverted Mercer's attention for an instant, Torrens had been quick to take advantage of it, for with one gigantic burst of power he dragged himself free from Mercer's arms. In the darkness Winnie could hear the thudding blows. Then something fell. There came a pause, then a click. Fearfully she found and lighted a match, only to see Torrens kneeling over Tom Mercer's body. "You haven't—you haven't killed him?" she managed to say.

"No," he said. He leaned back against the overturned table for support. "He almost killed me," he said. "He would have, I think, if you hadn't called. I didn't think you'd have cared," he added. "It wasn't for you," she said. Across the unconscious man her gaze met Torrens'. "Jim," she said. "you fought fair tonight—but are you fighting fair all the time against Tom?"

"What do you mean?" he asked her. "You threw away your gun tonight—because I was here, I think. Don't you know that as long as you're warden of the prison he's in, you always hold the loaded gun? What are you going to do with it?"

"We'll see," he said as Mercer stirred. Slowly, as if he were returning from afar, Tom Mercer came back to the bitter world of knowledge. His eyes, seeking Winnie's, asked a question she dared not answer, but as he strove to lift his hands, he felt the steel upon his wrists and knew that Torrens had triumphed. His face changed to the face of a dying man, but his eyes were wells of hate as he gazed at his enemy. He said no word when Winnie kissed him, clinging to him; but when Buddy crept over, seeking to cuddle up against him, he looked not at the child's tear-wet face but at the pitiful box of shells in his hands. "It's been a hell of a birthday, hasn't it, Bud?" he asked him. "Well, here's to the day you're twenty-one, and I'm free!" He lifted himself from the floor and turned to Torrens. "Ready," he said, and without another look at the woman and the child, followed the Warden out into the night.

THE rain had passed, and stars shone warmly. The smell of wet earth rose pungent, and the midnight was so vivid with the thrill of living that it seemed to strike Tom Mercer in the face. This, he told himself bitterly, was what he might have had if only he had not lingered. Now, beaten, he was being led back by the man whom he hated, the man who hated him. Suddenly he realized that Torrens had not linked him to himself. Could it be possible that he was giving him the chance to get away? Or was it only a boast of his power to prevent him? He thrust out his manacled hands to the Warden. "I can run just as easy with these on," he said tauntingly.

"I know," Torrens said quietly, "but I think you're not going to run."

Something in his tone struck Mercer. Its determination had not wavered, but its angle of direction seemed differently pointed. What did it portend, he wondered. Power, he knew, but how was the Warden going to exercise it?

Just outside the doorway, before the sentry gave them challenge, Torrens stopped. "Mercer," he said, "for a good many reasons that we needn't go over, I've put up with a lot from you that I wouldn't have taken from another man. One of the reasons is that you haven't grown up yet. You're as much of a child as your little boy. Life hasn't disciplined you, hard though it's been; and prison wont, unless you see for yourself that it's a man's part to knuckle

down. Now, I'm going to give you just one more chance. It wont be any special favor. I don't play that way. What I'm going to give you I'll give to every man in the place who has the makings of manhood in him. Whether you'll take it or not, is up to you." He waited for no answer, and none would have come. Mercer followed him through the guarded doorway and into the entrance hall.

At the office door a deputy spoke to Torrens. The Warden stood, considering, a moment, then turned to Mercer. "Philo wants to see you," he said, "before he dies." He nodded to the deputy, and the man led Mercer through corridor after corridor until he had brought him to a hushed white room. There a man in a white garb took him past rows of empty cots to a screened space in the corner.

WHITE as the pillows on which he lay, old Philo smiled at Tom when the nurse left them together. All the life that was left in him came to his eyes and his voice as he spoke. "Did you get it to him?" he asked. "Did he like it?"

"Yes."
"Did he have the party?"
"Yes."
"Who brought you back?"
"Torrens."
"You know, don't you, that I never told him?"

"I know," he said. The majesty of death heralding its coming to this old man who had been thirty years in prison, awed him. "Can I do anything for you?" he asked, conscious of the futility of the query.

"Yes," Philo said, to his surprise. He seemed to be mastering his strength for the effort of speech. "I never had a son," he said, "and mostly I've been glad. But now—now I wish I'd had some one. Would you mind acting as if you were my boy?"

"No," Mercer said. He rose and patted the pillows in awkward imitation of Winnie's care of Buddy. With shy reverence of the great presence, his hand rested on the old man's thin hair. Philo gave him a wan smile tipped with strange radiance. The old boyish hunger for the father he had never known came back to the younger man.

"I thought perhaps you wouldn't." The old man spoke slowly. With every word his voice seemed weaker, but valiantly he strove. "Tom,"—he lingered over the name,—“there's something I found out here. I never was what you'd call religious. But there's something—in all of us—that wants something. Maybe it's God. And—anyhow—you can find the way to Him here just the same as outside. So if you have to stay—remember that. And, Tom,"—his voice grew so weak that Mercer had to bend down to hear the words,—“Torrens aint so bad. I've seen worse.” There was only a lingering whisper now, and his eyes were glazing. "And—sometimes—if you can—you'll come to Stony Lonely—and think—of—me—and—" The whisper trailed away. Mercer put his fingers on Philo's wrist. The pulse fluttered weakly, then was still.



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Mercer stood looking down at the peaceful old face with an aching throb of loss. Not in all his life had he possessed a friend such as the old man had been, and the knowledge that Philo had died, as he had always prayed against dying, in prison, and because of him, made his passing the more poignant to the watcher.

On this night he had lost his chance of freedom. He had lost something in Winnie, he feared. He had lost what hope he had cherished of holding Buddy's boyhood to him. He had lost hope, and belief in his power, and the fine courage of youth which takes no count of obstacle; but saddest of all, he had lost the man who had given his life to earn the freedom he had not attained, and it was for Philo and not for himself that the tears burned in Mercer's eyes when the nurse, returning, beckoned him away.

For Philo, too, Tom's unaccustomed prayer went up in that time when through the subtle underground of the prison he came to know, even in solitary, that they were burying the old man in Stony Lonely, that dismal cemetery which the convicts had named in all too bitter realization of the aptness of the naming. If Buddy had taught him the prayer, life was teaching him its use; and because he found inexplicable comforting in its petitioning, he said it over and over.

THROUGH the long days and the longer nights of the solitary, Mercer was groping toward some kind of growth like the roots of a plant. Unaware though he was that the night of his unsuccessful attempt at escape, marked by Winnie's failure to speed his going, and by Philo's death, was the seed of change within him, he nevertheless felt that the vague stirrings in his spirit portended some shift of his own attitude.

No word came to him from Torrens in the weeks he was held within the cell. At first he thought to use a prisoner's right of remonstrance against the petty details of his guarded days, and to that end he requested paper and pencil of the man who watched him. By the time they were given to him, however, he had decided that his punishment was, as Torrens had said, no more than any other man would have suffered for the same offense. The recollection that the Warden had thrown away his gun on the night when he had found him, came back to him over and over, until—grudgingly at first but with increasing respect—he began to see that Torrens might be playing fair with him. "If he is, I won't say a word," he promised himself, and tore up the sheet of paper lest he be tempted to use it in anger. With the pencil he drew, after an old habit of happier years, fantastic figures on the only medium within his reach, the wall of his cell.

Little by little the occupation, trifling as it seemed, engrossed him. Easily he exhausted his repertory of birds and insects and flowers, pictures which had always been wont to please Buddy. He could draw with skill, and he had the gift of observation. Now he called on his memory to supply him with material for his working, and it responded with a

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quicken which stirred his other mental faculties.

There came to him, as he worked on the crude drawings, the joy of creation, and for the first time since he had come to the prison, he forgot to count the passing of the hours. His pencil grew blunt, and he begged the guard to sharpen it. The man, seeing its use, brought him others of varied colors. "I used to have a little boy," he said. "He died." In his tone Mercer found a kinship that the bars could not efface. "If you'll get me a piece of paper," he told him, "I'll draw you a picture of mine."

He kept the promise, and the guard accepted the gift in a genuine gratitude which touched the man in the cell deeply. Next he drew a picture of the guard himself. Then, because he felt it a way of tribute, he began to draw his recollection of old Philo. And the first praise, other than Buddy's, which his efforts received came when the guard, peering into the cell one day, spoke with a certain awe. "Why, it's old Philo," he said.

Whether or not he told Torrens of the picture on the cell wall Mercer could not know, but Torrens came two days later and stood outside the bars, scanning the drawings narrowly. "Can you do much of that?" he asked Mercer.

"I've done that." There was pride in his voice.

"Do you want to do more of it?"

Because he had decided that Torrens might not be seeking vengeance at every turn of their paths, he took the Warden's query without the old suspicion, but the old apathy of his prison life led him into question. "Why?" he asked.

"Because there's room in the prison school for every man who wants to come."

"I don't want to go to school."

"Not even to help the other fellows?"

"How do you mean?"

"There are some of them who would like to know how to do what you are doing. Why don't you come and show them?"

"What could I do?"

"That." He pointed to the drawings.

"I couldn't teach anybody."

"Will you try it?"

Thought of old Philo's friendship for him, a stranger, urged him. He couldn't do anything for Philo now but go sometime to Stony Lonely, but might be able to amuse, to interest, perhaps even to guide another man. "All right," he said gruffly.

HE did not know, when he blinked into the brightness of the prison schoolroom, that he was on the threshold of a new life. To him prison meant nothing but incarceration and punishment.

The discovery that the school opened opportunity for an informality of speech unknown in other prison activities brought to him his first doubt as to Torrens' entire enmity toward him. If Torrens were trying to push him farther down, why had he given him this chance to move, to think, to feel outside the beaten track of prison life? He had said, of course, that he gave him nothing

that he did not give other men, but the fact that he let him share it with them puzzled Mercer.

That a few of the men watched with avidity his drawings, and that all of them evinced interest in the finished product gratified him. It was only natural that he should fall into the common interests of the group, and he found himself without surprise poring over textbooks, juggling arithmetic problems, and struggling with spelling. Without any satiric enjoyment he accepted the fact that the instructor of mathematics was serving a sentence for bank-wrecking, and that the teacher of writing was one of the most notorious forgers in the country. In apparent forgetfulness of their sins, they were working with their fellows, and in time Mercer caught something of the spirit of the game.

It was the forger who suggested to him that he could capitalize his drawing talent when he was free. "I'm a coal-miner," Mercer said, "and I guess I'll never be anything else—if I ever get back to it."

"Why go back?" the man asked. The question stirred wondering which Winnie's ambition for him had sometimes quickened, but he shook his head. "I guess it won't matter what I'll be doing in fourteen years," he said. It was the first time he had accepted the thought that he would serve out his sentence, but its voicing failed to give him the cold chill of fearful finality he would have felt a month before. The realization that he was one of hundreds, paying the same kind of penalties under the same system, was acting as anodyne upon him.

THAT it was only a surface effect, however, came to him with the first visiting day which brought Winnie. She was alone, waiting for him in the entrance-hall at his summons. "I didn't dare bring Buddy," she told Mercer. "He didn't sleep for nights after the time you came." There was no reproach in her voice, but he chose to find it there. "I guess I'm all kinds of a fool," he said.

"No," she said, but so wearily that he winced. "You're not any kind of fool, Tom. Sometimes I have thought that I was the fool for asking you to come back. You could have got away, I suppose. But I was afraid for you."

"I'm not as sorry as I was," he said, more to comfort her than to speak the truth.

"Why?"

Her answer set him seeking reasons. "Oh, well, I guess I couldn't have made it, anyway," was all he could find, but he could not escape the feeling that in some peculiar and unfathomable way he was not altogether regretful at his failure. Because his life was so pitifully limited, he told her of all its trivial incidents, even though timidly expectant of her indifference. To his surprise, she refused to consider them petty, either in actuality or in portent. "You won't give it up now that you've started," she implored him, "even if you thought it couldn't be for long?"

He gazed at her questioningly, and she went on: "I don't know whether I should



The Kiss That Burned—

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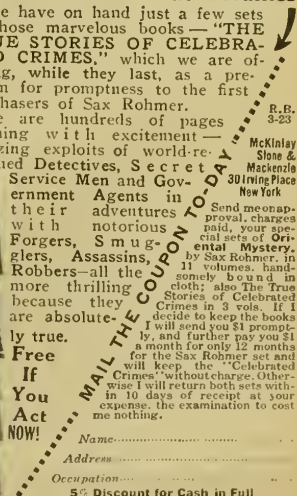
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"Do you think it'll work?" he questioned doubtfully.

"We don't dare think it will, and we don't dare think it won't," she said. Her glance went toward the Warden's office, and Mercer thought he understood. Instead of the rage that had possessed him at other times when he had suspected that Torrens would oppose him, a queer lassitude came over him.

Winnie turned to look him in the eyes. "Tom, what's the matter?" she demanded.

"Nothing new."

"Yes, it is. You've given up!" she challenged him flatly.

"How can anyone hold on forever?"

"It won't be forever."

"It'll be fourteen years. I won't be young when I'm through here. And you—neither will you, Winnie."

"What of it?"

"Weil, you're young now, and pretty. There's no reason why you should bury yourself just because you married a man who didn't know enough to take care of you right. You could marry again, marry somebody who'd treat you right, if only—if you'd just cut me out."

"Tom!" Her voice rang sharp. "If I thought you meant that, if I thought you trusted my love for you so little that you didn't know that there's nothing else in the world I could ever do but wait for you, and work for you, and love you, I'd—I'd hate you! But you don't mean it, and I know you don't. You have been brooding over everything, and you've come to the fool notion that all that's keeping me from wealth and ease and everything else is just loyalty to you. I suppose you think you're noble for saying anything like that, but I think—I think you ought to be spanked!"

HE knew, looking at her shining eyes, that he had never loved her half so well, never yearned for her half so tenderly as now, but out of his love the fire of sacrifice arose. "You've got to do it, Winnie," he insisted.

"It takes two to make that bargain," she said, more lightly. "It seems to me that I married you for worse as well as for better, didn't I?"

"But not this much worse."

She tried to laugh, but the laughter failed to ring true. "What am I going to do with you?" she asked unsteadily. She put her hand over his. "Tom, dear," she said, "life's a queer thing. I've been thinking lately it was like the sand pile where Buddy played when you saw him. It's a glistening, shining heap where we all want to play when we're children, and we fling its grains far and wide. Then we begin to build our castles in Spain out of it, and they are—oh, so wonderful! And then they fall down in the winds and the rains, and we say that there's nothing more to

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do with those shimmering yellow sands. But there is! For out of them we can build something surer than dreams, something real. They have put the sand into the wall to help hold it together." She hesitated, fearful that he might not understand her, but his nod spurred her on. "That's what we have to do with the things that happen to us. We have to take them, and mix them with something we have in ourselves—maybe it's courage—and make them into the wall that we climb to—to God, I guess. Don't you see, Tom?"

"I'm trying to," he said.

HE did try in the days which followed her visit, to see their life as Winnie saw it. All too poignantly he realized his unworthiness of her; but he saw, too, that her love for him gave to her no middle ground. She wouldn't be Winnie if she compromised with life, even when life dealt her heavy blows. The spiritual knowledge of her fine courage entered into Mercer with the sharpness of a dagger-thrust, but once in, gave to his soul the iron it needed.

Almost imperceptibly he began to change his attitude toward the rest of the world, no longer regarding it as a great and oppressing force designed for his undoing, but seeing that life, even in prison, might give a man field for endeavors. Old Philo had been right, he saw, as Winnie was right. It did not matter where a man dwelt, but it did matter how he dwelt. His offering to the memory of the old man as well as to Winnie was a determination to do the very best he could with the tools at his hand.

Through the lingering autumn and the seemingly endless winter he held to his high resolve determinedly. His work in the school progressed, and he found an interest in it for its own sake. He made no ties, perhaps in the feeling that old Philo's friendship was gold which permitted no substituting of alloy. Sometimes he found chance to go to Stony Lonely and brood on the tragedies of dead lives rather than on any sadness of death. It was there, one day when on the hillsides beyond the town of prison and mills the spring was beginning in blossoms of white and pink, that Torrens found him, engaged in a trivial task of path-mending which he had taken for the keeping of the dead man's request.

At sight of him the Warden stopped. "Do you like being outdoors?" he asked him, and Mercer thrilled to the knowledge that there was no enmity in his tone.

"Yes," he said.

For a moment Torrens stood silent, chewing his underlip. Then, "I'm going to try an experiment," he said. "If it goes through, you can be outdoors all summer, if you like."

He went off, leaving Mercer confused by his own changed feeling and a wonder of what these might be came to him in the school through a furtive conversation between the forger and the bank-wrecker. "I tell you it's true," the forger was insisting. "He's going to try the honor system."

"It wont work," the bank-wrecker de-

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By MRS. GRACE HORCHLER

MAYBE I don't know what it is to be a fat woman. Just imagine it—a woman of 5 feet, 6 inches tall, weighing over 234 lbs. That was me—for 15 years! Yes, I was a sight, I'll admit. And I was never allowed to forget it. I "got" the glances and the whispered comment whenever I squeezed myself into a seat in the street car or theatre. Besides, no one has yet invented a flattering mirror.

I used to smile and try to appear indifferent to my size, but it was only make-believe. Underneath it all, there was much wistfulness. Besides, I was worried about my health, my heart in particular. I used to get danger signals on the least exertion.

For over 15 years I did everything to reduce. Goodness knows how much money I spent. I went to physicians, and took no end of special medicines. I bought everything the drug stores carried for taking off fat. I tried dieting until I was almost a physical wreck. I put long hours in hot baths and rolling machines. Everything failed me.

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of various parts of my body are more properly told in a private letter.

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clared scornfully. The echo of his scorn resounded again in the voice of a man in Torrens' office a week later. Mercer, waiting in the hall for an order from the deputy, heard the Warden's low tones and the other man's higher insistence. "You can't do it successfully," he was saying.

"They do it at Occoquan," he heard Torrens say. "They haven't even bars there."

"Oh, well—" The voice died away, but Mercer guessed the truth of the rumor. Torrens meant to institute an honor system, and by his words, it would give Tom the chance to stretch himself outside the walls. The hope which he had thought dead rose in Lazarus robes, but the smell of the grave clung to them, and he dared not cherish them again. He could not forbear, however, from telling Winnie of the possibility when she came on the next visiting day. "It'll be a lot easier," he assured her.

"Are you sure it may not be harder?" she asked him, and he did not question what she might mean.

THEY were seated on a bench in the entrance-hall; and Torrens, coming in toward his office, had to pass them squarely. When he saw Winnie, he halted. From the shadowing on his face, Mercer knew how the other man loathed to see her there, but there rose in him now no triumphant gloating that she had come for his sake. He was, he realized, more bitterly regretful of her presence now than Torrens could ever be. The humiliations of her coming pierced him so suddenly and so deeply that he felt that his selfishness had been demanding from her too high a price. He must, he thought, satisfy himself with the knowledge of her loyalty without the comforting of her presence. He bade her good-by with a feeling of renunciation, and went straight to Torrens, rushing to the point of his errand.

"I don't want Winnie to come again," he said.

"Why not?"

"It's too hard for her. It breaks her heart every time she does, but she'll keep on coming unless we can stop her somehow."

"Yes," said Torrens, "she'll keep on coming."

He sat in silence, staring out of the window toward the lawn which lay startlingly green in front of the stone façade of the building. A queer wistfulness had crept into his voice, reminding Mercer of the way old Philo had spoken of Winnie on the day when he had read her letter. He wondered if the Warden were going to speak more of her, and he felt that he would almost welcome the chance to tell some one of his decision concerning her; but it was not of Mercer's wife that Torrens spoke.

"I'm going to put in the honor system on next Monday morning," he said. "I suppose that you know that there's no more dangerous experiment in prison work than it can be for the man who's responsible. If it fails, why—" He shrugged off the consequences. "But if it succeeds, it means a chance for a thousand men, anyhow, to prove up. So I'm

going to take a chance for myself. I'm going to start a road-camp down the line, up in the hills away from where anybody lives. One hundred men go there, with nothing to hold them but their word. They will be their own guards, their own governors, but upon them depends the chance that sixteen hundred other men will have. They will work all day, but they will work with the State road-engineers, and they will have their own foreman of work. I'm picking you for the job."

"Me?" Mercer asked dully.

"You," said Torrens. He pressed the buzzer on his desk; and Mercer knew it as signal for his departure. He started toward the door, but once there, he turned, tried to say something, and failed. Torrens was not even looking after him.

NOT even in the face of the thrill with which the news of the establishing of an honor system moved the prison, could Mercer comprehend his good fortune. By ordinary rules he knew that he, who had tried to escape no later than last midsummer, would stand no chance of selection, and he realized that Torrens' choice of him came from a motive different in type from the one which inspired him to choose the bank-wrecker as surveyor's helper and the forger as timekeeper. Torrens knew of them, as they knew of themselves, that they pinned their hopes of freedom, on political influence, and would risk no abortive attempts of winning it by other means.

Why, though, had Torrens chosen him? Was it merely to keep Winnie from those heartbreaking visits, or was it because somehow the Warden had come to see what he had been striving to do, and was, in retaliation, giving him trust? The thought of the responsibility which the honor entailed sobered any joy he might have had in it, and it was without relief that he took his place on Monday morning beside the driver of one of the long carry-alls which were to take the honor men of the prison to the road-camp.

Gradually, however, as the strange caravan moved out from the town and into the hills, there came to Mercer the sense of gratitude for what the trust meant. Green fires, running in spurts down gentle slopes, stirred answering flames in his winter-bound heart. The look of the blossoms, reminding him of the time when he had wooed Winnie, brought to him assuaging understanding of spring's constant recurrence. He was glad to be outdoors, glad to be given, if only for this brief space, the power of a free man.

The old habit of work, ingrown in the years of his hard-driven labor in the mines, caught him in its wheels as soon as the engineers laid out the course for his supervision. With the authority of a man knowing the value of every hour, he plunged into the task, heeding not the grumblings of the softer-lived convicts of his crew.

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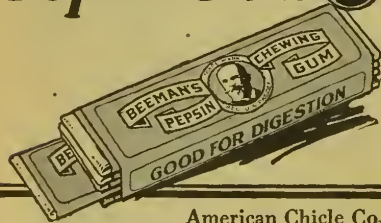
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his blanket at night with a weariness that shut out thought; but in time the vigor of his youth reasserted itself, and he found too much time for 'unwelcome pondering. Out of it came realization that this freedom was but curtailed and transient, and like the tiger's tasting of blood, it only maddened him for more. It was not the thought of an escape from bondage, but the old, immemorial urging of the springtime, driving men forth to unknown lands, which sped his soul. He had now no set desire to get to Winnie and Buddy, nothing but an inchoate purpose to get anywhere out of bounds. The horizon line lured him; the smell of the earth intoxicated him.

Night after night found him hesitant, until at last there came a midnight of clouds when he slipped to the door of the tent he shared with the bank-wrecker and made swift decision to try his fate. He moved noiselessly toward the road, keeping within the shadows till he came to the crest of the hill. There he halted, looking back toward the tents for reassurance of their quiet. Then he faced forward, but he did not move. For squarely in front of him stood some one or something that held him back.

For one frightful instant fear of the unknown gripped him. All the old superstitions of the mines coagulated in his brain into one clot of dread. He could see nothing, hear nothing, but the darkness around him seemed palpitant with pressure. He tried to shake it off, but it was not to be shaken. He tried to drive through it, but he could not move forward. Frightened and baffled, he began to question what power could be holding him back from the freedom that awaited him beyond the brow of the hill.

There came to him Torrens' words: "If it succeeds, it's a chance for a thousand men; but if it fails—" His mind, running on high speed, saw suddenly the power that the Warden had given him. Why, it all depended on him, this plan which would make or break Jim Torrens! If he stayed, the system might hold. If he went, it certainly could not.

If it were only Torrens who would be crushed, though! But back of the Warden he could see that long line of men, marching from cell to shop, from shop to dining-hall, from dining-hall to cell again, those gray-faced, sullen, slinking men, turning on him eyes of bitter hate for his betrayal of them; and always, marching in their midst came Philo, who had died to give him his chance. They were the force, he knew now, which held him back. Could he pass them to that double victory, his own escape and Torrens' downfall? He put out his hand, and found no pressure but the cool air of the spring night. He took a step outward. No resistance held him back now. On the top of the hill, with the camp lying quiet and the prison far away, he stood in tense, thinking silence while before him the road wound clear to the world of the free.

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