Price 25 Cents

January 1921

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Beauty"—the latest novel by Rupert Hughes—"Conflict" by Clarence Budington Kelland
Katherine Newlin Burt, Ben Ames Williams, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Hal G. Evarts and others

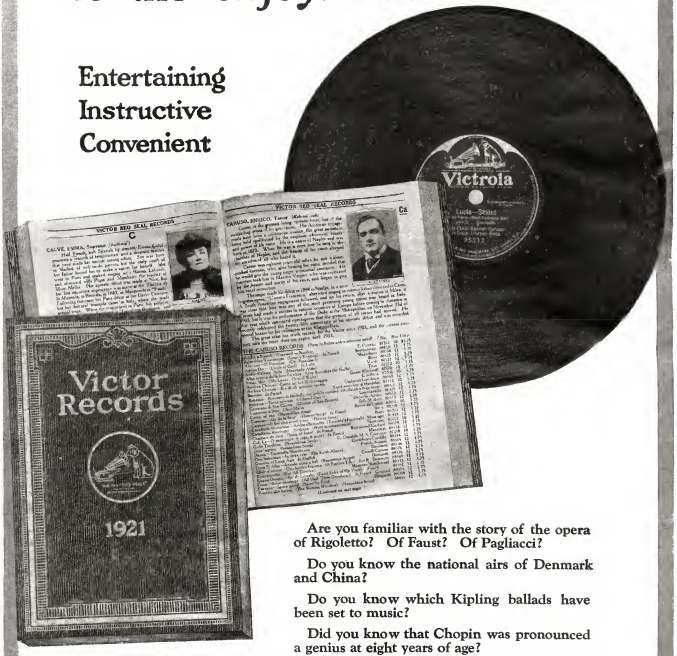
Looking Pleasant this Time

FOR the first time in months the young housewife looks at the figures without scowling *awfully*, and she has Jell-O to thank for the pleasure she derives from inspecting them now. Any woman who wants to know how Jell-O can help her out in the matter of her monthly bills, or in other particulars, will find the information in the new Jell-O Book, just out, which is more beautiful and complete than any other ever issued, and it will be sent free to any woman furnishing her name and address.

THE GENESEE PURE FOOD COMPANY, Le Roy, N. Y., and Bridgeburg, Ont.

The world's best guide book to the enjoyment of music

Entertaining
Instructive
Convenient



Are you familiar with the story of the opera of Rigoletto? Of Faust? Of Pagliacci?

Do you know the national airs of Denmark and China?

Do you know which Kipling ballads have been set to music?

Did you know that Chopin was pronounced a genius at eight years of age?

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REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

This trademark and the trademarked word "Victrola" identify all our products. Look under the lid! Look on the label!

VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO.
Camden, N. J.

Victor Talking Machine Company, Camden, N.J.

This Executive Rose From A Clerkship

Five years ago he was a subordinate, for "down the line." Today he is dictating policies in a great corporation.

Some of his former mates (still in their old jobs) say it was luck—others talk of favoritism—but the records of LaSalle Extension University show that it was training which put this man into an executive ship with his company.

As we saw, just as every clear-headed fellow must see, that there are not enough men with the expert knowledge required to hold high salaried positions. He saw that training was all he needed to pass from the high stool in the outer office to the big mahogany desk in the private room. He realized that men who are "held down" are the ones who do not make themselves worth more.

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What gave this man his start was the sending of a coupon like the one at the bottom of this page. That brought him complete information about the LaSalle plan of training under experts during spare time—a plan which organized and simplified for him the knowledge and experience of hundreds of the country's best business authorities. Along with this information came evidence—copies of hundreds of letters—from men who too were formerly in subordinate positions, but who had been pushed up thru LaSalle training.

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LaSalle gives every man the chance to train for advancement. It enrolls young fellows just beginning their careers; it gives the man already started a new impetus; and it also has as members old, seasoned executives who realize that they, too, can learn more from its staff of over 450 business experts.

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By the LaSalle method you can get, in your leisure time at home, the benefit of the combined experience of noted business authorities in the kind of work for which you wish to qualify.

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The coupon shows the various divisions of business in which the opportunities are greatest. Select the one to which your tastes are most inclined. Learn how you can train at home in every detail of the work and qualify for a position of responsibility and good pay. The LaSalle plan will not interfere with your present position or earnings.

Simply send the coupon marked to indicate the course which particularly interests you and you will receive full information about the LaSalle Problem Method of training, the small cost and our easy terms. And we will also send free our famous book, "Ten Years' Promotion in One," a book that has been an inspiration to more than 250,000 ambitious men. Send for your copy now. Which course shall we tell you about?

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

LaSalle TRAINING OPENS A DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The Largest Business Training Institution in the World

Dept. 166-R **Chicago, Ill.**

Please send me catalog and full information regarding the course and service I have marked with an X below. Also a copy of your book, "Ten Years' Promotion in One," all without obligation to me.

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- ☐ COMMERCIAL LAW: Reading, Reference and Consultation Service for Business Men.
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As safe as possible!

Any other answer is ridiculous—sometimes it is criminal!

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This system is the highest type of fire-fighting device ever devised. It is automatic! The heat of the fire works it. It is always on guard. Always ready. No human aid is required. When the Fire Starts the Water Starts!

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Send us a postal card for "Fire Tragedies and Their Remedy." Every mother and father needs it to convince school authorities that as safe as possible is what the public proposes to have for its children. Write us now before you put aside this magazine. Address Grinnell Company, Inc., 273 West Exchange Street, Providence, R. I.

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Notice to Subscribers and Readers: The congested condition of the railroads is causing delays in mail, express and freight deliveries to such an extent that subscription copies of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, as well as the copies for news-stand sale, in common with other publications, are likely to be somewhat delayed. If, therefore, your subscription copy does not arrive promptly on the 23d, or if your newsdealer does not have the magazine on sale on the 23d, please take these things into consideration and wait a few days before writing to us.

We can assure all subscribers that their copies are being mailed as early as heretofore, in fact, earlier; any delay in delivery will, therefore, result from causes entirely beyond our control, which not only affect magazine deliveries but delivery of shipments of every description.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
Vol XXXVI, No. 3

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JANUARY
1921

Cover Design, posed by Rosina Galli, painted by Haskell Coffin

The *Best* Serial Novels of the Year

Conflict — By Clarence Budington Kelland — 19
Illustrated by Frank Street

Beauty — By Rupert Hughes — 39
Illustrated by W. T. Benda

Snow-blind — By Katharine Newlin Burt — 54
Illustrated by Clark Fay

The Immediate Jewel — By Ben Ames Williams — 68
Illustrated by E. F. Ward

The *Best* Short Stories of the Month

The Woman Who Hated Politics — By Alice Duer Miller — 25
Illustrated by Frank Snapp

United States Smith — By Gerald Beaumont — 30
Illustrated by William Mead Prince

Mischief — By E. Phillips Oppenheim — 35
Illustrated by Raeburn Van Buren

Savagery — By Hal G. Evarts — 44
Illustrated by Frank Stick

The Widening Circle — By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow — 49
Illustrated by Robert W. Stewart

Christmas Eve at Pilot Butte — By Courtney Ryley Cooper — 59
Illustrated by Douglas Duer

What if the Girl Wouldn't Go Back? — By Lucian Cary — 64
Illustrated by Leslie Benson

Something Different — By Mark Lee Luther — 73
Illustrated by Harold Lund

The High Brotherhood — By George T. Marsh — 78
Illustrated by Frederick J. Garner

—*And*—

Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorial — 17

TERMS: $3.00 a year in advance; 25 cents a number. Foreign postage $1.00 additional except on subscriptions for soldiers overseas on which there is no extra postage charge, the price for the subscription being the same as domestic subscriptions, viz.: $3.00 per year. Canadian postage 50c. Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publisher. Remittances 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.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course, the subscription never reaches this office.

Louis Eckstein
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THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE'S EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

Educational Advertising Continued on Page 92

How In One Evening I Learned The Secret of Drawing

By Walter Sayden

FROM boyhood, I have always wanted to draw things. I suppose there are hundreds of young fellows who feel the same way as I did. I often said that if it were possible, I should choose commercial art as a profession. It was not only the big salaries and independence enjoyed by artists and cartoonists that appealed to me, it was the fascination of the game itself.

He was drawing little pictures

But I could hardly draw a straight line. My friends used to have a laughing hysterics at my attempts to sketch things.

One morning, as I was coming into town on the eight o'clock train, I met Larry Stafford. I had come into town with him every day for years, usually passing the time discussing the morning papers.

But this particular morning he had a pad and pencil in his hand. He was drawing little pictures of things that looked like a series of small animals.

"What on earth are you doing?" I asked in amazement.

Larry smiled. "Don't be afraid, I am quite sane. These little pictures are part of a scheme of mine. I am illustrating an idea. They are supposed to be a graphic representation of a deal I am putting over. They speak louder than words."

I watched him,—amazed to see that he drew very well indeed. As he proceeded, and the drawings became more life-like, my curiosity was aroused—I asked him about it.

"Why, I am surprised that you ask me!" he answered. "Look how easy it all is,"—and he quickly sketched a few other figures and grinned at my amazement.

"There is just one little secret, of the who'e thing, Walter," he added. "I never drew before in my life, and you see,— these little sketches really are not bad, are they? You have always wanted to draw, and even if you don't become an artist, you will find it a mighty convenient thing to know. This secret makes drawing as easy as writing. Let's get together this evening and I'll show you how simple it is. I'll give you a little lesson."

The Greatest Surprise of My Life

That night I was astonished to learn that there was but One Great Rule that covered every sort of drawing. I mastered this rule in just fifty minutes, and in two hours found that I could draw. Think of it! It was almost like magic. I had never before been able to draw a recognizable object.

At this time I was a salesman, so that the only time that I had to practice and apply this secret, this Rule, was in spare minutes when at the office or at home. But I progressed with almost unbelievable rapidity.

My First Real Drawing

One day I was talking with a buyer. Remembering Larry's "idea-pictures," I drew some figures to illustrate the point I was trying to establish. He looked at the pictures and caught my idea at once. Before I left he gave me a larger order than I had ever before received from him. *My pictures* had put my idea over.

This worked so well, that I tried it again several times, in fact—and each time I got the same results. My pictures seemed to make a stronger appeal than my words, and my sales increased tremendously.

But that was not all. Two weeks later, I overheard a conversation that struck me as amusing. I wrote it down, laughed at it and, just for fun, sent it to one of the humorous weeklies. A few days later, to my great surprise and pleasure, I received a check from the art editor and a request for more contributions.

From that time on, I sent in little sketches and jokes, more or less regularly. A few months ago, I received an offer which startled me. The magazine for which I had been drawing wished to take me on the regular staff at a much greater salary than I was then making.

My love of drawing came strongly to the front and, needless to say, I accepted at once, and the first thing I did was to tell Larry Stafford what his idea had led to. When he heard that I was actually a successful artist on a real magazine he gasped with amazement.

I told him how the same One Great Rule of drawing which had made it easy for him to draw had meant even more to me—and how this simple home-study course by a famous artist, Charles Lederer, which we had gone over that evening, had given me the secret which had meant so much.

Larry laughed at my enthusiasm, but admitted that such a remarkable success as mine was enough to make a man a bit optimistic.

Easier than Learning to Operate a Typewriter

Through this amazing system, drawing can be *taught* as easily as anything else. In his simple, home-study course a world-famous cartoonist, Charles Lederer, teaches you to draw just as a business school teaches you to keep books, or operate a typewriter or write shorthand. But it is a hundred times simpler than any of those accomplishments.

And the best part of it all—is that the course teaches you to draw so that you can *sell* your pictures right from the start. That is really the most important part after all. Everyone wants to sell his work, and that is just what you can do, with Mr. Lederer's great secret.

Don't misunderstand, I am not praising myself. The point is this,—if I, who never was able to draw at all, could achieve this really remarkable success, others can do the same, or better.

See for yourself,—send for the course and try it out. If you can draw at all you will probably get along even faster than I, and you will find modern commercial art the most fascinating and delightful work imaginable. Remember, that opportunities in this uncrowded field are unlimited. There is a constantly growing demand for cartoonists and illustrators. If you like to draw, or if you *think* that you *would* like to draw, don't miss this wonderful opportunity to learn in an evening or two of your spare time.

The most fascinating Business in the world

Mr. Charles Lederer, the well-known newspaper cartoonist, after years of practical working experience, has developed one great simple rule of commercial drawing. This secret has revolutionized the entire theory of drawing. It means that drawing can be easy for *you* as writing. Out of his many years of work-a-day experience, Mr. Lederer offers this One Big Secret of Drawing to all.

Five Days' Free Trial

We want you to prove to your own satisfaction the tremendous value of Mr. Lederer's discovery. It will not cost you one penny. We want you to examine the Entire Course at our expense for five days. If you will just fill out the coupon below, detach it and mail it to us, we will gladly send you the complete course for your approval. We feel sure that when you see the surprising simplicity of this method you will agree with us that it is the greatest discovery ever made in this field.

Look it over, test it out—then if after five days you decide that you want it, send us $7.00. If you do not wish to keep it, return to us and forget the matter.

But act AT ONCE. Learn to draw—whether or not your aim is commercial art. It is a big asset no matter which field you are in. Let us disclose to you the whole secret. Detach the coupon and mail it TODAY.

Independent Corporation
Dept. D-361, 319 Sixth Avenue, New York

Independent Corporation
Dept. D-361, 319 Sixth Avenue, New York

You may send me the Course or Courses checked below. Within five days of receipt I will either remail them or send you $5 for each in full payment, except as noted.

- ☐ Drawing, Art Cartooning Course ($5) By Charles Lederer
- ☐ Both Memory Course ($5) By David M. Roth
- ☐ How to Read Character at Sight ($5) By Dr. K. M. H. Blackford
- ☐ Mastery of Speech ($5) By Frederick Houk Law
- ☐ Personal Courses in Personal Efficiency ($5) By Edward Earle Purinton
- ☐ Super-Salesmanship ($5) By Arthur Newcomb
- ☐ Home Study Business Builder Account System ($5.50) By Wesley W. Ferrin
- ☐ Parsons Shorthand $5) By Alexander Lichtenstag

Name.....

Address.....

.....

To Mothers of School Girls

The importance of using Packer's Tar Soap regularly during the "high school" era.

IF there is one particular time when the hair and scalp demand vigilant looking after, it is during the teens, when the budding girl is slipping into womanhood.

At this time the scalp glands are very active and susceptible to infections and devitalizing influences which later produce diseases of the scalp and loss of hair. Therefore, extraordinary precautions should be taken to avoid conditions likely to interfere with their natural activity and the consequent health and growth of the hair.

Shampoos with Packer's Tar Soap should be given at least every twelve or fourteen days throughout this important period, following the sensible Packer method described in the booklet accompanying each cake. The scalp is then assured the full benefit of pure pine tar and healing vegetable oils and the help of scalp manipulation through easy finger-tip massage. Furthermore, the invaluable and often life-long habit is formed of regularly caring for the hair and scalp.

Packer's Tar Soap

"Pure as the Pines"

Today, after nearly fifty years, "Packer's" is still the same pure, clean-smelling pine-tar soap that gave such encouragement to the shampoo habit in be early 70s.

Packer's Liquid Tar Soap

And Packer's *Liquid* Tar Soap! Designed for those who prefer a liquid shampoo soap of "Packer quality. It cleanses delightfully—keeping the hair soft and attractive. It is perfumed just enough to be agreeable.

THE PACKER MFG. COMPANY
Dept. 83A
120 West 32nd Street,
New York City

Send for These
"PACKER"
Samples

10 cents each

HALF-CAKE of Packer's Tar Soap, good for several refreshing shampoos — 10 cents.

LIBERAL SAMPLE BOTTLE of Packer's Liquid Tar Soap, delicately perfumed and delightfully cleansing — 10 cents.

Galileo's Pendulum:

PAINTED FOR FATHER TIME BY HUGH RANKIN

SWINGING from the lofty dome of the ancient cathedral at Pisa, Italy, hangs a massive bronze lamp.

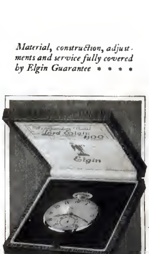
Watch it sway, as Galileo and Marina watched it three hundred years ago, and you may notice a peculiar thing: the *distance* of its swing varies, but the *time* remains the same.

Countless eyes had idly gazed at it, but Galileo's were first to read its secret—the principle of isochronism, or "equal time." The seventeen-year-old philosopher had discovered *the law of the Pendulum!*

Sixty years later, hopelessly blind, he thought out its practical application to clock work, afterwards adapted to pocket watches in the form of the "pendulum balance."

American watch owners owe a debt of gratitude to Italy. For the "pendulum balance," or balance wheel, is a prime factor in the precision of those timekeeping marvels of our day—

Material, construction, adjustments and service fully covered by Elgin Guarantee * * * *



Elgin Watches

IRENE OLSON
in "The Greenwich Follies"
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

ANN PENNINGTON
in "Scandals of 1920"
Photograph by De Meyer, New York

LOUISE GLAUM
Film Play Star

PEGGY WOOD
in "Buddies"
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

BETTINA ALLEN
in "Century Midnight Whirl"
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

ANNETTE BADE
in "The Midnight Follies"
Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

Robt. Burns Cigar

HAVE YOU TRIED ONE *LATELY*?

It's easy to explain!

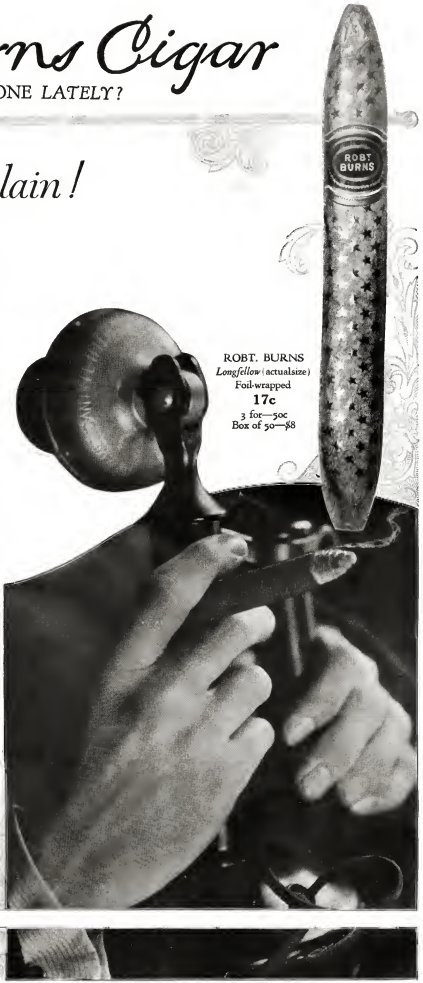
ROBT. BURNS' great popularity with modern men is easy to explain: His *filler* is *full Havana* of particularly mild selection. Special curing mellows this Havana to a still more comfortable mildness.

Around Robt. Burns we place a single thinness of the finest wrapper leaf grown—*neutral Sumatra.*

When you smoke your first Robt. Burns, the chances are you will say to yourself, "The very cigar I've been looking for — should have tried it long ago!"

Most good cigar stores sell Robt. Burns *Invincible* and *Longfellow.* Today is a good day to get acquainted.

General Cigar Co., INC.
NATIONAL BRANDS
NEW YORK CITY



ROBT. BURNS
Longfellow (actual size)
Foil-wrapped
17c
3 for—50c
Box of 50—$8

What Happens When an Apple Hits You?

A common-sense editorial by BRUCE BARTON

ON the dining-car the other day I ordered preserved figs for dessert; and the waiter responded cheerfully: "I'm sorry, sah, but we aint got none."

A keen-looking young fellow sitting opposite me looked up and smiled.

"It might interest you to know how that same remark put several thousand dollars into my pocket," he said.

"I am in the business of making apple-sauce," he explained in answer to my look of surprise. "We put it up in sealed jars and sell it through the grocery stores. Everyone was kind enough to tell us when we started that it couldn't be done; but we do it just the same.

"Coming over from Philadelphia last year I ordered preserved figs; and received the same answer that the waiter has just given you. That set me thinking.

"I went back to our factory, got a jar that would hold an individual portion of apple-sauce, filled it, labeled it attractively, and set out for New York to interview the men who make the purchases for the dining-cars. It was difficult to interest them at first, but I succeeded finally.

"And now we sell scores of thousands of those individual jars every year—all because a waiter told me that he was sorry, but 'we aint got no preserved figs'."

That man did not know it, but he had given in less than five minutes an epitome of human progress. By just such steps the race has climbed out of barbarism into civilization—by one mind after another meeting an obstacle and conquering it.

How many millions of men have watched their wives bending over a needle? Elias Howe watched his wife, and thought, and worked, and invented the sewing-machine.

How many have seen the steam in a kettle lift the lid? Watt saw it, and out of his thought there came the steam engine.

Most of us go lazily through life, using whatever the ingenuity of the past has bequeathed, and adding nothing on our own account.

A hundred clerks will work side by side in an office; and only one in a year will ever gladden the heart of the boss by saying: "Couldn't we save a little time or money by doing this thing in this better way?"

But that one clerk who, out of his dissatisfaction with things as they are, devises even a trifling improvement, is a brother of Edison and Watt and Fulton. Humanity becomes his debtor in a little measure; in him are the seeds of genius.

For what is genius but an insatiable appetite for something better, a settled habit of meeting every *can't* with a *why?*

There are great unused sections in all of our brains. How much would be added to human progress if, for one single week, each one of us were to make every obstacle the subject of a little real thought?

Sir Isaac Newton lying under an apple tree was hit on the head by an apple. And setting his mind to work, he developed at length the theory of gravitation.

Apples of obstacles and mischance continue to fall; we are hit by them every day. But the trouble is most of them merely raise a bump when they ought to stir up an idea.

Another of Bruce Barton's Common-sense Editorials will appear on this page in the next issue of the Red Book Magazine.

Men like Ivory Soap

They like its unassuming whiteness.

They like its refreshing fragrance.

They like its quick, abundant, lasting lather.

They like its easy rinsing.

They like its mildness.

They like its convenience—"it floats."

They like the refreshing, healthful feeling of perfect cleanliness that follows its use.

They like it because they know it is just pure soap of the highest grade—nothing else.

Ivory is the safe, pleasing soap for everybody's toilet and daily bath.

IVORY SOAP

IVORY

IT FLOATS

99 44/100% PURE

Wash silk shirts and all fine garments with Ivory Soap Flakes. ***Sample Package Free.***

Absolutely safe. Snowlike flakes of purest soap that melt into rich suds instantly. No rubbing. Send for free sample to The Procter & Gamble Co., Dept. 28-A, Home Economics Section, Cincinnati, O.

JANUARY, 1921
Vol. XXXVI, Number 3

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

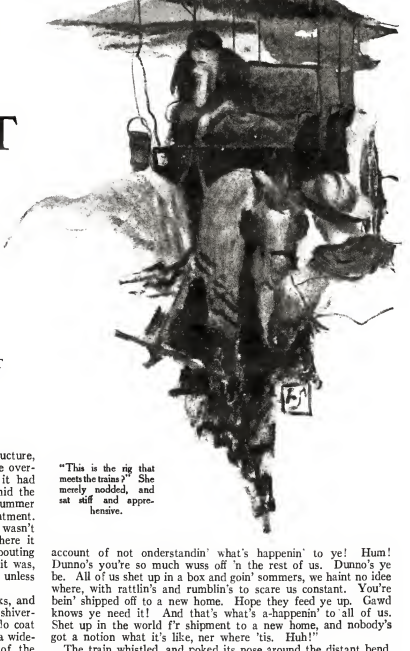
KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN
Editor

THIS vital novel of today by the author of "The Daughter of Discontent" deals with a girl's fight for her soul's freedom from the bondage of age and hypocrisy. Its scene is the great North Woods.

CONFLICT

By
CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

Illustrated by FRANK STREET



"This is the rig that meets the trains?" She merely nodded, and sat stiff and apprehensive.

CHAPTER I

THE railway station, a drab, neglected structure, squatted in the mud and slush waiting for the overdue train to arrive. For years and years it had squatted there amid mountainously piled winter snow, amid the mud and muck of thawing spring, amid the unsavory summer dust. Its aspect was always one of boredom and discontentment.

It was unable to see the town it served, because the town wasn't there at all, but a mile away, and behind the station, where it could not even look at the tall stack of the sawmill, spouting smoke from spruce slabs and sawdust. The station knew it was, and always would be, the sort of station nobody got off at unless necessity compelled.

On the platform stood one of those uphill baggage trucks, and on the truck was a soap-box with slats across the top and a shivering puppy inside. An old man in rubber boots and a buffalo coat and a cap pulled down over his ears was poking the tip of a wide-striped mitten through the slats for the entertainment of the puppy, which did not seem to be entertained in the least, and talking to it in a nasal, sharp-toned voice which was perfectly in keeping with the straggling white whiskers which tickled his muffler. The three-seated conveyance which he drove was backed against the platform, and the pair of unclipped horses attached to it stood with drooped heads as if finishing their night's repose.

"Too skeered to be friendly," he said to the puppy, "and I don't blame ye a mite. Uh-uh! Haint no way of explainin' to ye what's happened, nuther. Wonder what you're figgerin' has happened. Calc'late your world has plumb gone to smash. Shet up in a box and left a-settin' out in the cold!" He peered at the address on the box. "You haint goin' fur,—only two stations,—but I bet ye when ye git into that baggage-car, and the rattlin' and roarin' begins, you'll come nigh to throwin' a fit. Jest on account of not onderstandin' what's happenin' to ye! Hum! Dunno's you're so much wuss off 'n the rest of us. Dunno's ye be. All of us shet up in a box and goin' sommers, we haint no idee where, with rattlin's and rumblin's to scare us constant. You're bein' shipped off to a new home. Hope they feed ye up. Gawd knows ye need it! And that's what's a-happenin' to all of us. Shet up in the world fr shipment to a new home, and nobody's got a notion what it's like, ner where 'tis. Huh!"

The train whistled, and poked its nose around the distant bend, and approached with a motion for all the world like that of a cat running along a ridge-pole. It clanked and sniffed and squealed and spat as if protesting at the necessity for stopping at such a place, but finally subsided, growling, before the station. The station master galloped ahead with the swaybacked truck, and no less than four large trunks were dumped out upon it with the amazing celerity of which baggagemen are capable. But nobody got off the train. The conductor stood scowling beside the step, for it was his ambition to make up time. Half a minute passed, and then a young woman appeared on the platform and tripped down the steps, careful not to touch the hand-rail lest it soil her gloves. She carried nothing, but behind her came another young woman lugging two bags.

"You took your time," said the conductor, but the young woman

did not favor him with so much as a glance; she was too much occupied by looking at the surrounding prospect, and if her expression was an indication of her thoughts, she was criticising it sharply.

THE old man who had poked his mitten-tip at the bewildered puppy waited for her to approach.

"Your name Dorkis?" he asked.

"I am Miss Remalie," she said in the tone one uses to put another in his proper place.

"Dorkis Remalie, haint it? Dorkis your fust name?"

"Yes. Where—"

"All right, then, Dorkis, you come with me. Your uncle told me to fetch you up. Who's that?" He poked his mitten toward the young woman who carried the bags.

"My maid," said Miss Remalie shortly.

"Nothin' said about no maid. What's her name?"

"That can't matter, can it? Really! If you are to take me to my uncle's house, let us start."

"Um! Got any baggage?"

"Only these bags and four trunks."

"Cale'latin' to open a store?" the old man asked with quickened interest.

"Of course not. It's cold and disagreeable here. I've had no breakfast. Let the man take the bags, Jane."

"Um! You're some pertier'n I figgered John Remalie's niece'd be apt to be, but I haint disapp'inted in your disposition, to speak of. If you stick to it patient, it'll be as ornery as John's at his age." The old man did not offer this as rebuke or in a spirit of criticism, but merely as an observation. He picked up the bags the maid set down on the platform, grunted, and walked off toward his conveyance. Dorcas Remalie hesitated, biting her lips at the impertinence, and her helplessness to resent it, but followed with Jane at her heels.

"You two set in there," said their driver, jerking his thumb toward the second seat, "and hang on. 'Taint nuther wheelin' ner slippin', and like's not, you'll joggle out."

He climbed to his seat, released the reins from the whip-socket and spoke to his horses: "G'lang, there! Yup! Come round—what's ailin' ye? Got a passel of wimmin aboard. Never learn much off'n wimmin. Travelin' men's the most eddicatin'. Don't calc'late to be no more learned at the end of this trip than I be at the beginnin'."

Suddenly he turned and stared at Miss Remalie's maid.

"What you calc'late to do? Cook?" he demanded.

"No—sir," said that young woman with a good deal of embarrassment.

"Mighty good thing. Miss Labo wouldn't never tolerate nobody messin' around her kitchen. 'Taint likely she'll tolerate you nohow. Say, what do you do?"

"I—I take care of Miss Remalie's clothes, and do her hair and —and—"

"Button her shoes?" he asked with interest.

"Yes sir."

"Um! Read about 'em. Seen 'em in the movies. Uh-huh! Didn't never calc'late on seein' one in the flesh. Never kin tell. Drive a bus long enough, and everythin'll happen to you. Been a-drivin' this here trip to the station fer forty year, and never missed a train. Fact! Got my eddication that way—listenin' to the talk of travelin' men and sich. Sea'sely ever a trip I don't pick up somethin' wuth knowin' . . . . G'lang, there. Haint I told you to keep out of them ruts?"

"Why didn't my uncle meet me?" Dorcas asked shortly.

"He haint the meetin' kind," said the driver. "Say, does this here maid of your'n rully help you put on your clothes in the mornin'? Pull on your stockin's and sich?"

"Can that possibly interest you?" said Miss Remalie frigidly.

"It not only kin, but it does. Does she?"

"She does."

"Should think it'd be a pesky nuisance. Wash your face an' hands fer ye?"

Miss Remalie's eyes were fixed sullenly on the road before her, and she did not answer. The old man studied her face out of the corner of his eye, cleared his throat and turned to his horses.

If Miss Remalie had not been a very proud young woman, she would have cried. The prospect was bleak, uninteresting, drab, dirty. Nowhere was a mitigation of the monotony of the country within her view. The thought that she must live among these surroundings perhaps for years terrified her. It was impossible, a nightmare from which she would awake.

A feeling of helpless desperation seized her. Somehow she had been entrapped by events, and all the brightness and hope had been snipped from her life by the scissors of Fate. She hated John Remalie, her father's brother though he was, with all the bitterness of which a girl of nineteen is capable. She never had liked the man with his cold, pious ways, though she had never known him well nor seen him often. She hated him—*hated* him!

In another week or two she would have been starting for Florida. There would have been warmth and sunshine and dancing and music and irresponsibility and luxury. In the spring she would have stopped off at Pinehurst, and later she had planned to go to Lennox, with a little yachting later and perhaps some camping *de luxe* thrown in. But here she was, not from necessity, financial necessity, but because of the unspeakable tyranny of the man whom ill fortune had put in a position of absolute authority over her! She could not bear it. She could not bear it!

They were entering the village now, passing a row of houses all painted a hideous yellow—a dozen of them, already banked against the coming of winter, every one exactly like every other one. Everywhere was dinginess. Half a dozen stores in unkempt frame buildings, with show-windows filled with such articles of utility and adornment as Dorcas Remalie never before had seen, stared at her. Such a village had no right to have contact with her; it was an affront to her pride and to her self respect.

Yet here she was, helpless to escape.

The conveyance turned into the muddy square, veered to the right, and crossing a bridge the boards of which rattled loosely, began climbing a hill. If Dorcas Remalie had looked behind her, she would have seen the great, beautiful, silvery bulk of the distant mountain, and perhaps she would have then and there admitted that this country was not altogether neglected by God.

Upon the hill were two or three decent, almost pretentious houses of characteristic village architecture. They were large, and rambled, or they affected quasi-mansard roofs with profuse bay windows. Whatever their architectural incongruities, all were placed well back from the street amid obviously planted maples or mountain ash, in broad lots—and gave off an atmosphere of homyness and decency and solidity and comfort. The conveyance turned through the gateway in a low stone wall, and Dorcas looked up quickly to see what manner of house was to be her home.

"Oh!" she cried, and her hand flew to her throat.

"Here you be," said the driver. "Biggest and *most* expensive house in the caounty. Uh-huh! Made out of stone. Kin see for yourself. Folks says the's twenty rooms into it, though I haint never counted, myself."

IT was the sternest, most forbidding house Dorcas had ever seen. Nothing ameliorated its blank, frowning stare. It was so big it impressed, so granite gray and hard that it depressed. It was a house to warn one away, not to invite one to enter. Besides its austere hideousness, it seemed to hint at an ability to conceal matters best not brought to light. The shades were down on all windows in front. John Remalie had planned the house; it had been erected under his eye, and it suited him.

"Mostly they use the back door," said the driver.

Dorcas ignored the suggestion, and when the wagon stopped, alighted and mounted the steps to the austere door. There was a bell-pull, which she operated. The driver sat on his seat, watching with obvious interest to see what was going to happen. Nothing happened. Dorcas pulled the bell again, and when she had about made up her mind to try a third time, there came sounds from within, the releasing of a chain, the unlocking of locks, and one half of the double door swung inward. In the opening appeared a gray, spare figure of a woman, indistinct in the dusk of the unlighted vestibule. Her features were not to be distinguished. She remained silent, staring, waiting.

"I am Miss Remalie," said Dorcas. "My uncle—"

"Gone to the mill," said a voice, which, somehow, gave one the impression of long disuse. "Come in so I kin git the door shet."

Dorcas entered, followed by her maid. The door closed behind them.

The driver of the vehicle gathered up his reins. "G'lang," he said to his horses.

CHAPTER II

DORCAS followed her conductor through a broad hall of dusk and shadows, from which opened larger, dusky, shadowy rooms. No light was permitted to enter, but a few meager rays stole admission past the edges of drawn shades. There

"Your comin' here haint my doin'," said Miss Labo, "and I don't purpose to be put out by it." Dorcas motioned peremptorily toward the door.

Orrin whispered anxiously: "Get somebody — quick!

was an odor of cleanly disuse, of haircloth—a pungent odor not to be described or compared to any other odor. It was unfamiliar to Dorcas, but it conveyed its meaning to her, and she shivered.

She found herself walking softly, with bated breath—tiptoeing, as if a plush casket with silver handles rested in one of those obscure rooms.

The woman who led the way moved silently through the hall, turned to the right, and without looking back or paying any attention whatever to Dorcas and the maid, mounted the stairs. Dorcas hesitated, then followed. The woman pushed open the door of a bedroom and entered. Dorcas paused in the doorway. The room was large, carpeted with Brussels, furnished with huge pieces of black walnut ornamented by columns and scrolls and panels of polished veneer. The shades of its three windows were carefully drawn.

The woman walked to the side of the enormous bed, turned jerkily and pointed downward.

"Yours," she said.

Dorcas was glad of any place of refuge where she might be alone and think and rest. She entered, motioning her maid to follow with the bags.

"Will you show my maid what room she will occupy?" she asked.

"Who? Her?" The woman pointed at Jane as if Jane were some article of merchandise.

"Yes."

"Never heard of her before. No orders."

"But she must have a room."

"Nothing said. Nothing can be done."

"Where is my uncle? Why isn't he here to receive me? Who are you?"

"*Miss* Labo—housekeeper," said the woman, ignoring the first two questions, but answering the third in such a manner as to stress her spinsterhood.

"Very well, Miss Labo. Will you have breakfast for Jane and myself sent up as soon as possible?"

"Breakfast's over. Dishes done."

"But we have traveled all night. There was no diner on the train." Dorcas was close to tears, but pride restrained them. She walked to the window and released the shade so that it flew with a snap to the top and then whirled around the roller once or twice. Miss Labo uttered a sound of expostulation. Dorcas repeated the action at both the other windows. Somehow the light gave her courage, perhaps the courage of desperation, for she faced Miss Labo.

"Will you bring food immediately? Coffee and toast at any rate. Immediately, please."

For the first time Dorcas saw Miss Labo distinctly. It was the whiteness of the woman's face that one saw first—not a pallor as of long illness, but rather the complexion of some different race. Miss Labo's hair was gray with distinct streaks of black, and was drawn tightly back from her forehead into a tight, shiny knot at the crown of her head. The effect of it was as if Miss Labo's head were covered with a veneer of some strangely grained wood brought to a high polish. Her eyes were black and small and very sharp. Dorcas thought at once that these were the sort of eyes that could look upon unsightly things without wavering. She was spare, very straight, very flat of chest, and hipless; she made

Get the marshal before Mark kills this young feller."

Dorcas think of hermits and anchorites who chastened the flesh. As their eyes met, the girl knew she would never find a friend in this woman.

"Your comin' here haint my doin'," said Miss Labo sharply, "and I don't purpose to be put out by it."

Dorcas motioned peremptorily toward the door, and Miss Labo, after remaining motionless for a moment as if to indicate that she would not leave until it suited her convenience, turned and vanished silently into the dismal hall.

Dorcas burned with a sense of having been wantonly outraged, gratuitously insulted. Anger took the place of loneliness and dread of her surroundings. She, Dorcas Remalie, had been spoken to in this manner by a servant! Affronts to one's dignity have a sharper edge at nineteen than at fifty.

Why were these things happening? Why did her uncle's servant affront her? How had it come about that she had arrived at a position where she could be thus affronted with impunity? She had a feeling of being stripped of everything, of aloneness and helplessness—she who had never been compelled to ask a favor or utter a command a second time. Her own world had petted and humored her, exerting itself for her pleasure and her convenience. In this new world she seemed to be nothing—less than nothing. Her uncle had lacked the courtesy to welcome her to the home of which she was compelled to be an inmate; her uncle's servant openly resented her coming, treated her as if she were some pauper stepchild.

"Miss Remalie," said the maid.

"Yes, Jane." Dorcas did not turn from the window from which she was staring dry-eyed, yet trembling from head to foot.

"You needn't see about a room for me."

"I don't understand."

"I wouldn't stay in this house for gold and precious stones, Miss Remalie. I'm goin' back to N'York by the first train. I'm—I'm afraid here." The girl's voice quavered.

"Very well, Jane. Please unpack my bags."

"It aint no way to use a lady like you."

Sympathy from a servant! It was unbearable to think she had fallen so in the eyes of her maid that Jane could sympathize with her.

Dorcas leaned against the window frame, her fists clenched until the knuckles showed white, her face pale and sullen. Anger, the hot, flashing, unrestrained anger of a pampered, willful girl of nineteen, swept over her. She would run away. That is the first thought of youth when confronted by authority—to run away. She counted her money. In her purse was a trifle over a hundred dollars. A hundred dollars was negligible to Dorcas Remalie. Why, her allowance for spending-money had been fifty times that—until her father died. She might *run* away on a hundred dollars, but she could not *stay* away.

The idea of *earning* money never had occurred to her, except in a society way and for charity.

She could not now become a person in a shop, nor an office person, because she did not know how. She knew how to do nothing but to be what she was, a very pretty débutante.

Movement outside arrested her attention; it was a slight, quick movement, a cautious movement, and it was the caution which fixed Dorcas' eyes upon the spot. She was not sure, but she thought she saw a head bob out around the corner of the barn and then jerk back again. As she stood watching with parted lips, she looked very young indeed. The head appeared again, moving out cautiously, an inch at a time, and remaining so the eyes in the head could stare about with the evident desire of making certain no one was about. Then a man ducked from the shelter of the barn, ran stooping to the woodpile, behind which Dorcas could see him lurking for a moment or two, after which he crouched and stepped cautiously toward the rear of the house, disappearing from view.

His face had been invisible throughout, but Dorcas observed that he was a big man with bulky shoulders made to appear gigantic by his green-and-blue-checked Mackinaw coat. On his head was a knit cap, and his trousers were tucked into high rubber shoes of some sort, which Dorcas' experience could not identify as shoe-pacs. She watched, but the man did not reappear. It was evident to her he had entered the house, and it was evident to her that he had not wanted to be seen entering the house.

She was more interested than frightened. Somehow the incident seemed in character with the house. It was mysterious as the house was mysterious. Queer things ought to happen in such a house. Already, though she had not been within its walls an hour, she was beginning to feel the weight of the house's character. It was a strong and oppressive character, a disquieting character. The house was set apart from other houses, not by its outrageous architecture, but by the atmosphere of it, an atmosphere of unnatural life, of strangeness, as if it were a stage prepared in every detail of setting for a play in which unbelievable things might happen.

As she still stood by the window, a buggy splashed by along the driveway, and Dorcas saw it stop and her uncle alight. He entered the back door, and she could hear him shut it loudly after himself. Then came a brief pause before she heard his voice calling her name peremptorily from the foot of the stairs.

"Dorcas! Come down."

She walked toward the door, her lips compressed, her heart thumping. She felt cold, incapable of speech, as if life had died within her and as if it would be impossible to utter a word to the man who awaited her. She paused on the landing and looked down to where he stood stiffly looking up at her. Apparently he was as much at a loss for a suitable greeting in the circumstances as she. For an appreciable time they merely stared at each other

"You're here," he said finally, and now she remembered how she had disliked his voice, with its metallic distinctness.

She made no response, but descended slowly the remaining steps. Her uncle did not extend his hand to her; he simply motioned to an open door and said: "We'll go in here."

It was a small room, a sort of office containing a battered roll-top desk, tightly closed, and two oak chairs with saddle seats. John Remalie entered first, leaving Dorcas to follow, but when she was inside, he brushed past her and closed the door firmly. Then he seated himself and peered at her coldly out of his gray eyes, eyes that were too close together to invite friendship or confidence. His face was smooth-shaven and gaunt, his hair a yellowish white as if it had once been sandy and now clung obstinately to its youthful color. His expression had been schooled to austerity. The look of the man made one want to stand in the sunshine for its warmth and light. A glance at John Remalie's face was enough to warrant the observant in reaching the conclusion that no gracious human quality or emotion had its residence in him.

"You brought four trunks and a—maid," he said.

"Yes."

"No girl of your age should have four trunks of clothing. Your father permitted such pandering to your vanity. I shall not."

"My wardrobe," she said angrily, "is none of your affair."

"Whatever concerns you is my affair. The maid must go. I do not believe in servants of that kind."

"She is going," Dorcas said in her most biting voice. "She declines to stay in such a house."

John Remalie's expression did not alter as he scrutinized his ward. She met him eye to eye, defiantly.

"I do not expect affection from you," he said presently, "but I shall enforce obedience."

"You have no right to treat me so. You have no right to force me to live here in this—this horrible place, in this dreadful house. My father never meant you should do this. He never intended you should be a—a *tyrant*." Her voice quavered and ceased. She was a raid to speak more, for fear of losing self-control and dignity.

"I am the best judge of your father's intentions. By his will and the order of the court I am the guardian of your *person* and property. As the guardian of your person I am responsible to God for the welfare of your soul. You have been pampered; your character has been undermined by luxuries and the useless, unseemly life you have been permitted to lead. It may be too late to turn you into a useful, God-fearing woman, but it is my duty to do what I can, by the aid of our Heavenly Father."

She laughed shortly. Years dropped from her, and she became an impertinent child, capable of showing her dislike by sticking out her tongue. "If you're the kind of man God likes," she said saucily, "I'll be friendly with Satan."

He seemed to increase in stature, to swell with righteous wrath. "I permit no impiety in this house," he said in an awesome voice. "You must be disciplined. You are a mere child. Possibly you have been made to regard yourself as a young woman and beyond discipline. Dorcas," he made his voice unctuously solemn, "you are an heiress. Your father left a great fortune which will be your own some day. While you are in my hands and that fortune is in my hands, I shall teach you how to make use of it as the Master would desire. You shall wear decent clothing, not the immodest garments which are doubtless in those trunks. You shall conform to the religious practices of this house. You shall eat plain food, and if you read, it shall be books I approve. The sole end of your life has thus far been pleasure. The day will come," he prophesied with a forbidding smile, "when you will thank me for the concern I am showing, and for the labor I shall give to forming your character. I often think how all things are for the best. My brother's death—ah—may mean the salvation of his daughter's soul."

Dorcas compressed her lips. "Who is that woman?" she said sharply.

John Remalie was nonplused for an instant. Such an unexpected wrenching of the conversation threw him off his balance. "What woman?" he asked, off his guard.

"The woman in this house."

"She is my housekeeper. An excellent woman, who has been with me for twenty-five years."

"I don't care if she's been here a hundred," said Dorcas. "I wont stay in the house with her."

"Why, may I ask?" said Remalie, compressing his lips and narrowing his lids.

"Because she is a wicked, cruel woman. She has done something awful, or she will do something awful. I can *feel* it."

She was startled, frightened by the sudden change in her uncle's bearing. His eyes glittered; his jaw dropped and his cheeks became flaccid. He leaned forward stiffly, and his mouth worked, but uttered no sound. It was as if some sudden, sharp pain had stabbed his heart, and he gazed with terror into the eyes of death. "What—do—you—mean?" he said, finding difficulty in enunciating the words.

"Exactly what I say; she must leave this house if I am to stay in it."

"You don't know what you're saying. You don't know what you're saying. Twenty-five years. Miss Labo has lived here twenty-five years." He stopped suddenly and appeared to gather the forces of his will; in another moment he was himself, cold, piously stern, repellant. "This is my house, young woman. Those shall remain in it whom I desire. I am master in this house, master of all who live in it. You do well to bear that in mind."

A rap sounded on the door.

"Dinner," said John Remalie; and rising, he strode abruptly into the dining-room. The table was set for three. John Remalie sat at the head, Miss Labo at the foot, and Dorcas was motioned to a chair at one side. Remalie bowed his head, and at great length and in detail not only besought a blessing upon the food, but gave the Almighty numerous and, doubtless, valuable hints as to the best way of conducting His universe in general. His head remained bowed a few moments after the petition ended; then he began serving the food silently. He did not speak during the meal except as Dorcas addressed him. Miss Labo did not speak at all, but if she wished anything beyond her reach, contented herself by pointing. She did not once look at John Remalie, nor did John Remalie look at her. Dorcas would have been astonished and frightened, as she was astonished and frightened when she came to know the fact, if she had been aware at that moment that Miss Labo had not spoken a word to John Remalie in twenty-five years. She had lived in his house, prepared his food, performed the labor of his household for a quarter of a century, and not once in that long span of years had she opened her mouth to utter a syllable to the man who was her employer!

John Remalie pushed back his chair and arose.

"Your maid will be ready to take the four o'clock train," he said. "Orrin Lakin will take her to the station."

Dorcas lifted her shoulders but did not speak.

"I shall finish what I have to say to *(Continued on page 140)*

The station knew it was, and always would be, the sort of station nobody got off at unless compelled.

"Hell, Laura," he murmured, "I never liked any woman but you."

THE WOMAN WHO HATED POLITICS

By ALICE DUER MILLER

Illustrated by FRANK SNAPP

"PEREGRIN is bringing five politicians home to dinner," said Mrs. Peregrin, as if announcing a great disaster.

Her companion, a gentle, neat young man who never attempted a more aggressive rôle than companionability, replied, as if it were a complete and adequate answer: "Oh, well!"

"And we shall have to dine at a quarter past seven."

At this a slight shade crossed Treat's face: dinner an hour earlier than usual was hardly dinner at all.

"I never know how to behave to people like that," Mrs. Peregrin went on, as if this were entirely the people's fault. "If I'm civil, I'm patronizing; and if I'm natural, I'm rude."

"They're pretty much like everyone else, I suppose."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Peregrin. "They always say: 'You have a lovely home, ma'am.' Most people don't say that, Treatsie."

"No, most people know better. You'd better ask some other women to come and help you out."

Mrs. Peregrin looked at him with scorn. "Where could I find any women who would be willing to help—except the horrors, and they of course can't. Besides, everyone's away—the clever cats! The Hudson in August!"

"Laura Stanton is here with her mother-in-law."

Mrs. Peregrin's eye lightened and clouded again. "Laura's rather a goose," she said. "I mean that politicians are seldom fashionable, and Laura insists so on fashion. You know she comes from the Middle West."

"Oh, I don't think she takes social life quite so seriously as she used to," answered Treat. "I have an impression it would be quite safe nowadays to ask her to meet some one less important than a queen."

"She's lovely to look at, and the politicians would like that." Mrs. Peregrin was considering the question from all angles. "But then, she's in such deep mourning. Justin Stanton has only been dead three months. Still, my party doesn't promise to be very gay."

"Gayer than dining with those old women at the Stantons. Poor, poor Laura!"

"Oh, I never can bring myself to pity a widow," returned Mrs. Peregrin, and continued to the footman who had answered her ring: "Telephone to Mrs. Stanton's house and ask if Mrs. Justin Stanton, Jr., will dine here tonight. Say there will be no one but ourselves and Mr. Treat."

Then, as the man left the room, she added, in answer to Treat's lifted eyebrow: "Don't be silly, Treatsie; I could not send a message through a servant that there would be nothing *human* here except ourselves."

"Politicians are human, goodness knows!"

"So Peregrin always contends."

Presently the footman came back to say that Mrs. Justin Stanton, Jr., was out.

"*Out!*" said Mrs. Peregrin, casting the word straight in his teeth, as if it were his fault. The footman did not seem to care at all, but began calmly to take away the tea things, so that Mrs. Peregrin turned and attacked Treat: "Now will you tell me what Laura can be doing at this hour?"

"Oh, I can never guess what you women do all day long," answered Treat. "What do you do yourself?"

"Oh, I do common things like gardening and playing with the children," said Mrs. Peregrin, "but Laura wouldn't do anything but *chic* things—things, I mean, that she used to read in fashion papers were *chic*—like being massaged and perfuming her hair."

But Mrs. Justin Stanton, Jr., was not doing either. She was driving along the Hudson, wondering—wondering that is, when her mind was not a total blank, how it was that this myth of a society gay and fashionable, wicked and amusing, had ever gained such a hold over her youthful imagination.

She could even fancy that her present deplorable situation—a duty visit to two old ladies—might be described in the papers of her native town as a "week-end." "Mrs. Justin Stanton, Jr., is spending the week-end with Mrs. Stanton, Sr., at her country place on the Hudson." Would they add that she had once been a resident of Wixville? No, the editors of the *Sentinel* would probably be too kind-hearted to rake up the old scandal. He'd leave it at that, knowing that everyone would remember; and girls, such girls as she herself had been, might read the paragraph, and something indefinable would be suggested to them of flirtation and gambling, trailing tea-gowns, wit and happiness.

Tri-trot, the old horses' feet sounded on the macadam. Laura leaned forward and said in the lovely low voice which she had acquired three years ago: "I think we'll turn back now, Peters."

"Yes, ma'am," said Peters, touching his hat respectfully. "We'll go on for a bit yet."

Of course the Stantons had recognized the modern necessity for automobiles, and several cars of solid, expensive makes were standing in the garage at that moment, but they also recognized the necessity of being loyal to Peters, who had driven the family for fifty years and would never be anything but a coachman. They kept the victoria and the horses for his sake, and every now and then, on a fine afternoon, some member of the family was expected to drive with him. Laura, in a moment of hopelessness, had actually volunteered to go this afternoon, thinking that she would like to be alone; but after an hour of it she found she did not like it at all.

The Hudson, as every New Yorker knows, is a magnificent stream, making the Rhine look like an artificial lake and the Thames like a meadow brook. But anyone who has lived upon the Hudson knows that its broad waters can reflect the late afternoon sun with a steady dazzling heat that makes the observer wish that its banks were narrower and its bosom less splendid.

Laura, in her deep mourning's wife,—the man who was mayor, —and she was down at the hotel singing in a Red Cross concert back in 1914, when this man from the East, Stanton—well, I don't know just how they fixed it, but she got her divorce and married him."

SIX years ago—the autumn that Jim was running for mayor —every evening was given up to politics, meetings or conferences at the house. There had even been politics in her singing at the concert—at least, Jim had wanted her to do it. She remembered very well how she had come downstairs dressed for the entertainment, and had found two politicians with Jim. They rose as she entered, yet not so quickly but what she saw that they had had their feet on her best sofa, that sofa for which she paid seventy-five dollars of Jim's slim funds, and which she had had covered in a velvet impractically delicate. She hated them all fiercely—hated their shirt-sleeves and their cigars and the faint smell of beer in the room she had made beautiful with such infinite thought.

She did not want their help in electing her husband mayor, because she did not want him to be mayor. She wanted him to drop politics, to stick to law and make enough money to move away from Wixville to surroundings where she would be more appreciated.

When she had first fallen in love with Jim,—and as a girl she had been very much in love with him,—she had thought him capable of anything. A strong, clever, capable man, she had imagined him making a fortune quickly and carrying her away to Chicago or New York. But at the end of three years he had got no further than running for mayor of Wixville with no absolute certainty of success.

To be mayor of Wixville seemed to Laura a pretty sordid job. She could not bear to see Jim working for it so eagerly. She might have tolerated it if his fellow-citizens had forced it on his acceptance, but she thought the struggle contemptible. Besides, it made him neglect her.

She was a very beautiful woman. The year before, when Ta't had come campaigning through the State, a young reporter from a New York paper had told some one at a political dinner who had told her, that in his opinion Mrs. Jim Robinson was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, "bar none."

"Bar none," she used to repeat to herself, thinking of all those he must have seen—at charity balls and the Metropolitan Opera House. He must have seen all the famous beauties whose pictures she had studied and whose clothes she had copied. Yet he thought her the most beautiful woman he had seen!

THIS evening of the concert she knew she was looking well —in a long black-and-white dress with a rhinestone band in her hair. She stood, a stern presence in the sitting-room doorway, looking at the three men: old Reilly, the proprietor of the hotel where she was going, a white-haired, red-faced old man, very dominating in local politics; the supervisor, round-headed and polite, whose sleek black hair, parted in the center, kept falling forward in two trembling hoops; at her husband, who was writing with his head cocked on one side to keep the smoke of his cigar out of his eyes. How she had agonized over his appearance! She admired tall men with a forward droop to their shoulders and a hollow behind their waistcoats, but she recognized that Jim, strongly built and not much taller than she was, had possibilities if he would take the trouble to bring them out. He had a smooth, clear skin and bright, piercing blue eyes, so bright people often thought they were twinkling with laughter when they were simply flashing with the most serious intelligence. He could look very well when he tried; but now, with his brown hair mussed, and his left eye screwed up to keep the smoke out of it, with his coat off and garters around his shirtsleeves, his appearance shocked something in her which she thought idealistic and which he thought silly.

"We could do with three more bottles of beer, dearie."

She did not answer at all. She just turned on her heel and walked out of the house. The hotel was across the street.

She hated politics—not only because they were ugly and vulgar, and she loved the elegancies of life, but because they had the power of invading and dominating; they were more powerful even in her own house than she was.

She had just finished her first song and was waiting for the applause to subside, when, looking through the doorway of the ballroom, she saw a man who was crossing the lobby pause and look in her direction. He had just bitten off the end of a cigar, but what he saw through the wide doorway made him saunter toward the sound of the clapping. He came and leaned against the jamb of the door. He was tall and young, and there was a hollow behind his waistcoat. His clothes were made of a soft gray stuff which, she discovered later—not very much later—smelled deliciously of peat or heather or some odor not hitherto familiar to her nostrils.

She had been going to sing something by Debussy, but as she looked at this new auditor, so elegant and well turned out, she began to distrust her French accent, and she substituted Shubert's serenade. She was not a vain woman, but she knew before this song was over that the stranger in the doorway was interested in her.

Jim's eyes were still twinkling when he saw his former wife. His face changed.

He managed the introduction beautifully. A cruder man might have scraped acquaintance with her directly. He scraped acquaintance with the most imposing white-haired woman in the room. When Laura stepped down from the platform, these two were waiting for her. The stranger was Mr. Stanton, from New York.

The *Sentinel* had a column about him the next day. His sister had lately married an English marquis, and it was in the interests of his brother-in-law that he was in Wixville, looking up a site for a British airplane factory.

Newport, New York, a colonial family, a sister a marchioness—it had all sounded romantic, like a dream and a fairy-tale and a love-affair combined. To be snatched up out of ugly little Wixville, which had only come into existence thirty years ago, and plunged into the fashionable New York! To be taken away from the round of trolley franchises and sewer contracts, which seemed to make up her husband's political activities, snatched up like Helen by a blond stranger into a realm of refinement and jewels and parties and French clothes.

ALL the elements had materialized—except the marquis and his wife, who were busy fighting the war in their own country. The jewels and the clothes and the parties had all been produced by her new husband; and yet somehow the effect was not what, in Wixville, she had fancied that it would be.

Her new husband was not a brilliant man, but she did not mind that; she herself was not of the intellectual type. The trouble with Justin was that like so many people with a tremendous sense of their own importance and no great ability, his egotism expressed itself in negations—in the things he wouldn't do, the people he wouldn't know, the parties he would not go to.

Many a poor girl has been disappointed at finding her husband's family less aristocratic than she supposed. Laura's ill luck was that they were more so. The Stantons were too exclusive, too deeply rooted in tradition. They belonged to a group—small, in the North, at least—whose ancestors had come to this country not as farmers or religious enthusiasts, but as adventurous gentlemen, and had attempted, chiefly along the Hudson Valley, to establish a duplicate of English country life. Their tradition of wealth and aristocracy was as solidly grounded as that of English county families. But a republic was no place for them, and most of them have ceased to exist—have lost their money and their prestige and been overwhelmed by the plutocrats of the eighties.

Justin's mother controlled his social standards and allowed no friendship with those who did not come up in birth and breeding, manners and elegance to the standards of those golden years when her husband had been a foreign ambassador. The result was that her choice was limited. Laura well remembered the first dinner-party her mother-in-law had given her—the footmen and the flowers, the golden urns of flowers and the golden bowls of fruit, everything beautiful and perfect except the guests. She had sat between a bald, elderly man who knew an immense amount about international banking, and a pale cousin of the Stantons who was interested in the purification of city politics. Laura found that the purification of politics was not a bit more interesting than their corruption in Wixville.

Before the winter was over, however, she began to see that there were people who amused themselves and others, who were leading a life more nearly like what, in Wixville, she had pictured New York life. But her mother-in-law ignored them—though, oddly enough, they did not seem to want to be ignored. Laura used to think they would never maneuver for an invitation to Mrs. Stanton's parties if they had only known how dull the parties were.

Eventually, perhaps, she would have arranged her own life her own way; but America's entrance into the war came, and then her husband's sudden death from influenza; and now, here she was, a lovely, dissatisfied widow at twenty-eight, rolling slowly through a little country town on her way home to dinner with three old ladies.

As she was passing the town hall, a poster caught her eye. Her heart changed its beat, although she had not read the printed words. She turned, craning her neck over the hood of the victoria, trying to see what it was that had caught her subconscious attention. She could read nothing but, "Monster Mass Meeting." Oh, only politics! Well, dull as her life now was, she was at least spared that. What had attracted her attention had probably been some resemblance to the flaring posters in Wixville long ago.

It was extraordinary how seldom the memory of her first husband ever crossed her mind. Cut off as she was from all her early associations, she was never of course under the necessity of speaking his name. Indeed, she had gradually formed the habit of never mentioning anything that had happened to her before 1914. Her new friends talked long and easily to her without ever hearing a reference to her life before she had been Mrs. Justin Stanton. But she had accomplished a more difficult feat than this—a feat which might almost be called superhuman, if so many human beings did not accomplish it; she had succeeded in casting out of her consciousness all her past life except the last six years; it was gone—she couldn't have remembered it now if she had wanted to, and of course she did not want to.

Clumpety-clump, clump! The horses stopped under the porte-cochère which her father-in-law had added in 1880 to the old stone house of his forefathers. A young footman came running down the steps to help her out. She crossed the square hall, paved in black and white marble, where tall vases were standing holding the celebrated Stanton chrysanthemums which always took first prize in the Dutchess County show. The house was very still. She knew that the old ladies were sitting on the piazza at this hour, watching the sunset. She had no intention of joining them, but the footman was giving her a message: Mrs. Peregrin had telephoned to know if she would dine there that evening at seven-fifteen—no one but themselves and Mr. Treat.

LAURA despised Treat and rather feared Mrs. Peregrin, who made fun of everyone, including herself; but a great desire to go—to go anywhere—came over her. When first married, she would have answered the footman with some expression of human interest, but now she just nodded her head, and turned toward the piazza.

Honeysuckle and one of the oldest wistaria vines in the country made a bower of one corner of it, and here there were tables and chairs. The Stantons did not approve of the modern manner of lounging in public, but Aunt Arabella's age demanded a relaxation of this rule, and a magnificent couch had been arranged for her. On this, in all the glory of her high lace cap, she was now reclining, vigorous and black-eyed for all her eighty years. Near her sat Mrs. Stanton, erect but at ease, her hands as white as the pearls she wore on them, draped in her lap, her eyes fixed on the crimson and gold sky, the black mountains and the streak of river still unaccountably blue. Mrs. Stanton had been a beauty, too, when she entered the family—as great a beauty as Laura; and she had brought a little money and no ugly scandal with her. Her unmarried sister, Aunt Beatrice Stevens, was there too, slim as a mosquito, and very dressy in half-mourning for her nephew.

Laura looked at them and felt that she knew just what they had been talking about since she went out—what it was that Lord Beaconsfield had really said to the Ambassador, when it was that Justin's grandfather had bought the new field on the highroad, how many of the Peregrins' remote ancestors were actually queer enough to be shut up. The Peregrins—fortunately for Laura's plans—were respected equals.

As she stepped out on the piazza, Mrs. Stanton said kindly: "Did you have a pleasant drive, my dear?"

The question angered Laura. How in heaven's name could a young and beautiful woman enjoy driving in the heat alone behind two lazy old horses. She expressed her irritation by answering as if she were speaking to an importunate child:

"It's rather hot, you know."

Mrs. Stanton, senior, always gentle and kind and unruffled, knew how to put underbred young people in the wrong: "It's a shame to victimize you," she said, with a faint accent on the pronoun. "Peters likes to feel he is driving a member of the family now and then, but there is no reason why *you* should go."

Laura noted the implication that she was hardly a member of the family. "The Peregrins want me to dine tonight," she said. She told herself that she was going anyhow, whatever her family thought, but she helped them to think right by suppressing the existence of Treat as she added: "No one but themselves, of course. Do you see any reason why I should not go?"

Aunt Arabella's eyes flashed about generally, but Mrs. Stanton said in her levelest tone: "Not if you want to."

Of course, a widow of scarcely three months ought not to want to—Laura caught that intimation, but she did not care. She was already thinking about what she would wear. The presentation of her own great beauty was one of her few amusements. She moved quickly away before anything could be said to make it difficult to go. She hated to think of them sitting there in what should have been a bower of love, criticising every natural impulse of her youth.

When she had gone, they glanced at each other and shook their heads. They were not ill-natured women, but they themselves had all made sacrifices for the code they subscribed to; and besides, they had loved Justin deeply.

Laura, having made herself as lovely as a pure white crêpe could make her—it was from her mother-in-law that she had learned that pure white was considered as deep mourning as black—was not deeply chagrined at finding the Peregrin's drawing-room full of men. She was, however, surprised, and catching this look, Mrs. Peregrin came guiltily forward and met her at the door.

"Yes, Laura, dear," she murmured, "I did deceive you about our being alone; but I needed your help, and they're only some political friends of my husband's."

Laura allowed her beautiful eyes to stray toward the compact group. Now that she knew they were politicians, she told herself that she had recognized their species as soon as she saw them. "I'm not much good at this sort of thing," she said. "I hate politics."

her intimate friends—and she was almost intimate with the Peregrins—had no recollection whatever that her name had been Robinson before; by becoming a Stanton, she had risen into their ken. She thought she would like to explain this to Jim; and yet if she were asked to lay her hand on his arm—an arm whose contours her fingers so well remembered—and go in to dinner with him, she would rather leave the house.

Fortunately they went in to the dining-room in a group, still talking. There were ten of them, and the chances of her sitting next to Jim were slight. She would be reserved, she thought, for one of the older, more important men. And yet, when she sat down and found herself between her host and a State chairman, she was conscious of bitter disappointment.

He, she saw to her surprise, was sitting on Mrs. Peregrin's right

The jewels and the clothes and the parties had all been produced by her new husband, yet somehow the effect was not what she had thought it would be.

"They wont hate you," answered Mrs. Peregrin. And then the group opened, allowing Laura to see that the central figure to whose words they had all been listening was Jim Robinson. The other men were laughing, and Jim's eyes were still twinkling over some shrewd truth he had just uttered, when he saw his former wife standing in the doorway. His face changed; it grew black and watchful, as she had so often seen it in old times when some political deal took an unaccountable turn.

As for herself, she stood quite still, and like a drowning person, relived all her life in a few seconds. The memories of her early days overwhelmed her so that she was hardly aware where she was. Those memories cast out? Not much! She had merely locked them up, and now they had broken the lock and rushed out upon her, stronger and more vital than anything that had happened to her since then.

The men were being introduced to her. Jim just nodded and moved away. She realized that he was suspicious of some sort of a plot; and indeed, it would be hard to explain that

—the most distinguished of the company. She stared at him for several seconds, and then hastily atttempted a banality with her host about the weather. He did not hear her. He was leaning across the table to address Jim.

"What are you going to say this evening, Congressman?"

"*Congressman!*" cried Laura, her voice ringing out louder than she meant it to, and sounding, even in her own ears, strange.

She saw Jim turn to his hostess and heard him ask: "Is that lady interested in politics?" She couldn't hear her hostess' answer, but she knew what it would be—a detailed account of her, which would at least put Jim's mind at rest about any design to throw them together. She saw Jim's head slightly cocked as he listened, and once she saw him quickly suppress a smile—occasioned perhaps by a reference to a former unfortunate marriage.

For the first few minutes she herself had been afraid that some one in the room would recall the connection between them, but as time went on, she became reckless, and turning to Peregrin, she asked in a voice hardly lowered enough *(Continued on page 108)*

UNITED STATES SMITH

Illustrated by
WILLIAM MEAD PRINCE

By
GERALD BEAUMONT

ON the twenty-fifth of February, 1898, the storm king struck with particular viciousness off the ice-dotted North Atlantic coast. Among the vessels that fell victim to the ferocity of the elements was the Scandinavian liner *Star of Denmark*, bound for New York from Copenhagen with a full cabin list and eighty emigrants in the steerage.

Late at night the little steamer was disemboweled by a floating mass of ice blown south by the tempest. Between the time the deathblow was struck and the moment when the *Star of Denmark* was sucked down, stern foremost, every lifeboat was launched successfuly. They are brave and skilled mariners, those Norsemen!

Seventeen of the twenty boats were still afloat at dawn. Passing steamers picked them up and brought the survivors into various ports along the American coast. One boat, blown farther south than the others, was eventually hoisted aboard the *Coronia*. Of its original twenty-four occupants thirteen were dead from exposure. The survivors were landed at New York and became at once the object of the city's curiosity and compassion. Among the little group of miserable immigrants who stepped on American soil just at dusk of that freezing day, a boy of four or five whose light blue eyes and yellow hair suggested Viking ancestry, attracted particular attention.

Along the Yukon from St. Michael to Tanana went stories of a sergeant who had whipped "Midnight" Taggart.

"Gamest little kid in all the world," testified a seaman. "He hasn't whimpered or complained yet, and look—all his fingers are frozen!"

Every effort to learn the child's identity failed. To all queries in English, Swedish or Norwegian he returned only a puzzled smile. A steward offered the explanation that the boy's mother was among those who had succumbed to exposure, and that they were from Copenhagen.

An hour later a veteran reporter, more observing than the others, showed up at the emergency hospital with an interpreter from the Danish consulate.

"Ask the kid his name," directed the newspaper man. The youngster brightened at the sound of his native tongue. The interpreter translated the reply.

"He says it is on the tag on his coat."

The reporter located the steward and returned with the sodden stub of a continental express-tag taken from the lapel of a tiny jacket.

Rain and wind had reduced the slip of cardboard to a mere fragment containing three words—the first two hand-written as part of what had evidently been an address, the last the printed name of some advertiser. They were: "United States . . . . Smith." All else was obliterated.

"Find out what you can," urged the reporter. "He wouldn't have had a tag on him if he'd been with his mother."

The interpreter sat down at the edge of the cot on which the small survivor was beginning to experience the exquisite torture of returning circulation. He was a father himself, and he understood children. His voice soothed, suggested, prompted. Presently he looked up, his eyelashes wet.

"It is a strange case. He will not tell his name, except to say that Aunt Dagmar has written every thing on the tag. He does not understand that it is torn. Mamma and Papa, he says, are in heaven. They went there in a big ship when he was very small. He has come to live with Uncle Christian, who is also on the tag. That was not his mother who died yesterday, but a good lady, he says, who knows Uncle Christian."

Doris spoke her mind with simplicity and courage.

The interpreter paused a moment reflectively and then added: "The ship's records would show who the child is, but they are gone, and the duplicate passenger-list is never very explicit in the matter of immigrants. Undoubtedly the steamship people will be able to trace him through their Copenhagen office."

The reporter looked down at the weather-beaten card in his fingers and mused over the fragmentary inscription. "Poor little cuss," he commiserated, "poor little 'United States Smith!' Ask him what he is going to do when he grows up."

"He says he will fight for his country," translated the man from the consulate.

"A soldier, eh? What does he call his country?"

The interpreter repeated the question softly in Danish. The boy's eyes lighted. The little arms rose from the coverlet and beat the time. In a high-pitched, singsong the small voice burst forth:

"My Kon-tree 'tis off Thee
Sweet La-and of Lee-ber-tee,
Off Thee Ay seeng!"

The reporter's jaw dropped. "Good Lord," he exclaimed, "where do you suppose the kid learned *that?* And the little beggar put his whole soul into it—like a prayer!"

In his usually cynical eyes burned the fire of inspiration. He strode to the wall telephone and called up his city editor.

"Billy," he pleaded, "get me a flashlight man down here quick and save me some space on the front page. I've got *the* story of the *Star of Denmark!*"

Subsequent events justified the newspaper man's instinct. The story that appeared the following morning on the first page of the biggest of the New York dailies was to become a classic. By nightfall every news service in the country had copied it, and the illustrated papers were scrambling for more pictures of the "baby Viking who had come up out of the sea and storm to fight for his adopted country."

New York was already experiencing the first flush of martial fever. The battleship Maine had been blown up in Havana Harbor with its hundreds of sleeping bluejackets. The stock-market was shaky. America's strength was unknown—and here had come little "United States Smith" as a symbol of the youth and courage and patriotic fervor of the New World.

Hundreds came to see him, the women to kiss him and weep over him, the men to pat him on the head and ask him to sing, and to put coins in his pocket that were like pennies, only much larger and whiter, and brighter. He accepted all the attention complacently and waited for Uncle Christian to come and take him away. But no Uncle Christian came.

Instead one afternoon there came to Ellis Island a tall man in a fine uniform with a beautiful lady and a little girl who put her arms around United States Smith and kissed him. Then the beautiful lady showed him a tiny uniform of khaki with a sword and a bright red tassel, and called to another woman in a frilled white cap who spoke to him in Danish and told him he was to wear the uniform and to call her "Nu-nu," and that they would all go away together to a big house and live happily ever afterward.

"And is that soldier man Uncle Christian?" he demanded.

"No, dear. Uncle Christian is too poor to care for any more little boys. This is your new mamma and papa and your little sister Doris. I am your nurse, and you must be a good little boy."

"So I will grow up and fight for my country, Nu-nu?"

"Yes, dear."

"Very well," said the child gravely. "I will go."

A few months later Congress acted, and there came an afternoon when United States Smith, mounted on a pony led by a tall trooper, rode down a broad street that was filled with marching men carrying guns, and there was much cheering and music and waving of flags. Many times the trooper turned to him and smiled and motioned for him to take off his hat to the people in the windows who were calling to him. This he did, and after they had ridden a long way and he was trying not to show how tired he was, his new papa came and kissed him, and Nu-nu was there to explain that Papa was going away to fight for his country.

"Then, of course, I will go too," decided the child.

But Nu-nu explained that some one must stay at home and protect Mamma and little Doris, and that Papa had said he was to be a good soldier and salute to show that he understood his orders.

United States Smith put a small hand to the visor of his officer's cap, but his chin quivered. It was the first big disappointment of his life.

All these things and many more the boy remembered either as he had seen them or as Nu-nu explained them when he grew old enough to understand. He learned that his real name was Thorwald Bjeerlag and that while his truly mother and father were Danish, he himself was an American, for he had been born on his father's sailing vessel, which was of American registry and flew the Stars and Stripes. It was explained to him that Mother Bjeerdag had been very proud of this and had told Grandma Dagmar in Copenhagen that one day Thorwald would be President of the United States and a great soldier, but that for a short time he was to stay safely with Grandma while they made one more trip. Then they would sell the vessel and all would move to the great America.

Nu-nu said that no one ever heard anything more of the *Nova Scotia* and that Grandma Dagmar had therefore done the best she could by scraping up enough money to send him to Uncle Christian

so that he might grow up in his own country and learn to fight for it.

"But Uncle Christian is very poor and has many children," concluded Nu-nu, "and so here you are!"

"It is much nicer," the boy commented. "I like to be called 'United States Smith' better than my other name. Only it takes an awfully long while to grow up, doesn't it, Nu-nu?"

NEVERTHELESS he did grow up—a sturdy little serious-faced chap, slow of thought and word and action—but a bulldog of courage and tenacity.

One day he and Doris came before Mamma Virgie to settle a dispute. Doris was in tears.

"He says he is going away to fight for his country, Mamma, and he isn't, is he?"

"I hope not, dear; what do you want him to do?"

"Why, to marry me, of course, and we will go on a big ranch in the country and take care of you."

"I can do that when I come back," objected United States Smith. "A man's place is to fight for his country. Papa said I could do that when I grew up, and I'm almost twelve."

Doris tossed her curls indignantly. "I don't care. I just hate people who fight."

"Hush, dear," interrupted her mother. "Your father *died* for his country."

"But Mother, Thorwald isn't fighting for his country. He fights just 'cause he likes it. He fought a big boy at school today and got licked."

"I'm going to fight him again tomorrow," said United States Smith hopefully. "He said England had a bigger navy than we did."

Not only did he fight the next day, but the day following, and the day after that. On the third day he won, and the argument was never renewed.

He was twenty when the world war broke out. It set at naught immediately all the efforts of Mother Virgie and Doris to turn his mind into commercial channels. On his twenty-second birthday, with the shock of the *Lusitania* still fresh in the public mind, he enlisted in the regular army.

He returned in uniform to say good-by—a fine figure of a man standing six feet in his stockings, with clear blue eyes and yellow hair. Doris was just a year his junior.

For the first time they did not know what to say to each other. There was a barrier of tender shyness between them that neither exactly understood and that caused Mother Virgie to smile through her tears.

"You will come back to us, Thorwald, unharmed. God will grant me that much. In the meantime Doris and I will wait for you."

Penitently he kissed them both. "It is in here, Mamma Virgie," he explained, thumping his chest, "the love of fighting and the love of my country. America will declare war any day now, and the regulars, you see, will be among the first to go."

But when America did strike almost a year later, he was among the last men in uniform to hear the news. That was because a perverse Fate had ordered his regiment into the Northwest and detached one battalion for duty in the Land of Little Voices.

Across continent to Seattle, thence by wire and cable to St. Michael, along the military telegraph line to Fort Gibbon and by courier to the last outpost above the Yukon, the great news traveled to United States Smith. But not even the sergeant's chevrons on his sleeve could comfort him then in the growing fear that the War Department as well as God would have no need for the little handful of men who burnished their rifles by the light of the aurora.

Summer and winter passed, interminable as the tortures of the damned. Men repeated stories that had first been whispered in Vladivostock by rat-faced Red propagandists. The war was being misconducted; green troops were being rushed to France and the regular army held back; capital was back of the American movement to Siberia; the Bolsheviki had the right idea.

Through it all, United States Smith enforced discipline and respect for authority. Along the Yukon from St. Michael to Tanana and south to Fairbanks went stories of a yellow-haired sergeant who had whipped "Midnight" Taggart in an hour's fight on a river barge for refusing to salute the flag. And as everybody knew, Taggart had always been a law unto himself in the North.

Reporting to headquarters one afternoon, United States Smith found himself summoned before Major Stanton, who had grown gray in the service.

"Sergeant," said his superior officer, "not all problems can be solved by the regulations. Two fists are sometimes worth more than a battalion, and I want you to know it."

"Thank you, sir," replied the sergeant. "But can a man who whips others, whip himself?" Out of a haggard face, bloodshot eyes searched the officer's for an answer.

Major Stanton played with the ivory paper-cutter on his desk. When he finally answered, his voice was without much of its usual brusqueness.

"When a man loves his country as we do, Sergeant, he can do even that."

United States Smith saluted and returned to his post.

Summer succeeded, and then one afternoon the telegraph wires hummed the long-awaited message. A courier reached the farthest outpost at the supper hour.

"Replacement units are coming up the Yukon. We're under orders to move to Seattle. It's overseas, sure!"

United States Smith lay awake on his cot that night, staring out the barracks window at the northern lights.

"Dear God," he whispered, "I thank Thee!"

It was two months before the regiment reached the Atlantic seaboard and the point of embarkation. Then he was granted a few days' leave of absence to permit him to hurry into New York. Happier than he had ever been in his life, he put his arms around Doris and Mother Virgie.

"It is all right now," he assured them laughingly. "It was hard waiting, but you see I did grow up, after all."

There were two days of perfect understanding and tender confidences, and then dark-eyed Doris spoke her mind with the simplicity and courage that the war had given to her young womanhood.

"Thorwald, do you still love me?"

"Yes, Doris."

"Then I want you to fight for your wife and your home as well as for your country. Mamma Virgie and I have talked it all over. It will help me to pray and to wait for you."

So they were married that night, and the following evening the line of transports and their convoys slipped out at dusk bearing America's last contribution to the battle-line.

They were five days out when the wireless told of the signing of the armistice. The regimental bands played the national anthem; United States Smith stood at attention; flags broke out on all the ships; and *that* was the second big disappointment of his life.

TWO years with the army of occupation, and he was back, at the age of twenty-six, with the indelible stamp of the permanent soldier upon his face and figure. He found Mamma Virgie patiently sweet and adoring as ever, and his wife a full-blown rose waiting to be crushed in his embrace.

"I'm not worthy of either of you," he told them. "I am a soldier who has never fought. There will be no more wars. I will never fight for America, and yet I have always dreamed that one day I should live up to the name that was given me."

"Never mind," consoled Doris. "You have served your country, and that is better than fighting. Perhaps, by and by, you will win a commission, and Mamma Virgie will mother the company, and we will live in officers' quarters and have an orderly."

"And what about the ranch that you always wanted?"

She made a little grimace. "Don't cross-examine your superior officer. Can't I serve my country too?"

He saluted stiffly, and she returned it; and then they laughed and kissed each other.

Unexpectedly, one afternoon, while he was still in New York, something happened which fired his imagination anew. He was walking down the same street along which he had ridden on a pony so many years before, when he found his progress blocked by a crowd gathered before a newspaper office. A man in his shirt-sleeves was writing on a huge revolving bulletin board. Suddenly a boy darted along the scaffolding on which the man was standing. In one hand he held a yellow sheet. The man took one glance at the message, gave the board a quick turn, and in letters a foot high chalked the words:

"TOURNIER WINS."

There were sporadic cheers, but for the most part the crowd seemed stunned. The shirt-sleeved man added a postscript:

"Fourth Round—Knockout."

Next to United States Smith a swarthy giant laughed throatily.

He had the neck and shoulders of a bull, the dominating manner of one who had looked at life from many angles.

"Costs me five thousand," he boomed, "I should have known better, too. Well, little old America can kiss the title good-by now for a mighty long time."

"Oh, I don't know," hazarded another man. "Some fellow will come along."

The bull-necked man shook his head. "There's only one man in the world who could whip Tournier—and that, mind you, not in five rounds nor ten, nor fifteen, probably not in twenty—but in a finish fight. I'd bet my soul on it!"

"Yes?" inquired the other. "Who is it—Cutler?"

The big man snorted. "You saw what happened to Denby? Well Cutler wouldn't last that long! The man I mean was a yellow-haired sergeant I used to know in Alaska. We fought it out on a barge in the Upper Yukon. Twenty times I knocked him down, and each time he came back, and in the end he got me. I was a man in those days too, but he was a bulldog! God, *what* a bulldog!"

United States Smith pressed forward until his shoulder touched the speaker.

"Would you know that sergeant again if you saw him?"

"Would I?" Black eyes turned from a contemplation of the bulletin board into an amused and tolerant scrutiny of the man who had propounded the query. The look gave way to one of incredulity, and then profound amazement.

"Well, I'll be damned!" vowed Midnight Taggart. "Where did *you* come from?"

"No matter. Let's get out of here; I want to talk to you."

"My club, then, Sergeant; I struck it rich after you left. No more rough-stuff for mine. Gad, I owe you something. You put religion in me. Come on."

Thus it was that over a table in one of Gotham's clubs, United States Smith faced again the one-time terror of Alaska.

"Now, about this Tournier?" he questioned eagerly. "Did you mean what you said back there in the street?"

In a high pitched singsong the small voice burst forth: "My Kon-*tree* 'tis off *Thee*—"

"Every word of it. I've been at the ringside of every fight in America for three years except this one, and I'd have been at this, only we had a boy at our house last night. Think of that, Sergeant—a boy, nine pounds, and the loudest lungs this side of the Yukon. You want to fight Tournier?"

"I think," answered United States Smith slowly, "that is perhaps why I was born."

Taggart grunted and puffed thoughtfully at his cigar for several moments.

"Well, Sergeant, it may be as you say; there was always something about you different from most men, but fighting as we fought, and fighting with four-ounce gloves in a sixteen-foot ring are different things, and there is only one Tournier the Wolf. He is whelped of the devil and chain lightning. You saw what he did to the best we've got!"

"Canuck?"

"That and Indian. Served in the French army. The Parisians adopted him, and now he will go back with the title and stay there until he runs out of money."

"And then?"

"Come to this country for more."

United States Smith drew a deep breath, and his eyes expanded. "Midnight," he confided, "I don't know whether you will quite understand, but — What must I do?"

Taggart flushed. "I get you, Sergeant. I do understand." He thought a moment. "Come down tonight, and I'll introduce you to Pat Griffin. He's handled two world's champions, and if he takes you—the fight is on."

United States Smith went home and laid the matter before his wife.

"But Thorwald—a prize-fighter!" There was dismay and consternation in her voice.

He looked at her with such dumb entreaty in his blue eyes that she had not the heart to say more.

"It isn't the money, Doris, nor yet alone the love of fighting; it's America I'm thinking of now; she's lost something, and maybe I can bring it back."

Late that afternoon he located "Shorty" McCabe, the stubby little Scotch corporal who had been his companion on many an adventure in the Yukon.

"Shorty, can I fight?"

"None better."

"Tournier won the heavyweight title from an American. Will you be in my corner when I win it back?"

"Will a duck swim?" replied McCabe.

And in a back room of Pat Griffin's café they talked it all over that night. The shrewd little Irishman was frankly skeptical. He pointed out a hundred difficulties. Finally he voiced the most serious of all his objections.

"It isn't that I doubt your judgment, Taggart, but this Tournier is the best I've ever seen, and I've seen them all. He is faster than Corbett; he hits harder than Fitzsimmons, and he has Sharkey's heart. Granting everything that you say about your man, it would take a year to make him a drawing-card for the Wolf. We would have to start him somewhere on the other side of the continent and work east; it would take time and money—too much of both."

Midnight Taegart threw a checkbook on the table. "My money against your time, Pat!" he challenged. "Anything up to fifty thousand. Think of a twenty-round fight some day on the border for the International Championship, with Pat Griffin behind the American contestant!"

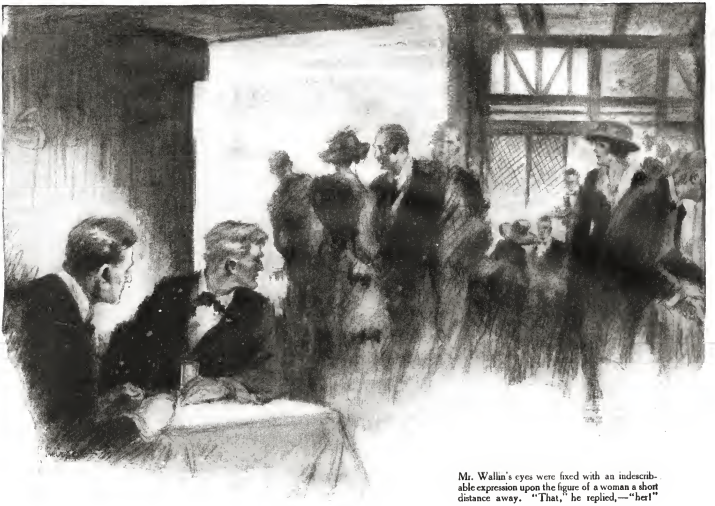
The warm blood mounted slowly into the Irishman's faded cheeks and spread to the roots of his graying hair; the glint of battle lighted his mild blue eyes. He saw himself once again in his shirt-sleeves, crouching down by the water-buckets, matching his wits against the men in the opposite corner—heard again the thud of glove against naked body and the dull clang of the bell, sniffed the odor of resin and alcohol and perspiring human flesh. The picture was too much for him. His arms went out impulsively.

"Eheu!" he sighed. "There is no fool like an old fool. I'm with you, boys; let's get down to business!"

In the small hours of the morning, when they had mapped out a general plan of action and settled many details, Pat

(Continued on page 136)

He did not hear the count of ten nor the roaring of the multitude.



Mr. Wallin's eyes were fixed with an indescribable expression upon the figure of a woman a short distance away. "That," he replied,—"her!"

MISCHIEF

Another Adventure of Mr. Cray of the U. S. A.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Illustrated by

RAEBURN VAN BUREN

THE meeting between Mr. Cray and Mr. Edward P. Wallin of Seattle was a touching and wonderful thing. It took place on the pavement of the Strand, about fifty yards from the entrance to the Hotel Milan, the occasion being a leisurely stroll on the part of Mr. Cray toward one of the reopened hotels in Northumberland Avenue, which was reputed to possess a wizard in the art of cocktail mixing. They recognized each other about ten yards off, and their greetings were vociferous and idiomatic.

"If it isn't Ed!" Mr. Cray exclaimed. "Welcome to our city!"

"Joe, old sport, if this isn't bully!" was the prompt and hearty response. "Put it there, my son of the Stars and Stripes. Why, I thought you were handing doughnuts to the boys out in Coblenz."

"Demobbed," was the cheerful reply. "I had twelve months of it steady."

"Gee, but you're a wonder! I guess the Milan's the nearest."

Arm in arm, the two men swung along the pavement, Mr. Wallin a somewhat smaller and plumper edition of his old friend. Their faces exuded good humor and good will. Each was filled with the joy of meeting a friend and fellow countryman in a strange city.

"Ed," Mr. Cray observed, "they've hit us pretty hard on the other side."

"They sure have!" the other groaned. "You have to have a pain in your stomach and call at the drug-store with a prescription to get a drop, and even then you feel like hiding behind the show-case. And I tell you, Joe, to see the boys lapping up nut sundaes and getting gloomier all the time is just one over the limit. We're not used to it yet; we still go about kind of dazed."

Mr. Cray glanced at his watch as they reached the Milan bar. He led the way to two easy-chairs and beckoned to a waiter.

"Two Scotch-and-sodas, Tim," he ordered, "and in a quarter of an hour see that Coley shakes us up two dry Martinis. Afterward we'll have a bite of luncheon in the grill-room."

The program was approved and carried out. About halfway through the meal Mr. Cray asked a momentous question:

"Say, what's brought you over, Ed?"

Mr. Wallin laid down his knife and fork and groaned. His eyes were fixed with an indescribable expression upon the figure of a woman a short distance away.

"That," he replied, "—her!"

Mr. Cray turned in his chair. A smartly attired young woman,

who had paused upon the threshold looking around the room as though in search of some one, was now approaching their table.

"Why, Mr. Wallin," she exclaimed as she shook hands, "I had no idea that you were staying here!"

"I'm not," he replied. "I'm just having a bite with a friend. I'd like you to know Mr. Joseph P. Cray—Miss Nora Medlicott."

Mr. Cray rose at once and shook hands with Miss Medlicott. She was very good-looking; her expression was pleasing and her manner friendly.

"I'm glad to know you, Mr. Cray," she said. "Are you by any chance related to Mrs. Georgina Cray, vice president of the Women's Kill-the-Drink League?"

"My wife," Mr. Cray faltered.

Miss Medlicott shook hands with him again.

"I am proud to know you, sir," she declared. "Your wife did a great work in Oregon."

"Sure!" Mr. Cray murmured, his tone singularly lacking in conviction. "I've been kind of out of things for the last two years."

"Mr. Cray has been over in France, doing relief work," his friend explained.

"Exactly what I should have expected from Mrs. Cray's husband," the young lady declared approvingly.

"You'll sit down and have some lunch with us, Miss Medlicott?" Mr. Wallin begged in the hope of detaining the fair one a while.

The young lady appeared to hesitate. She glanced once more around the room.

"I promised to lunch with some of the crowd," she said, "but—"

Her eyes suddenly fell upon the bottle of Scotch which Mr. Wallin had vainly tried to conceal behind a newspaper. Her manner stiffened.

"We'll send this right away," the offender promised eagerly. "I'm not accustomed to it in the middle of the day, but Mr. Cray here has a touch of rheumatism."

Mr. Cray saw that the young lady's eyes were dancing and he felt relieved. "Will you give me the recipe of your beverage, please?" she said.

"Touch of what?" Mr. Cray asked blankly, and received a kick on the shins for his obtuseness.

Miss Medlicott smiled gravely at him.

"You mustn't think I'm overprejudiced, Mr. Cray," she said, "but I am a great believer in total abstinence. I have many friends, however, who do not share my views, among them Mr. Wallin, here. I do not, however, sit down at a table, if I can help it, where alcoholic liquors are being consumed."

"We'll soon make that all right if you'll join us," Mr. Cray promised, pushing the bottle heroically away.

"In any case," Miss Medlicott replied, smiling, "there are my friends. Good-by, Mr. Cray! You will come and call, wont you, Mr. Wallin?"

"Sure!" that gentleman assented eagerly. "I'll be round tomorrow afternoon."

The young lady departed. Mr. Cray looked after her regretfully.

"That's a pity, Ed!" he said. "A real stunner too, if ever I spoke to one."

Mr. Wallin groaned.

"And I love her, Joe," he confided. "Six times I've asked her to marry me, and I've come over here because I couldn't bear to think of her in London and these foreign places and me back in Seattle. Sometimes I think I'll have to take the pledge."

Mr. Cray coughed. He found advice difficult.

"It's a serious step, Ed. At our time of life men ought to be careful how they trifle with their constitutions."

Mr. Wallin helped himself.

"You're right, Joe," he agreed, "but I do sure love that girl."

"How do you stand with her?" his friend inquired.

"All right, I guess, except for this idea of hers," was the doleful reply. "I can't see that it's her fault. Her father and mother are the same. She's been brought up in the atmosphere."

"She seems a nice girl, too," Mr. Cray sighed.

"If she'd only leave off trying to convert *me*," Mr. Wallin murmured.

Mr. Cray finished his whisky and soda, and displayed an interest in the waiter's suggestion as to liqueurs. The matter having been satisfactorily dealt with, he proceeded to the reconsideration of his friend's dilemma.

"Ed," he said, "have you ever tried to convert the young lady?"

"Will you tell me how to start about it?" Mr. Wallin asked drearily. "The poor girl doesn't know the taste of wine or liquor. Nothing of the sort has ever been allowed in the house since she was born. I'd as soon think of offering her a cocktail as of handing her poisoned chocolates, and I guess she'd feel the same about it."

"What sort of a crowd is she with over here?" Mr. Cray inquired.

"Why, there's her father and mother, a reverend gentleman, two elderly men, and Hiram Crofts, the senator. I guess he's in the same boat I am."

"A rival, eh?" Mr. Cray observed.

His friend assented dolefully.

"And looks like a winner. There they all are—over at the round table."

Mr. Cray studied the group thoughtfully.

"Dead ones!" he declared. "Why, Miss Medlicott is the only live one in the bunch. She doesn't belong, Ed."

"That water drinking," Mr. Wallin remarked, "seems to link them together, though."

"You mean to tell me that sandy-haired, melancholy-looking dyspeptic is your rival?" his host went on. "Gee, Ed, you ought to put it over on him!"

"He's the big noise when he's on the platform."

"Sure, but the girl isn't going to live with him on a platform! What are they all doing over here, Ed?"

"Inhipid?" Mr. Croft repeated severely. "Mr. Wallin, you surprise me."
"Not nearly so much as you're surprising me," that gentleman replied.

"They're collecting recipes of temperance drinks," Mr. Wallin replied. "The idea is, when they find one that goes, to form a company to manufacture it. Something that's cool and thirst-quenching in summer, and warm and vitalizing in winter—"

"A new soft drink, eh?" Mr. Cray said thoughtfully.

"That's the idea. They're going round the English manufactories, and if they can't find anything they're going on the Continent."

"A new soft drink, eh?" Mr. Cray repeated. "There's money in that, Ed."

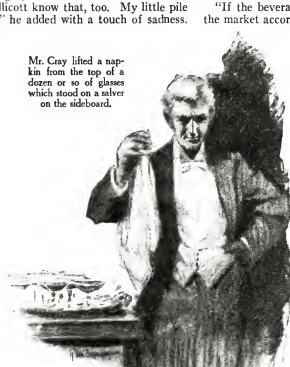
"Sure," Mr. Wallin assented, "or Hiram Crofts wouldn't be in it. He cuts out the hard stuff all right, but his nose follows the dollars all the time. Pa and Ma Medlicott know that, too. My little pile isn't much by the side of his," he added with a touch of sadness.

"Ed," his friend said firmly, "if you let a whimple-faced, anaemic-looking weed like that rob you of a fine girl like Miss Medlicott, I'm through with you."

"Do you think I want him to have her?" Mr. Wallin asked almost indignantly. "Do you think I've followed her over here for nothing? Say, you always were a slick sort of chap, Joe; do you think you could help me?"

Mr. Cray stretched a thin but muscular hand across the table.

"I do think so and I will, Ed," he declared. "Put it there."



Mr. Cray lifted a napkin from the top of a dozen or so of glasses which stood on a salver on the sideboard.

THE Hiram Crofts*cum*-Medlicott party occupied a large round table in a corner of the restaurant. Mr. Wallin and his companion paused before it on their way out.

"I want you all to know my friend, Mr. Joseph P. Cray," the former said, with his hand on Hiram Croft's shoulder. "Mr. Cray has just returned from two years of relief work with the Army of Occupation."

Mr. Hiram Croft shook hands. The introduction was made general.

"Any relation, may I ask?" Mrs. Medlicott began, adjusting her pince-nez.

"My friend Mr. Cray," Mr. Wallin interrupted proudly, "is the husband of Mrs. Cray, the Vice President of the Kill-the-Drink League."

Mr. Hiram Croft shook hands with him again.

"This is a privilege, Mr. Cray," he said.

Every one seemed pleased and happy. A chair was brought for Mr. Cray, who looked round at the table with its four goblets of ice-water with an inward shiver. There was a good deal of general conversation, which Mr. Cray dexterously brought up to a certain point.

"Mr. Croft," he said, "I am one of those men who, before the war, had used liquor in moderation."

Mr. Cray in the eyes of everybody became a very black sheep indeed. Everybody's manner stiffened perceptibly. It was hard to connect an even moderate use of strong drink with the husband of such an inspired dry prophetess as Mrs. Cray.

"When I took up my work 'over there'," Mr. Cray continued, "I cut it right out. Not a drop of liquor of any sort passed my lips. Being naturally of a somewhat thirsty disposition, I developed a strong interest in—ah—temperance drinks."

"Sure!" Mr. Croft murmured with returning tolerance.

"The subject of temperance drinks," Mr. Medlicott announced, "is one which is at the present time engaging a large share of our attention."

"So I understood from my friend Mr. Wallin here," Mr. Cray said. "I gathered that you were over here looking out for a thoroughly satisfactory recipe for a non-alcoholic beverage."

"Do you know of one, Mr. Cray?" Mrs. Medlicott asked.

"Madam," the gentleman addressed replied solemnly, "I do."

"This is becoming very interesting," the Senator remarked. "Can we be introduced to it, sir?"

Mr. Cray drew his chair a little closer to the table.

"Mrs. Medlicott and gentlemen," he said, "it is, in a sense, a most extraordinary thing that I should have come into touch with you. I claim to have discovered the most wonderful, refreshing, thirst-quenching and exhilarating beverage the world has ever known. I hold the recipe of it, and I value that recipe at a good many dollars."

Mr. Croft murmured and nodded.

"If the beverage," Mr. Cray proceeded solemnly, "were put on the market according to my directions and sold at even a moderate profit, its sales throughout the world would be colossal. But," he went on, "all this is talk. I am prepared to prove my words. I ask you, Mrs. Medlicott and gentlemen, have you yet discovered a satisfactory non-alcoholic beverage?"

"We have not," Mrs. Medlicott admitted.

"We were inclined to favor a certain brand of dry ginger ale," Mr. Croft observed, "but we have come to the decision that its after-effects are deleterious."

"A sense of inflation," one of the old gentlemen murmured.

"A tendency towards pains in the lower regions," Mr. Medlicott admitted frankly.

"In short," Mr. Cray summed up, "you have not yet found what you are looking for. Now I have brought my recipe back from France, and although I have not yet sold a single bottle, been near the trade or mentioned it to a soul, I have a plant near London and I shall be starting out shortly to manufacture on a very small scale. I invite you, ladies and gentlemen, to dine with me at the restaurant of this hotel at eight o'clock next Wednesday night, when my daughter, Lady Sittingbourne, will be proud to be your hostess. You shall then test my beverage, and if you find it what you are looking for, there shall be no question of dollars between us. I will give you the recipe."

Mr. Hiram Croft shook hands with Mr. Cray for the third time.

"Sir," he said, "if you are not led away by the enthusiasm of the discoverer, you are one of the world's benefactors."

"You have spoken, sir," Mrs. Medlicott declared, "as the husband of Mrs. Cray should speak."

"In short," Mr. Medlicott declared, "we accept your invitation."

MR. CRAY received his guests on the appointed day, in the sitting-room of his suite. He presented them to his daughter, and as soon as they were all assembled he stood by his little sideboard and addressed them.

"Mrs. and Miss Medlicott and gentlemen," he said, "I can assure you that I feel it a very great honor to entertain you tonight, but I do not want you for a moment to lose sight of the fact that in a sense this is an educational, and I trust you will find it a deeply interesting, exposition. I am going to disprove everything that has ever been written about alcohol."

"Hear, hear!" Mr. Hiram Croft murmured.

"Now," Mr. Cray continued, smiling, "you are all doubtless aware of a long-established habit in America of taking a cocktail before dinner. However one looks upon it, the habit itself is without doubt a pernicious one."

"Deplorable!" Mrs. Medlicott murmured.

"Unhygienic," one of the old gentlemen echoed.

Mr. Cray signified his unqualified assent.

"Still," he continued, "one function of this cocktail is, on the surface, worthy. A little party of friends such as the present one meets, a little tired with the day's toil, shy, perhaps, from an imperfect acquaintance with one another, depressed with business worries, physically and, perhaps, mentally weary. A cocktail has its function upon such an occasion. We have heard the hearty laugh, we have seen the lightning change, the smile of relief, a spirit, perhaps, of good-fellowship, incited by this evil means. Now, my friends, I propose to *(Continued on page 115)*

BEAUTY

By
RUPERT HUGHES

Illustrated by
W. T. BENDA

The Story So Far:

CLELIA BLAKENEY, Mrs. Roantree's willful and beautiful niece, had disappeared from her Adirondack country-place—clad, it would seem, only in night-clothes.

They searched everywhere through a blinding snowstorm: Burnley the painter, Randel the sculptor, and Larrick, a young Texan. Days passed—days of bitter cold and snow; mystery deepened; fear increased. One day Larrick and Nancy Fleet, a very New York girl who had stayed with Mrs. Roantree, went out on snowshoes again to search the lake shore. They found the ice thick and windswept of snow, and Nancy went back for her skates. And then it was that Larrick found Clelia Blakeney—lying face upward, frozen fast in the ice, a gash on her forehead.

That night it was Larrick who kept a strange death-watch: through the window of the room where he sat could be seen on the snowy, moonlit veranda the beautiful, dreadful statue of Clelia Blakeney, locked in the block of ice which had been cut from the lake and hauled thither by ox-sled. . . . .

Larrick had been a penniless cowboy when he saved the life of that gilded young aristocrat Norry Frewin in a barroom row. Later he had found a cinnabar pocket that brought him a quarter of a million dollars. A trip to New York had followed; he had looked up Frewin; and that grateful young man had introduced him to Clelia. . . . . And now he sat here, keeping watch over all that was left of her—himself aflame with longing to "get" the man who, he assumed, had caused her death.

Larrick's mind went back to the scenes of his acquaintance with Clelia, and her "crowd," especially with Nancy Fleet and her strange pitiful cousin Louise Coykendall. Larrick had carried on quite a flirtation with Nancy. So it happened that he had been in the Fleet drawing-room when Louise came in with the story of her newest tragedy. For Louise had first tried to win back Coykendall's waning affection through having her face made over by a beauty-surgeon—who had bungled, with the result that she had to wear a veil. And now, sobbed Louise, her husband had found evidence, false but effective, on which to base a divorce action.

Mrs. Coykendall.

CHAPTER XXVI

"HE has evidence enough. But I'm all too innocent." These two phrases played seesaw in Larrick's brain as he strode through the downpour that turned the cañon of Fifth Avenue into a vast shower-bath several miles long.

To Larrick alone it had the invigoration, the ecstasy of a shower-bath. His desert-tanned hide rejoiced in the squandered floods. The rain slashed down from the murky sky in bias streaks; it beat off from the walls of the houses; it caromed from the stoops; it shot up in an echo-rain from the pavements. The teeming gutters carried it to holes where it went in swirling and vanished by long subterranean channels to the river.

Waste, waste, waste of life-giving waters, while millions of square miles of desert lay in a purgatory of drouth!

And of love, it seemed to Larrick, there was the same mad waste. Love, the life-giver, the life-sustainer, the life-justifier, rained where it was not needed and flowed away into the dark, back to the river and the sea, while millions of men and women thirsted for it in vain.

This Mrs. Coykendall rained her love on the asphalt soul of her husband, and it gave him only annoyance. And meanwhile she who wasted so much love parched for the lack of it.

What kind of man must Coykendall be, that a woman should love him so desperately? To forgive his disloyalty once was a proof of strong devotion; to forgive it again and again was mania. Mrs. Coykendall had been born rich. She had always had all that wealth gave, and yet she was a whimpering beggar for love. And finally she gave her face to the knives and the needles of a torturer, that she might renew herself for her indifferent husband. That was hardly less than the Hindu women had done, who climbed onto their husbands' funeral pyres to keep them company in the grave—and to keep other women away.

Larrick marveled at the strange insanity called love. Some men and women drew it as the moon the tides, the sun the dew. Other men and women were lucky if they could, by hunting and pleading, discover some one willing

to be loved and to return a little affection in payment for a life of service. And some men and women besought love as vainly as the desert pleaded for rain upon its gaunt bosom.

He had known Texas people to pray for rain and wait for rain for over a year and never see a cloud in the sky except now and then some flimsy vapor that stayed just long enough to make a fool of hope. He had known the cattle to die by the hundred till the survivors had to be loaded on trains and shipped north to water. He had seen cornfields shriveled into vast areas of dusty jungle. He had known the earth to dry to such powder that, as Colonel Will Sterrett wrote, the insects perished and the field mice starved. And all this while there were cloudbursts and floods wreaking vengeance on other lands.

Love was like that. Larrick had never thought much about it till now, when he went striding down Fifth Avenue, his costly evening clothes saturated with p o u n d i n g r a i n, his patent-leather shoes squeaking with the pools inside. He was remembering how he had sometimes rasped his file-like tongue along his cracked lips and stared with bleary eyes at the dried-out water-hole he had struggled to across the scorching sand.

It never rains but it pours. He had met up with Nancy Fleet in the rain, and he had tasted her lips, had been invited into her home, and had kissed her again—only to have his feast interrupted by the specter of Mrs. Coykendall with her wild story of a husband that not only betrayed her but trapped her in her own folly and threatened her with public shame.

What could she have meant by saying that he had "evidence enough?" How could he have "evidence" if she were "innocent" as she said—"all too innocent," as she had sobbed.

That was the last word in shame. The poor thing had fallen so low that she felt remorse for her loyalty and her decency and her innocence, because they had been so indecently rewarded, so blatantly unappreciated.

Larrick's heart was an unfailing spring of sympathy. He heard a woman weeping. That was enough. She was all right. She wouldn't cry just for the fun of it. His heart ached with pity, and his head with curiosity.

What could Coykendall be like? He wanted to lay eyes on that fellow—lay hands on him too. But what could he be like?

(When Larrick came to know him afterward, he found him an idolator at the shrine of Clelia Blakeney, who paid no more heed to his prayers then he paid to his wife's. The lesser god was looking over the head of the worshiper toward a higher goddess, who ignored him. But that gave Mrs. Coykendall no comfort. She wanted love, not revenge. She had gambled even with her beauty, and had lost that too!)

ON that night of deluge the rain seemed to enliven Larrick's sensibilities beyond themselves, as rain alone can do for all the plants and animals and men it falls upon. Fifth Avenue had always been a word to him, like *Babylon* or *Samarcand*. But now it was almost abandoned, a dead road in a deserted mining town. So few people were to be seen, and they fleeing in cabs as from a plague or darting from shelter to shelter like thieves, that he said to himself:

"I could just about steal the whole blamed street if I'd a mind to."

But as he splashed south, he passed more and more shops, their windows idly alight overtime for the advertisement of the wares within. After a mile or so he turned into Thirty-fourth Street and entered the Waldorf. In his room he peeled off his togs, wrung them out in the bathtub and sent the suit to the valet. Then he drew on his silk pajamas (they had cost him twenty-seven dollars) and slipped into an almost too exquisite brocaded

"See that girl—the one in cerise? That's the girl Roy Coykendall is said to

silk bathrobe that he had been unable to resist (though he had almost toppled over when the haberdasher informed him of the price.)

He shoved his big feet into enormous slippers of limp morocco and stared at his bed, whose covers a maid had already folded back with fine exactitude.

He had to laugh at the image he caught of himself in the door-long mirror. Up to a few weeks before he had considered that the only really essential preparation for sleep was the removal of his spurs. More came off if he had the time or the bed, but he practically never slept with his spurs on. Now he had dressed up almost as much to go to bed as to go calling.

He hunted for the tobacco pouch and the rice-paper brochure and rolled himself a cigarette. This reminded him of Nancy Fleet, whom he had almost forgotten except as the satellite of the tragic Mrs. Coykendall. Now he forgot Mrs. Coykendall and thought of the luscious armful Nancy made. He exulted in the fairy story he had written for himself in a few weeks; his amazing vein of luck had included not only wealth and the acquaintance with people of wealth but even a brilliant conquest of one of the beautiful daughters of wealth.

He had shot up into the sky from the depths of obscurity as if one of those extinct Texan volcanoes of Brewster County had suddenly wakened beneath him and skyrocketed him to the clouds. He could almost smell the sulphur. There was something Satanic about it all. He supposed that before long he would come down like the rocket-stick and thereafter lie as dull and dismal as the rugged lava patches that made iron islands and peninsulas in the sand sea.

But now he was going up, up, up, in a blaze of glory, and he was immensely pleased with the view. Better to have soared and flopped, than never to have hit the sky.

He smoked many cigarettes, imagining Miss Fleet at his side

be crazy about. She's the girl he wants to marry when he shakes off Louise."

praising his dexterity—or rather his sinisterity, since he rolled them with his left hand. He decided that he would have to teach her how to roll her own. It would be a ladylike accomplishment in these days when nearly all the city women seemed to be going mad over cigarettes. As he had said to Frewin in a Will Rogersy phrase:

"I-see where it says in the paper that women in England are takin' to pipes—little ladylike pipes. I reckon befo' long they'll move on to chewin' tobacca—perfumed, mostlike, or flavored with pep'mint or somethin'."

His delight in the prospect of teaching Miss Fleet the high art of cigarette-making was hampered by a dread that she might carry out her threat of making him ride a trottin'-hoss. She had ridden to the hounds too, she said, and, as he had heard tell, that included hurdlin' stone fences. He had stuck to all sorts of jumpin'-jack broncos, but none of them had ever leaped a bob-wire fence with him. He shuddered at what would happen to him if they ever put him aboard a leapin'-hoss and sicked him on a snake-fence. He had seen pictures in the papers of young ladies soaring over hurdles as if they rode seagulls, but he reckoned it was not for him.

Still, Miss Fleet had driven him to taking dancing lessons, and maybe there was somebody somewhere who would sell him a set of jumpin' lessons. He wondered if there was a corresponding-school course in it. He had "seen where it said in the paper" that you could learn singing and piano-playing by correspondence. So why not jumping?

Anyway, he was going to take all the lessons there were in this being rich business—at least as long as his money held out to burn. At the rate it was smoking, two hundred and fifty thousand would last him about a year—after he paid the income tax. This sadly solemn thought made him drowsy, and he thrust his lank figure into the fine linen and slept till all hours.

In fact, he was wakened by his telephone. Some luxury, that, just to reach out of bed and pull the telephone over, set it on your chest and talk to a lady without getting up and dressing first! He had never expected to hear Miss Fleet's voice unchaperoned in his bedroom, and he drew the covers hastily over him when he caught her almost glittering accents.

"I hope I haven't got you out of bed," she began when she was sure it was he.

"Oh, no! I been up for hours," he lied with fine chivalry.

"Well, I've been up all night," she groaned. "My poor cousin has just fallen asleep. She talked herself out, and it's my first chance to escape. I really need some help and some advice and I don't want to go to any of our friends. It struck me that you were just the man of all men to do us a wonderful service. If you would! Would you?"

"Anything you want, from killin' one or mo' men, up or down. I'm your man."

"I think one killin' would be enough," she answered, "and it would just about solve the problem! But I'd love to have a word with you first. It's not exactly a telephone subject. You say you've been up for hours. Could you come here at once for a little while? I've got a luncheon date I simply can't break. Could you come right away?"

"I'm nearly there now!" he cried.

"Good-by, then!" she said, and was gone.

HE sprang from bed as if he had felt a Gila monster under him. He had learned from casual allusions that it was indecent not to begin the day with a bath; so he sped into the shower and out. He put into his clothes as if the telephone girl had told him the hotel was on fire. His gifted left hand worked at buttons while his right manipulated comb and brush.

His gallant lie cost him the privilege of breakfast, and he was still reassuring himself that he was all buttoned in when the elevator took him down. He told a taxicab driver to run over any traffic cop that got in the way, and they made the distance in much less than the legal minimum, without arrest. When he was ushered into Miss Fleet's presence, he explained his delay by saying that the taxicab had broken down on the road.

She led him into the home office of her father, who had left

for Broad Street long before. It was a somber wilderness of precious books and tables and cabinets, and of chairs like the laps of the gods.

Larrick had indulged himself in visions of gathering Miss Fleet into his arms as soon as he met her, but she looked too haggard and anxious, and she was in no mood for romance. She was tasting the too bitter ashes of it. She motioned him to a vast fauteuil of almost smothering comfort, but she sat on the edge of a great carved table, or walked the floor as she told him of Mrs. Coykendall's plight. She answered the riddle of the night before but she posed a new one, the solution of which was not a matter for curiosity but for action. He looked upon her as a sphinx, but he was no Œdipus when it came to solving the puzzle.

CHAPTER XXVII

"YOU heard so much last night," she began, "that you have a right—and an obligation—to hear more. You did overhear something, didn't you?"

"Well, yes, something," Larrick mumbled. "I couldn't he'p myse'f. But don't tell me anything you don't want to, unless I can he'p you. You didn't ask me not to tell anybody, and I hope it was because you knew I wouldn't."

"I thought you were safe," she smiled drearily. "But just what did you hear?"

"Well, I heard the lady say her husband was goin' to sue her for divo'ce, and had evidence aplenty, but she was innocent—'all too innocent,' I think she said."

Nancy nodded grimly.

"I didn't ask you last night to keep this, and I don't ask you now. If a person doesn't keep such things by instinct, no promises will hold him. But I trust you. Lord knows, I trusted you with my own reputation last night—a poor thing, but all I've got. But no matter about me.

"It's insane of me to tell you the rest of Mrs. Coykendall's affairs. I've no right to burden you with them, but Louise has made me as hysterical as she is. So here goes. It would take all day to tell what she took all night to tell, but this is the gist of it—If you want to hear it?"

"I want to hear anything you'll do me the honor of tellin' me."

"Very graceful—especially for so early in the day! . . . Well, Louise—I told you last night what a rotter, what a flitter, her husband was—is!—always will be. Well, Louise couldn't bring herself to believe him hopeless. She tried all the schemes she had ever heard or read about; and I suppose there are more fool suggestions for holding love than for curing colds. Every daily paper is full of both, and none of them are any good, either for cold hearts or noses.

"But Louise read a book or two, and saw a play or two, where a wife tried the old dodge of making a careless husband jealous. It never failed to bring him back forever—in the books and plays. So she decided to try the record on her own Victrola. It was her last effort before she turned her face over to the surgeon.

"She dreamed it all out. She would pick up some fool man and throw herself at his head where Roy, her husband, could see her. Then he would hurry back to her on his knees. Well, just in time, as luck would have it, Roy himself introduced her to a handsome man—O. K.'d his family and all that—and left them together.

"It was so providential and so pat that Louise ought to have suspected it.

"I've always found in playing poker that if I needed one card to fill a flush, and drew it, it wouldn't do me any good. Somebody else would have a better hand, or nobody would bet at all.

"Well, Louise was too blind with love to have either wisdom or conscience. She began to lead this young fellow on. He was good-looking, too good-looking to be trusted. And he walked into the trap entirely too easily.

"Louise began to feel a little guilty when the luck ran her way, and it hurt her to see how quickly the fellow fell in love with her. She vowed that as soon as she won Roy back, she would find the nicest, prettiest girl in town for Boyd Cowper—that's the man's name—and make her marry him.

"Meanwhile she managed to have Cowper hanging around at the hours when Roy was expected home for dinner. He came home and found the man there a few times and scowled and went on up to his room. Louise thought she was succeeding gloriously.

"When she and Roy went out to a dance anywhere together, she saw to it that Cowper was invited, and she paid him marked attention, danced with him too often and hung on to him in the lovesick way so many women do.

"Roy protested several times, and Louise told him that she had a right to other men's attention since he gave her none. Well, this went on and on, but Roy's jealousy didn't seem to be turning to love. Louise grew frantic. She took a long chance. It's easy to say she oughtn't to have done it, and she deserved what she got, but it was her wifely infatuation with a no-good husband that was the cause of it all.

"This fellow Cowper began to make love to Louise as if he had rehearsed a part in a play. She encouraged him just a little to keep him interested. She permitted a caress or two, rebuked him but forgave him and let him call again. He grew bolder. She got a little frightened, but was still more afraid to let him go, since she'd gone so far.

"Once or twice a new second man happened in just as Cowper was holding her hand. Once or twice a new maid blundered upon them. We don't have old family servants any more—just a procession of new ones. Louise suffered agonies of humiliation, but like a crazy gambler, she hoped that the next bet would turn the luck.

"One afternoon when she'd been riding in the Park, she came home and found Cowper there waiting for her. He said he had met Roy, and Roy was going to take a girl to tea at the Biltmore. Louise decided to go there and make him jealous. She asked Cowper to take her, and rushed up to her room to change from riding togs to dancing. It never occurred to her to lock her door, and she was just—well, between costumes, when to her amazement, her horror, Cowper slipped into her room. She ordered him out. He refused to go and took her in his arms. She ought to have called a servant, but that was just what she didn't want to do. She was sure she would be blamed for encouraging him to such audacity. She blamed herself bitterly. But the man had been so meek and manageable before, that she was sure she could put him out quietly.

"She commanded him to go, but he wouldn't. Then the new maid appeared, said, 'Oh, I beg your pardon!' and vanished.

"Louise almost fainted with shame and rage. She just drooped and began to cry.

"She hadn't the strength to tear Cowper's eyes out! She hardly knew he was there, till she realized that he still had her in his arms. Now she implored him to go and never come near again. But he clung to her till she got hold of a pair of scissors and threatened to drive them into his eyes. Then he went.

"At the foot of the stairs he met Roy coming up. Instead of killing him, Roy dashed up to Louise and called her every name he could think of. He wouldn't listen to her, but had his things packed and sent to his club.

"OF course, Louise wouldn't see Cowper again. In fact, he took her at her word and never came near her. She was frantic. Roy wouldn't answer her letters, wouldn't come to the telephone, was always out if she called at his office.

"It was then in her desperation that she read one of those beauty-doctor advertisements, promising eternal youth. It struck the poor crazy thing that here was a way, the only way, to get Roy back—to appeal to his love for a pretty face by getting herself one.

"She lost no time. She went right to the private hospital and had everything done, including a few new experiments. I told you the ghastly result.

"Well, if Roy Coykendall were fit to live, Louise's pain and sacrifice for him would have broken his heart for her. He would have taken it as a penance even for the guilt he accused her of. Instead he began to demand that she divorce him. The poor mad creature refused.

"He stormed at her: 'Then, by God, I'll divorce you.'

"She laughed through her veil. 'It takes evidence for that, dearest, thank heaven!'

"'Oh, I've got the evidence, all right!' he said.

"'You can't have,' Louise answered, 'because there's been no guilt.'

"'Tell that to the jury,' he sneered. And then he flung at her copies of affidavits he had secured. The maid testified to what she had seen and what she had imagined. She confessed to calling the second man, and he testified that he had peeked through a keyhole and seen—well, he corroborated it. And then, to crown the whole nightmare, Roy had secured an affidavit from—you'll never believe it—a sworn confession from Boyd Cowper!"

This incredible thing sent Larrick into the air as if a copperhead had struck at him without warning. *(Continued on page 122)*

He clung to her until she got hold of a pair of scissors and threatened to drive them into his eyes. Then he went.

SAVAGERY

By HAL G. EVARTS

Illustrated by
FRANK STICK

The mother fox whirled and leaped at the sound.

"ADMITTED that we're a shade removed from savagery," said the explorer,—"and still farther from the beasts. I'm not arguing that. We've improved and amplified the system of barter and exchange. We cut a man's throat financially instead of knocking him on the head and appropriating his wealth. But the underlying impulse emanates from the same sources: love of mate and young, love of finery and display. Gouge the other fellow to provide for your own! Even gorillas travel in family groups. Well, I'm off."

Anderson, the raw-fur buyer, leaned against a display case and gazed after him.

"Carpenter has prowled into odd places so often and lived among savages so much that he's inclined to be one himself," he remarked.

The furrier leaned over the case and tapped it, looking earnestly at the raw-fur buyer.

"I've often thought the same of you," he smiled. "You've put in so much time among crude people that you're prone to believe in their primitive way of administering justice. It's easier to revert to the raw than to attain the opposite."

"Same to you, Flick!" Anderson retorted. "Carpenter is half right. You buy from me because you can purchase cheaper than at the auctions. I sell to you to get the best prices I can. You gouge me whenever you see the chance. I hold you up at every opportunity. Same reason—to provide for our own. We both cut out the middle-man and damn him for trying to do the same."

A woman rustled back through the shop and spread a silver fox pelt on the case.

"I want that matched, Mr. Flick," she said. "You remember I bought it a year ago because Arline admired it so. She doesn't know I have it, of course. I want a mate for it."

"How soon, Mrs. Carlton?" he asked. "It's a rather difficult pelt to match. There are forty shades of silver foxes, you know."

"Any time in two years," the woman said. "I want the set as a surprise for her eighteenth birthday."

"I can make it cheaper that way," the furrier stated. "I'll be sure to run across one in that time without going to the expense of hunting down a single pelt—which would be the case if you wished to match it at once. Twelve hundred dollars will cover it, I think."

Mrs. Carlton twisted her pretty mouth into a fetching pout.

"It's a frightful price to pay to some Northern savage who wont know how to enjoy the sum after he gets it. Why do they rob us so? Well, I simply must have it for Arline."

Anderson examined the skin minutely after the woman had departed. The forward half of the pelt was glossy black, the hackle fur heavy and unmarked by a single white hair. Just behind the shoulders a very few silver-tipped guard hairs peeped through, increasing in numbers

toward the open end of the cased hide till the rear third was liberally sprinkled and showed a lustrous silver against a blue-black field. The tail was five inches through and two-thirds as long as the pelt, black throughout its length except for the pure white tip. Anderson picked it up and shook it, head down, and the long fur rippled back while he blew into the underfur to part it and estimate its length and thickness.

A THOUSAND miles away a savage blast of wind swept a bald ridge near timber line and struck through the underfur of a pelt that was a perfect mate for the one Anderson had examined, a pelt worn by a living animal; and Wawina, the self on a high point, every sense alert. After perhaps five minutes, satisfied that all was well, he stretched forth his head, cupped his lips and sent forth a wild squall.

From far down the spruce-slope came an answering cry, the squall rising to a high note, then falling rapidly: "Wa-augh—ha-aw!" Wawina trotted back to the remains of the highorn ram and feasted. With the coming of night a gripping cold had shut down over the hills, congealing the surface of the drifts that had thawed and softened during the day under the warm, spring sun. The black fox raised his head as a shadowy form crossed over the ridge and slipped silently toward him under the trees. Wameechin, the red she-fox, came to the feed.

Suddenly his knees sagged under him at the roar of McCloud's gun from the edge of the timber.

silver-black fox, scudded over to the sheltered side of the hog-back, for no fox relishes a strong wind at his back that drives through his fur and whips his heavy brush. Once over the ridge he stopped, one forefoot uplifted, the sharp ears pricked forward and the keen, pointed nose testing the wind. The deep orange eyes peered from the black face with a contrast of colors even more startling than the effect of the snow-white tip that set off the magnificent black tail.

Wawina was all savage at that instant, for the meat-scent had reached his nostrils. He crossed back over the ridge, quartering into the wind. The scent came strong, and he traced it to the body of a mountain sheep that lay in the heavy timber on the slope. A cougar had dragged his kill to this sheltered spot and gorged, leaving the rest behind for the smaller meat-eaters of the hills.

The black fox stopped and sampled the wind for messages of the recent presence of other banqueters. The surface of the packed drifts showed many signs, and Wawina's nose informed him that some, at least, were fresh. Dusk was falling as he trotted to the sheep. Two gray jays squawked harshly and hopped to the lower branches of a spruce, from which point of vantage they viewed the intruder, uttering their monotonous "A-a-a-agh" at twenty-second intervals, first with a rising inflection as if putting an interrogation, then, after seeming to ponder the matter, giving vent to the same note with a falling inflection as if in answer to their own inquiry.

Wawina's nose informed him that two coyotes had fed there during the day, a lynx the night before; the rest of the signs were cold. The two jays, realizing, no doubt, that the fox had come to stay, rose above the trees and winged their way down the slope. The black fox moved back to the ridge and stationed him-

Two hours later she turned suddenly and moved off. Wawina followed, but she paid no heed to him, holding steadily on her way through heavy timber and across bald ridges until she came at last to an open shoulder of a hill. It was free of trees, clad with heavy sage and had a south exposure. The drifts had disappeared in this opening. Wameechin entered a clump of sage on the sidehill and failed to come out on the opposite side.

Wawina started down the mouth of the hole in the center of the sage thicket, but a snarl warned him back. He tried another entrance fifteen feet beyond, but with the same result. He gave over the effort and retraced his way.

When he reached the sheep again, he started to tear off a piece to take home. Wawina was a good mate. If Wameechin could not rustle for herself, he would feed her. The chunk of hide and meat was almost severed when the black fox saw a gray beast moving to the feed, and he departed until the lynx should leave.

Dawn was lifting the shadows as Wawina gained the ridge. He bedded on a rocky point that overlooked the feeding-place. A second beast joined the lynx at the meat, a hobcat whose fur showed spotted in the early morning light. The two worked at opposite extremities of the sheep, each endeavoring to tear off a piece that could be carried away. Wawina could hear the snarls as they lifted their heads to glare malevolently across the feed. The lynx had three kits in a windfall jam down the slope; the spotted cat had two young of her own in a crevice in a rock-slide a mile away.

Wawina despised the cats, the stupid beasts that would walk into an uncovered trap, whose males left their shes to raise the kits alone, even killed their own young whenever possible. The she-cats were good mothers—the one redeeming quality of the cat tribe.

The bobcat succeeded in tearing off a goodly chunk, and the big lynx leaped for her. The spotted cat dropped the meat and whisked down the slope. The mother lynx picked up the plunder and departed, and after she had gone, the bobcat returned and worked at the partially severed piece deserted by the other. By the time the first rays of the sun had driven the chill from the hills, she too had left the spot, a juicy fragment dangling from her jaws.

The meat-eating birds rallied to the feed, ravens and magpies, along with two big gray Clark's crows. One of the crows worked patiently to detach a shred of meat, uttering harsh squawks of resentment whenever disturbed by one of the larger ravens. Her efforts were crowned with success at last, but a raven pounced on the severed scrap and wrested it from her, flapped up through the trees and set sail for her nest on a distant cliff-face. The gray crow robbed a magpie of a similar morsel and winged away to feed her own hungry brood.

Wawina was averse to daylight foraging, but the thought of Wameechin's need spurred him on, and he dropped down to the sheep. He sliced deeply into one haunch, tugging and twisting to tear part of it away. He was nervous and alert, frequently raising his head and trotting a few paces into the wind to reassure himself. A last wrench severed the coveted piece of meat and he moved off with it toward the den. When halfway home, he saw movement among the trees ahead and crouched flat behind a down-log.

A dog coyote passed fifty yards below him, the one creature whose wisdom was superior to his own. Wawina feared and respected him accordingly. He remained motionless until long after the coyote had passed from view, then resumed his way, the orange eyes sweeping both flanks of his route. Twice he dropped the meat and elevated his muzzle to test the wind. The coyote hunted in the light of day with almost the same freedom as at night and Wawina dreaded his yellow cousin, for in the past he had been furnished with abundant proof of the coyote's resourcefulness. He cast an apprehensive glance over his shoulder—and the next second he was in full flight, for he had seen the yellow wolf quartering down upon him from behind.

The coyote dashed after him and gained. Wawina dropped the meat, and the coyote picked up the spoils, heading at once toward his own mate and pups.

The whole scheme was one of savagery throughout, each succeeding plunderer actuated by the same impulse, the urge to provide for his own.

WAWINA was a princely mate. In all the wild there were but two, the coyote and the wolf, who were his equals in this respect. He was only temporarily disheartened by the loss of his meat, and within a few hundred yards he was hunting for more. If he had been a fox of the far North he would have ranged the rolling timberlands and the barrens; if he had been born in the East, his hunting-ground would have been in the hardwood hills. Here, in the backbone of the Western ranges, his tribe had taken to the peaks, the altitude affording the same low temperatures as the lowlands farther north.

The black fox hunted the spruce-slopes, creeping through blowdowns and burnings, working against the wind into sidehill parks or out across the broad meadows above timber line. Small game was scarce, and for two hours he foraged without success. Then he came to the edge of a burning so ancient as to have been transformed by time into an open park. It caught the full sweep of the sun, and the drifts had melted off. The grassy slope was dotted with clumps of shrubs, and wild rose bushes that sprouted in profusion round the few charred logs left to mark the fire.

A pair of blue grouse stalked at the edge of a shrub thicket and reached up to tear off the swelling buds. Wawina worked downwind from them and advanced behind the cover of the shrubs, the delicious fragrance of the birds playing on his nostrils. He crouched flat and stealthily circled the thicket to a point where a single low shrub would afford cover from which to make a spring.

The fox can strike with unbelievable speed, and once within ten feet of an unsuspecting grouse, the bird is his. In all the hills there is perhaps but one four-footed killer whose strike is more lightning-like than that of the fox—a creature of stupid ferocity, one that when molested, attacks larger creatures with the blind rage of a tormented rattler, regardless of the certain consequences attendant upon his recklessness. One of this tribe too was on the meat-trail, intent upon supplying her four bloodthirsty young with meat. Wawina had flattened behind his screening shrub and tensed his muscles for a spring when there was a flash of yellow from the heart of the thicket.

A snakelike destroyer fastened on the neck of the hen grouse. The cock was off with a roar of wings while his mate drummed the ground in her death-struggles, the feathers fanned from the spot in whirling puffs. Wawina sprang—and so quick was the killer that she loosed her hold and darted away while the fox was still in mid-air; the she-weasel landed six feet from the grouse as the black fox struck it. Her body was ten inches long and little more than an inch in thickness. The mouth also was snakelike, seeming to split the head clear to the ears, and opened to such an extent that the fang-fringed red mask was of greater diameter than the body.

A SINGLE spring carried her back to Wawina, and the gaping mouth clicked shut as she connected with his throat. The long body flashed round his neck, almost concealed in the long fur where his teeth could not reach her, while her own fangs worked at his throat. Wawina snapped from side to side, but his teeth clashed on empty air. He shook himself savagely without loosening her hold the fraction of an inch, rolled over and over without avail, then dug both forepaws along the sides of his neck and tore the bloodsucker from him, one paw pinning her fast.

The weasel's teeth left Wawina's throat and fastened on the foot between the tender toes with a slash that forced him to jerk it back, and she flipped away as his teeth snapped shut on the space her body had occupied a split-second before. Even as he raised his head, she was back, flashing at his throat. His paws closed on her, but as he shut down burden and crushed her midway of the body, she writhed round and scored his face and nose with her teeth until a last wrench and shake threw her twenty feet, a lifeless heap.

The black fox reached her in two bounds and mauled her, then licked his wounded toes and circled his long tongue over his lacerated face. He picked up the grouse and the weasel, but first one or the other slipped from his jaws. At last he abandoned the idea of carrying the double burden and deposited the grouse on the ground while he buried the weasel at the end of a log and tamped the soft earth over it with his nose. He picked up the grouse and started for the den, holding to the heavy drifts under the matted spruce on the slopes and avoiding openings wherever feasible.

He came at last to a broad meadow which he must cross, and he stopped and tore off the head of the grouse, crunched it a few times to soften the skull and swallowed it, feathers, bill and all, his eyes sweeping the open ground during the operation. Assured that all was safe he started across.

A man who knelt within the timber farther down the opposite side suddenly dropped the traps he was caching under a log and trained his rifle on the fox. He shook his head and lowered it again. Wawina's pelt showed rubbed spots on the flanks. McCloud knew it would prove a blue pelt at best, and in all likelihood a shedder. Wawina reached the timber without knowing that death had hovered over him and passed him by.

McCloud went on his way, caching his traps where he could find them the following fall. Two hours later he entered a one-room log cabin and greeted the woman and two little girls that made his life worth living.

"The black fox still lives," he said. "Neither Campbell nor the Breed has pinched his toes. I saw him today, carrying a grouse, which means that his mate is denned this spring within my territory. Come fall, and I'll stretch his pelt and you'll have the trinkets you've been longing for."

There came a knock at the door; Anderson, the raw-fur buyer, had arrived to bargain for the winter's catch. McCloud told him of the black fox, and the woman brought out a well-thumbed catalogue and showed the buyer the treasures that would be gained with the price of the silver pelt; bright hair-ribbons and strings of glass beads for the little girls—red calico dresses for the one and robin's egg blue for the other; six plates and bowls of flowered porcelain for the table; a plaid shawl for herself, and a new fiddle for McCloud. As the list grew, the fur buyer wondered what it would benefit these people, buried deep in the wilderness, to come into possession of all this. He smiled at the earnest assurance that McCloud would strip off the silver's pelt in the fall.

HE had that day heard two similar assurances. The country was closely trapped, three lines thrown out over one district that could be covered by a single energetic trapper. Four hours ago he had been over on Paint Creek with Campbell, the favored suitor of Lucille, the daughter of the old Frenchman Jules Theseau who lived twenty miles to the east. Campbell had

Wawina turned on the man and snarled, backing to the full length of the chain.

confided that they would be wed as soon as he should take the black fox pelt and so be in a position to shower his beloved with the baubles which were her due. A few hours prior to that Incham, the breed, had scowlingly predicted that he himself would pinch Wawina's toes and that the coveted Lucille would turn her favor upon the man who came into such sudden affluence.

"Savages!" Anderson reflected. "Still thinking in terms of glass beads and gaudy cloth. Trinkets for their mates and young! Good sort at that—but simple."

Meanwhile, far back in the hills Wawina had reached the mouth of the den with an offering for his own mate and young, for during the early morning hours Wameechin had given birth to six tiny mites of life. Wawina started down the hole with the grouse, but his mate warned him off, set her teeth in the grouse and wrenched it away from him, backing with it down the long entrance to the nest.

Wawina did not see his offspring for four days. He darted down the hole while his rufous mate sunned herself on the slope. The six tiny creatures gave no indication of what they would later become. They were of the size of chipmunks, the tails short and fuzzy, large where they joined the body and slanting abruptly down to a point. There was no indication of their parents' long, slender noses; instead their heads were chunky and blunt. Their very short legs would not support them, and they crawled blindly about the nests with plaintive, mouselike squeaks. Nor in their fur did they give any promise of future coloring, the quarter-inch fuzz that covered them being a uniform slatish black. Wawina did not linger but sought the open air, thinking no doubt that Wameechin had sadly tricked him.

His red mate left the foraging to him, and for a space of two weeks she did not stray far from the den. Wawina hunted tirelessly. Grouse and rabbits, scores of mice and chipmunks, were carried to the den. Often he brought birds, once a groundhog; and twice he appeared with snakes. The surplus he buried in the soft earth at the roots of the sage. A fox who is a father is prey to constant fear that his mate and pups will at some time in the future run short of food, and of all animals he is the only one that will deny himself even in time of plenty.

Wawina was no exception to this rule. Whenever he brought meat to the den, he ate a portion of it, but always he was overcome by that fear of future shortage as soon as the wire-edge of his hunger was gone. He never gorged, ate barely enough to sustain him, perhaps less than half his usual rations, and cached the rest against a day of famine. It was notable that he brought home no ravens, crows or magpies. Except at the point of starvation a fox refuses to touch the flesh of one of these carrion-eaters.

The glossy black pelt by now had turned rusty and lost its luster, the fur hanging in matted patches. The tail was scrawny and thinly furred. Wawina had now become a sorry spectacle, and Wameechin's red pelt was no less ragged and disreputable.

When the cubs were four weeks old, the dog fox saw his offspring in the open for the first time. The little red vixen gave a low squall, and the six pups toddled from the mouth of the den. They were fat and round and awkward, waddling on their short legs as they scampered about on the sidehill. A few guard-hairs had pushed through the soft fuzz that covered them. Three were still dark and showed no trace of color, but the other three had acquired a queer yellow tint from the scattered guard-hairs, the dark underfur showing through.

The nondescript litter developed rapidly after their first trip to the open air, and by their seventh week the old dog could discern a likeness to the fox tribe where formerly his nose was the only means of identifying them as belonging to his kind. The legs had grown long and slender; the blunt noses had lengthened and grown sharp, the tails had furred out. Three of the pups were still very dark. One of these showed brownish patches on the sides just back of the shoulders. The three lighter ones had turned a soft reddish hue as more and more guard-hairs crowded through.

Wawina was very fond of his brood, and he romped and played with them near the mouth of the den. All through this playfulness, however, there was mixed a thread of useful training for the future. When he returned to the den with meat, they swarmed from the hole and tore it from his jaws. At times he ran with it, and they dashed after him. The first to seize it was forced to fight to retain his proprietorship, and the combats were strenuous and real. There were few feeding times when each young fox failed to feel the punishing teeth of the others. All trace of awkwardness had vanished, and the little pirates flashed always for the largest remaining scrap of the prey. In the end it was invariably torn to shreds, and each received his share. The one who was last to consume his portion was forced to swallow it on the run or not at all, for the rest never failed to give chase and hound him through the sage until the last morsel had disappeared.

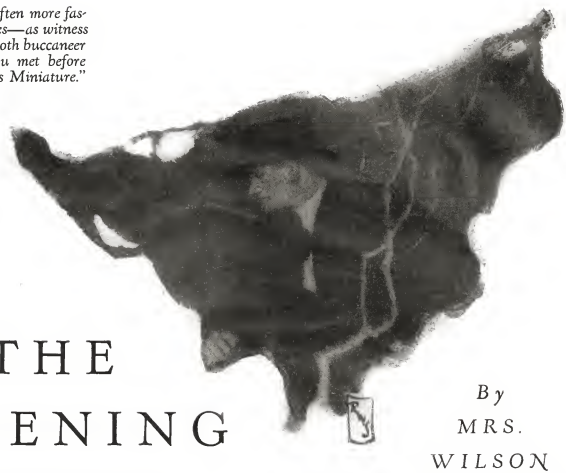
There was meat in plenty, for the vixen was now free to help her mate on the hunt. With the necessities of life supplied, Wawina turned his attention to other things. The minds of human parents, once their offspring are supplied with food, often turn to providing them with trinkets, toys and finery; and so it was with the black fox. On one of his hunts he sighted a white object half-buried in the pine-straw under the trees and turned it over with his paw. It proved to be the bleached skull of a small bear. Wawina trotted away from it, then turned back and viewed it from all sides. He picked it up and headed back for the den. The fox pups were thus treated to their first toy.

The mother fox, too, was now intent upon supplying amusements for her unruly family and brought home the whitened rib of an elk. Wawina next appeared with a large strip of deer-hide, toughened and weather-cured. Day by day the accumulation of toys increased. The young foxes were possessed of the same selfish cupidity that stamps the young of the human race. Whenever one of them elected to play with a certain trinket, the other toys were temporarily neglected as the whole brood rushed him and sought to gain possession of that particular one.

He cast an apprehensive glance over his shoulder —and the next second he was in full flight.

The system of communication between the members of the family was perfect, notwithstanding their limited vocabulary. The mother's various notes of command were so similar as to seem identical to the human ear, but the pups read the inflections unerringly. At one note they would file out *(Continued on page 104)*

VILLAINS are often more fascinating than heroes—as witness our friend the smooth buccaneer Achison, whom you met before in "The Medium's Miniature."



THE WIDENING CIRCLE

By MRS. WILSON WOODROW

Illustrated by ROBERT W. STEWART

HEYWOOD ACHISON, entering the stately library where John Schofield spent his declining days, would probably have been as much surprised as his host if some one had told them that they were both reliving a scene enacted twenty-five or thirty centuries before. And yet if Achison had given utterance to his secret thoughts, he would have voiced the demand that King Ahab made to his neighbor, Naboth:

"Give me thy vineyard."

And John Schofield's answer would have been that of Naboth:

"The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

But the centuries have taught us to cloak our greed with subtlety, and neither by word nor sign did Achison give a hint to the man who stretched out his hand in welcome, that he had determined to possess Scarlet Maples, this fine old estate in the Westchester Hills, with its handsome manor house built by the first Schofield in pre-Revolutionary days, and added to and embellished by every Schofield who had lived there since.

There was one present, however, who comprehended Achison's designs, and that was Frederick Schofield, the old man's nephew, whose handsome if not particularly strong face had begun to wear an habitually unhappy and careworn expression. He was under a heavy obligation to Achison, owing him not only money but gratitude—a debt of honor that must be paid.

It was through this boy that Achison had become a frequent visitor at Scarlet Maples. The elder Schofield had outlived the graceful impulses of hospitality; he claimed, as he often said, the privileges of age and infirmity, and refused to be bored. He was, moreover, inclined to view with suspicion and distrust any of his nephew's acquaintances. But Achison, in addition to possessing a fascinating personality, was a man of note, a criminal lawyer who had achieved the dizzy feat of rising to a spectacular eminence without impairing his dignity. He was also considerably older than Frederick, and the fact that the boy had won the friendship of such a man raised his otherwise doubtful value in his uncle's eyes.

Achison was now in the habit of motoring out to Scarlet Maples almost every Sunday, and these visits had become a source of pleasure to the recluse, for in spite of physical disability his keen and powerful mind had lost none of its vigor, and in Achison he found a more congenial companion than he had known for a long time. John Schofield had once been a power in two worlds; in business he had quadrupled an inherited fortune, and in the realm of art he had spent lavishly, ransacking the ages to gratify his discriminating taste.

Achison also was a collector, although in a lesser degree, and could talk to the valetudinarian in the language he loved and on the only subjects in which he still took an interest—the gossip of the auction-rooms and galleries, the genuine finds of this or that collector, or the frauds which had been palmed off on them.

In a few moments after Achison's arrival on this particular day Frederick, who had been fidgeting about, plainly ill at ease, excused himself on the plea of other guests, and left them.

The two men, sitting there in the library suffused by the mellow light of an afternoon in early autumn, were of strikingly contrasted types. Schofield, gaunt and lean as a starved wolf, sat in a great arm-chair, his shrunken hands clasped over the gold top of his cane. Achison, on the other hand, was anything but emaciated; yet although tall, he moved with an almost catlike grace and ease. Only an occasional glint in his steel-gray eyes betrayed the fact that he was neither so carelessly tolerant nor so smilingly debonair as he appeared.

"The responsibility you have placed on Fred is doing him good," he remarked to the uncle as Frederick closed the door upon them.

"I hope the reformation lasts," said Schofield grimly.

"Do the boy justice," Achison urged in his rich, persuasive voice. "These wild colts often turn out to be the most steady and reliable horses. And Fred could hardly have done more to prove the sincerity of his good intentions. He has buckled down to business, as you know, in a way to win the highest encomiums; and" —smiling— "he has also, if my eyes do not deceive me, had the good taste to fall head over heels in love with Miss Drew. What better assurance for the future could you ask?"

Schofield nodded, a glint of deep gratification in his eye. Margery Drew, an orphan ward of his who had lived since childhood in his home, and who was now a charming girl in her early twenties, was one of the few people he thoroughly believed in.

"They are engaged. Yes; Margery will keep him straight, if anyone can." He gave a chuckle of profound satisfaction.

"I am sure of it," Achison agreed heartily. "You have my warmest congratulations. You really should hesitate no longer about restoring Fred's inheritance."

The old man cogitated the suggestion, rubbing his chin with his hand.

"I've been waiting until I could feel sure of him," he explained. "But perhaps you are right. Ye-es. I guess you are right."

He sat with his penetrating eyes fixed on Achison for a moment or two, and then spoke again with an abrupt change to a more business-like tone.

"You've no ax to grind in this matter that I can see—"

"Except that I am interested in Fred, and believe in him," Achison put in.

"And," continued the other, "even though you have devoted yourself chiefly to criminal law, you are capable, I suppose, of drawing up a will?"

"I am," returned Achison, smiling but giving no outward sign of his inner elation. "And by the way,"—glancing toward a massive writing-table,—"if I catch your drift correctly, let me remind you that in these things there is no time like the present."

He spoke emphatically, but with just the proper degree of detachment.

Schofield nodded assentingly.

"You might, then, if you will, take down some notes of my wishes now, and then you can put them in proper legal form later. In a former will I made suitable provision for Margery, and then divided the residue of my property among various institutions. It is still my desire to make certain outside bequests." He enumerated them rapidly. "But," he then continued, "I want the homestead here to follow the name and belong to Frederick." His bent form straightened; he threw up his head proudly: "Scarlet Maples has been in our family for generations, Achison. It must continue to go down the line."

The lawyer murmured an appreciative comment, but he did not look up from the paper on which he was busily writing; and he continued to write rapidly for some time without speaking. At last, his task finished, he gathered up the loose sheets, looked them over, and having made one or two corrections, turned to Schofield.

"Now, Mr. Schofield,"—tapping his eyeglasses against the back of his hand,—"you and I know the accidents of life, the folly of delay. Again I repeat, there is no time like the present. Put your signature to this now, and call in two of the servants to witness it. If you do so, I fancy your night's rest will be that much easier."

"In good time—in good time," demurred the old man a bit petulantly. He seemed depressed, and leaned back wearily in his chair, silent and brooding.

"You spoke of my night's rest." He broke the silence at last. "Are you ever troubled by dreams, Achison?"

"Rarely," the lawyer replied.

"There's one dream that I dream over and over again." Schofield's voice was hardly above a whisper.

"What is it?" Achison asked with involuntary curiosity, and then checked himself quickly. "Don't think me prying, but it sometimes relieves the mind to talk of these things."

"It's an odd dream," Schofield answered musingly, "and always the same. I seem to be standing on the brink of a clear, narrow stream. It runs through a fertile country—wheat fields on one side, and a garden something like that on the other." He waved his hand toward the flower-bright lawns beyond the windows. "Then I feel a strong impulse. I know that it is a bad one at the time, but I am not able to resist it. I set to work to dam up the stream and divert it from its course. I work like a beaver, and when I have finished, the water flows out over a desert tract and disappears. The sands into which it sinks seem dryer than ever. My labor has been

"It cheers me," returned Ramsey, "to think how the circle is ever widening. More and more people are coming to know of your devious ways."

worse than useless. I wake up in a terrible state of depression. It takes a long time for me to throw it off." His voice trailed away; he sat huddled dejectedly in the chair.

"Odd, and unpleasant," Achison murmured sympathetically, keeping his mounting exultation out of his voice by an effort of will. "But, my dear Mr. Schofield, one doesn't have to be a psycho-analyst to interpret that. Think a moment. When Frederick was apparently going to the dogs, it distressed you to contemplate diverting the property from the Schofield line; yet you resolved to do so rather than to risk it in his hands after you were gone. All your love and pride, all the hopes you had centered on him, you ruthlessly put out of your mind. But they still continued to live in that storehouse of submerged memories, the subconscious, and to find their outlet in this dream. The dream is merely a symbolic picture of a former state of mind." His tone was dramatically impressive.

"The Schofield property, including this wonderful old place, husbanded and handed down always to the succeeding heir, typifies the stream deflected from its course and flowing out over the barren sands; the dam is a wall you built up between your rigid sense of duty and your heart. I believe"—his voice rang out dominatingly—"that this will release you from that wretched nightmare for good and all."

"A stream deflected from its course," Schofield muttered, "—the dam a wall built up between my sense of duty and my desire. Achison,"—he looked at the other strangely,—"you have said more than you imagine."

Again he relapsed into silence, and at last appeared to come to a determination which cost him an effort.

"I am not sure, not sure," he hesitated. Then: "I would like to show you something. We will go up to the gallery."

They passed through several rooms, the windows of which were heavily barred and wired with burglar-alarms. Achison longed to loiter and indulge his proprietary delight in what he already regarded as his possessions, his pictures, his tapestries, his rugs, potteries and *bibelots;* but Schofield hurried him on.

At last in one of the rooms they paused beside a cabinet of antique snuffboxes. Schofield opened the door, and pushing aside two or three of the specimens, pressed a concealed spring in the satin-wood floor. About a square foot of the marquetry slid noiselessly inward, revealing a shallow aperture. From this the old man lifted a carefully wrapped package.

Achison watched his movements with fascinated interest. The unsteady fingers untied the cord and removed the wrappings; and then Schofield looked at his companion with a flash of triumph on his face. In his hands was a book, the golden covers of which were wrought in marvelous designs.

"Good Lord!" Achison's habitual poise was shattered. "Why—why—"

He stretched out his hand, and Schofield reluctantly, as if he hated to see another touch it, gave the book to him.

The amazement deepened on Achison's face, as he put up his eyeglasses and examined it minutely.

"It must be—there can't be a doubt of the work!" His voice vibrated with excitement. "It's genuine Benvenuto Cellini—and beyond question, made for Francis I. Look! Here is the salamander, a particular device of Francis', and the stag, one of his emblems. Good heavens, Schofield, how did this come into your hands? Its place is in the Vatican, the Uffizi or the Louvre."

"You are right," murmured Schofield in a harsh whisper. "It came to me some years ago from very dubious sources. There was a reward offered by the Italian government. It still stands, you know—their law against removing art treasures of over a certain value. But I had to show it to you, after what you said about the dream—'something deflected from its true course.'

"I've made up my mind again and again to send it back. But when the moment came, I couldn't bear to part with it."

"I can easily understand," assented Achison, touching almost reverently the exquisite modeling of the covers.

"Ah, but you have yet to look inside!" Schofield took the book from him and dramatically exultant, turned over the leaves. "A missal illuminated by Albrecht Dürer!"

Achison fell back a step or two, and then leaned forward eagerly to scan the coloring at closer range.

"It's incredible!" He straightened up. "Impossible! Why, man, its value is fabulous. And you were dreaming of parting with it!"

"Stolen goods," croaked the old man. "And you have shown me what I must do. There'll be no more indecision, or faltering. It goes back tomorrow."

A deep flush colored Achison's face. If he before had coveted Scarlet Maples and all that it contained, he coveted it a thousand times more now that he knew it held this treasure of kings. He was overwhelmed by a passionate determination to possess at any cost this joint masterpiece of two of the world's greatest craftsmen, to know that it was his own, to gloat over it in secret as a miser over his gold.

Just as he was summoning all of his persuasive, argumentative powers to combat the old man's announced purpose, there was the sound of rapid footsteps approaching, and before Schofield could conceal the book, Frederick entered.

He stopped short, staring; and then his eye wandered to the secret repository in the cabinet.

"Why, I never saw that before!" he exclaimed. "What a beauty!" Conscious of his uncle's furious gaze, he stopped short.

"I beg your pardon if I am butting in," he stammered apologetically. "But Ramsey is outside, and wants to see the pictures. May I show him through the gallery?"

"You may not," replied the old collector angrily. "I wont have every Tom, Dick and Harry prying among my things." He waved his stick imperiously.

Surprised and evidently resentful, Frederick turned on his heel and left the room.

Achison looked after him, a deep frown between his eyebrows.

"Ramsey?" he repeated. "What Ramsey is that?" There was an edge to his tone.

"His name is Wallace Ramsey, I believe." Schofield was hurriedly replacing the missal in its niche, and closing the lid upon it. "A young fellow with whom Frederick seems to have struck up quite an intimacy."

"So?" Achison's lip curled disapprovingly. "Well, far be it from me to censor Frederick's friendships; but if this is the young man I take him to be, I should strongly discountenance any such association. Mr. Wallace Ramsey is a person to be avoided. He appeared from nowhere a year or two ago, and managed to get himself well introduced. Since then, although he has succeeded in escaping publicity, he has been involved in some exceedingly unsavory transactions. I am speaking solely in your interest when I tell you this, Mr. Schofield, but from certain and confidential knowledge. With all these valuable objects about, especially such a treasure as this missal you have just shown me, a man like Ramsey ought not to be permitted inside the doors."

John Schofield's lips protruded fiercely; there was fire in his eyes.

"Just like Frederick!" he said acridly. "I'll get rid of this friend of his in short order. Come."

He led the way from the gallery; but back again in his library he seemed to have forgotten his purpose to rid his house of an unwelcome visitor, and sank down panting in a chair, his face almost ghastly in its lack of color.

"I must rest," he said faintly. "You will excuse me, Achison; I am very tired."

"Not too tired, I am sure, to sign this," Achison replied in a brave attempt to assume his suave yet compelling manner, as he spread out on the table the draft of the will he had written, and dipped a pen in ink.

Schofield waved it aside with a stubborn gesture.

"Tomorrow will do. I want to look it over before I sign." He dismissed the matter from his attention and reverted to his old perplexity.

"Maybe your interpretation of that dream is right." He leaned forward and tapped his stick on the floor. "But if I dream that cursed nightmare again tonight, the missal goes back where it belongs tomorrow."

"You will not dream it," Achison said, praying that he could make the suggestion strong enough. "If you should, it will be because you have delayed signing the will. This other idea you hold is the greatest piece of nonsense I ever heard. Every man who has collected as widely as you have has two or three things which he only shows to the safe few. You bought and paid for the missal. Such things belong to the man who holds them."

"I've told Margery the whole story," he said at last, "—all about us, I mean."

Schofield sank lower in his seat; his mouth was set in a straight line.

"I am too tired to argue," he replied impatiently. "Come out tomorrow, and I will talk to you about the will."

Achison shrugged his shoulders; there was nothing to do but assent. He bade the old man good-by with what grace he could muster, and left the room.

There was a glorious sunset facing him as he stepped outside, but he was too absorbed to notice it—so absorbed that he started perceptibly when Frederick Schofield, who had been leaning moodily against one of the pillars of the porch, spoke to him.

"Can you give me a moment, Mr. Achison?" the young man began. "There is something I want to speak to you about."

"Certainly—certainly." Achison's graciousness was a shade perfunctory.

"Well, in the first place,"—the boy's face visibly brightened.—"Margery has consented to marry me."

"My dear boy,"—the lawyer wrung him by the hand,—"I am more than pleased. But I have already had an inkling of it; your uncle couldn't keep the secret. Still, even though it isn't altogether a surprise, it's mighty good news."

"Thanks." Frederick returned rather absently, and paused. There was evidently something else on his mind, something that he wished to put into words, but found it difficult to do. He looked down, frowning, and dug the toe of his shoe into the soft earth of the drive.

"I've told Margery the whole story," he said at last abruptly, "—all about us, I mean."

Achison made no movement; he merely drew in his breath quickly, and there was a slight click of his teeth as he tightened his lips to keep from uttering the word, "Fool!"

Frederick squared his shoulders; there was a new resolution in his voice.

"I feel very differently about the old place, now that I have come back to it," he said. "And Margery's heart is simply bound up in it. She cannot bear to think of its going out of the family." He hesitated a moment, then went on. "I should tell you, too, that my uncle is so pleased with our engagement, and with the way I have taken hold of the business, that he has given me quite a substantial sum of money. So now I am going to ask you to let me return the amounts you have advanced me, with interest, of course, and to be released from my promise to turn Scarlet Maples over to you in the event that my uncle restores my inheritance."

Achison did not reply at once. He was gazing off across the landscape—vivid maples and russet oaks as far as the eye could see. Naboth's vineyard had never appeared more fair. He turned to the younger man, and spoke definitely and concisely.

"My dear Fred, I hardly think you realize just what you are asking. It is decidedly unpleasant to have to refer to certain events in the past, but your memory must indeed have grown dull for you to come to me with such a request at this late date. After knocking around in South America for a more or less hectic two years, you came back to New York, down and out. You were found under suspicious circumstances and arrested for carrying concealed weapons. If it had not been for me, you would have been sent to the Island. Do you imagine, in view of those facts, that your uncle would have even considered giving you another chance?"

He laughed scoffingly. "You and I know him too well to believe that. I happened to be in the court-room when you were arraigned. I recognized you, took the case and got you off, successfully concealing your identity. I also suggested a plan of campaign that would reinstate you in your uncle's good graces, and I financed your rehabilitation."

"Oh, I know all that you did," cried Frederick desperately. "I never forget it for a minute. I only hoped—"

Achison disregarded the interruption. "The way in which our plans have succeeded has been beyond my hopes," he continued inexorably, "and for you to come to me now and try to beg off from a bargain, the terms of which you thoroughly understood, seems to me—well, to put it plainly, not the action of an honorable man."

Frederick flushed. "I am not trying to beg off," he denied hotly. "I only wanted to tell you how I felt, and see if you would not be willing to consider an arrangement."

"An arrangement?" Achison repeated scathingly. "The return of the sums I have advanced to you—with interest! Good Lord!

"You must excuse me, Achison; I am very tired." "Not too tired, I am sure, to sign this," Achison replied.

Do you think I put my brains at your disposal, and exerted myself as I did in your behalf, on any such pawnbroker's computation? Positively not! What does the beggarly amount of money involved mean to me? I made my terms plain in the beginning. You understood and accepted. There is nothing more to be said."

Frederick bowed dejectedly. "The agreement stands," he answered with a choke in his voice.

"Of course it does." The silkiness had come back into Achison's tones. "Let us forget the incident, Fred. After all, what is one old house to you? Under the terms of your uncle's will you will be a very rich man, with all the wide world open for your enjoyment. What is there to prevent you from building your own home, any sort of home you want? Think it over. . . . . Good-by."

He stepped into his big gray car, and starting it up, rolled away down the drive.

Around a bend in the winding road, and out of sight of the house, he checked the speed of the car and swore deeply and vehemently, damning all Schofields root and branch to the end of time. Then, his feelings relieved, it was characteristic of him to begin a cool and dispassionate mental review of the whole situation.

Up to a certain point everything had come his way: the game he had set out to play had been easier than he could possibly have foreseen. With the signing of the will, Scarlet Maples would be virtually his; for even eliminating his great age, John Schofield, as he happened to know, was the victim of an organic disease which must necessarily prove fatal within a few months—too short a time to render likely any change in his disposition of the property. And with the old man's death, he could call upon Frederick for a fulfillment of their compact, could force him to it, if it came to that.

Yet with all the odds apparently in his favor, Achison was too shrewd a calculator of chances not to recognize that the chain he had so carefully wrought depended on one link; and Frederick, instead of merely playing the part his mentor had assigned him, that of a supposedly reformed character, had with inconceivable stupidity actually become one. Nor was this all. The fool had also blundered into an intimacy with Wallace Ramsey, a fellow so intensely and vindictively hostile to Achison that he would go to any lengths to thwart or oppose him—as the lawyer had on more than one occasion had reason to appreciate.

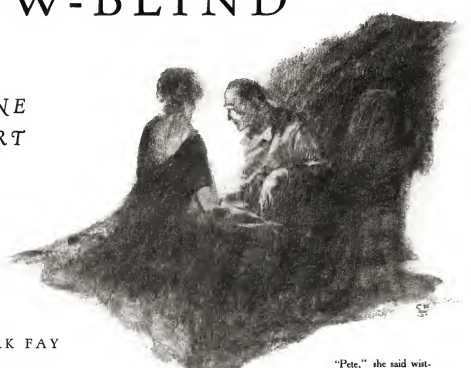
Was it not reasonable to suppose that Ramsey in his position of bosom friend would soon discover the existence of some sort of an understanding with Achison as the cause of Frederick's obvious dejection, and take pains to acquaint himself with the nature of it?

Achison drew up the car at the side of the road, and stopping the engine, lighted a cigarette while he tried to figure out his prospects. Already he had to count two persons in active opposition to him; Ramsey and the girl Margaret Drew. And Frederick, with a wife set like a rock against his giving up any part of his inheritance, and a friend forever at his elbow urging that Achison had trapped him into the bargain, and that whatever obligation there was could be justifiably met with a money settlement—well, Frederick's ultimate stand was under the circumstances hardly even a debatable question.

Of course, Achison could put into circulation the tale that he had rescued the boy from a term on Blackwell's Island—and prove it too, if required. But with the old man gone, what would that amount to? A morsel for the gossips to mull over for a day or two, and then forget. A bygone youthful peccadillo would not be counted very seriously against the possessor of Scarlet Maples and the Schofield millions. *(Continued on page 118)*

SNOW-BLIND

By KATHARINE NEWLIN BURT



"Pete," she said wistfully, "what can I do to make you love me?"

Illustrated by CLARK FAY

The story so far:

HUGH GARTH, ugly, misshapen, morose, returning to his snowdrift-covered cabin with his quarry of pelts and finding that in spite of his orders his younger brother Pete had neglected to mend his boot, struck him down, twisting his ankle.

His uncontrollable temper threatened to destroy him again! There was no one to take the pelts to the station now, nor to bring back the much-needed supplies; for Hugh, wanted for murder, had successfully eluded the officers of the law for fifteen years, but in all that time he had never ventured near the village.

Suddenly, defiantly, dramatic as always, Hugh announced that he would take the pelts himself—this in spite of tearful appeals from Bella, his middle-aged cousin, who had voluntarily and uncomplainingly shared his exile through all the years, and the reasoning of Pete, who had not seen fit to warn Hugh before that there had been notices of reward and photographs of him posted up in the post office when he had visited the village two months before.

After fifteen years they had started the man-hunt again! Sick of skulking, daring fate, Hugh strapped on his snowshoes.

"Who knows what I may meet out there?" he cried. "Beauty? Opportunity? Danger? Hope? Death? I sha'n't shirk it this time. I'll meet whatever comes."

They heard him singing as the sharp scraping of the skis came back over the snow, while they sat bewailing their weakness in allowing him to go to his own destruction. Hours later he returned—carrying a woman, young and beautiful, in his arms. He had found her half-frozen in the snow, and *snow-blind.*

Hugh, never so happy as when weaving fanciful romances around a splendid hero (always himself), and holding his audiences spellbound, was in his heaven now. Hour after hour during the little blind girl's convalescence he sat by her side, thrilling her with the stories of his heroism, and with a convincing assumption of modesty made her believe implicitly in his patient martyrdom—even at the hands of Bella and Pete.

As soon as she was able, she told her story:

She had been touring the West with a theatrical troupe when the train became snow-bound. Quitting the train for a stage, they were again buried in snowdrifts, and while the men were digging out horses and wagon, Sylvie, in an effort to keep warm, had strayed away along the edge of the forest.

Before she realized how far she had gone she was lost. Crazed with the fear of being attacked by bears she tried to find her way to a village, wandering all day, while the burning sun blazed against the snow. By night-time she was blind.

Hugh, showering all the tenderness of his starved life on the little blind stranger, sat by her bedside while Pete did the work. Indignant at the injustice of it and sickened by Hugh's constant love-making to Sylvie, Bella tried to enlist Pete's help in putting a stop to it, but without success. She insisted that God had had a hand in sending Sylvie to the desolate retreat at the wood's edge so that she might take Pete out to his rightful place in the world. Pete, knowing that Hugh had led Sylvie to regard him as a mere child, refused to interfere; and Hugh went on with his magic-making until Sylvie had fallen in love with the dashing hero he had pictured himself to be.

CHAPTER VI

IN the big, rudely carved chair Sylvie leaned back her head and pressed her hands to her unseeing eyes. She was not sorry that Hugh had left her, for she was oppressed and unnerved by her own emotions. Until he had kissed her hair, she had not known that she loved him—or rather loved an invisible presence that had enveloped her in an atmosphere of sympathy, of protection, that had painted itself, so to speak, in heroic colors and proportions against her darkness, that had revealed both strength and tenderness in touch and movement, and warm, deep voice.

For until now Sylvie's life had been entirely lacking in protection and tenderness; she had never known sympathy—her natural romanticism had been starved. The lacks in her life Hugh had supplied the more lavishly because he was aided, in her blindness, by the unrestricted powers of her fancy. But now in all the fervor of this, Sylvie felt, also for the first time, the full bitterness of her blindness. If she could see him—if only once! If she could see him!

And there came to Sylvie unreasonably, disconnectedly, a keen memory of Pete's embrace when he had caught her up from falling on the hearth. A boy of fourteen? Strange that he

Hugh seated himself on the edge of the bed and kissed her hand, but it quivered under his lips.

should be so strong, that his heart should beat so loud, that his arms should draw themselves so closely, so powerfully about her. What were they really like, these people who moved unseen around her and who exerted such great power over her sudden helplessness?

She got up and began to walk to and fro restlessly, gropingly across the room. She wished now that Hugh would come back. He had been with her so constantly that she had grown utterly dependent upon him. The dense red fog that lay so thick about her, frightened her when Hugh was not there to keep her mind busy with his talk, to paint pictures for her, to command her with his magnetic presence. She stood still and strained her eyes. She *must* see again. If she tried hard, the red fog would surely lift. Happiness, and her new love, they would be strong enough to dispel the mist. There—already it was a shade lighter! She almost thought that she could make out the brightness of the fire. She went toward it and sat down on the bear skin, holding out her tremulous, excited hands. And with a sudden impulse towards confidence she called: "Pete, O Pete! Come here a moment, please."

He came, and she beckoned to him with a gesture and an upward, vaguely directed smile, to sit beside her. She was aware of the rigid reserve of his body holding itself at a distance.

"Pete," she said wistfully, "what can I do to make you love me?"

He uttered a queer, sharp sound but said nothing. "Are you jealous?"

"No, Sylvie," he muttered.

"Oh, how I wish I could see you, Pete! I know then I'd understand you better. Pete, try to be a little more—more human. Tell me about yourself. Haven't you a bit of fondness for me? You see, I want—Pete—some day perhaps I'll be your sister—"

"Then he has asked you to marry him?"

He was usually so quiet that she was startled at this new tone. "Don't," she said. "Hush! We have only just found out. He went away because he couldn't bear his own happiness, Pete—" She felt for him and her hand touched his cheek. "Oh, Pete, your face is wet. You're crying."

"No, I'm not," he denied evenly. "It was melting from the roof when I came in."

She sighed. "You are so strange, Pete. Will you let me kiss you now—since you are going to be my big little brother?"

"I can't," he whispered. "I can't."

She laughed and crooked her arm about his neck, forcing his face down to hers. His lips were hard and cool.

The face that Sylvie imagined a boy's face, shy and blushing, half-frightened, half-cross, perhaps a trifle pleased, was so white and patient a face in its misery that her blind tenderness seemed almost like an intentional cruelty. It was an intensity of feeling almost palpable, but Sylvie's mouth remained unburnt, though it removed itself with a pathetic little twist of disappointment.

"You don't need to say anything," she said. "You've shown me how you feel. You can't like me. You are sorry I came. And I want so dreadfully for some one just now to talk to—to help me, to understand. It's all dark and wonderful and frightening. I wish I had a brother—"

She bent her face to her knees and began to cry, then, simply and passionately. At that Pete found it easy to forget himself. He put his arm very carefully about her, laying one of his hands on her bent head and stroking her hair.

"You have a brother," he said. "Right here."

The dark small silken head shook. "No. You don't like me."

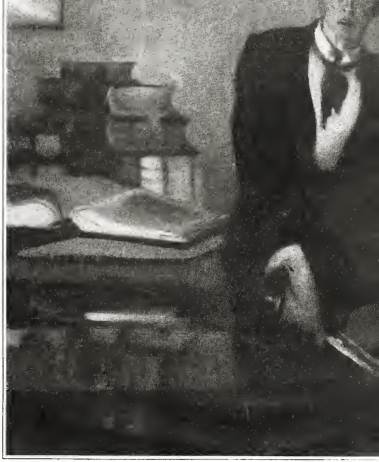
"I do—I do. Please tell me everything you feel like telling; I'd like awfully to help you, to understand, to listen to you. You see, you've been so much with Hugh, I haven't had a chance to know you as he does. And I guess—well—maybe I'm sort of shy."

She lifted her head at that, took his stroking hand and held it in both of hers under her chin, as a little girl holds her pet kitten for the pleasure of its warmth. "You must get over being shy with me, Pete. We both love Hugh; we both admire him so. I'd so love to talk to you about him—"

"Then do, Sylvie."

"I've never seen him," she sighed, "and you can see him all day long, Pete; will you try your best now to describe Hugh to me—every bit of him? Tell me the color of his eyes and the shape of his face and—everything. Tell me all you remember about him always."

"I—I'm no good at that, Sylvie. A fellow you see all day long



"The professor said too much—called Ruther-

—why, you don't know what he looks like, 'specially if he's your own brother."

"Well, you certainly know the color of his eyes."

"He has hazel eyes—I think you'd call them—"

"Yes?" she drank in his words eagerly, pressing his hand tighter in her excitement. "Go on. If only you were a girl, now, you'd do this so much better."

"I—I—but I don't know what else to say, Sylvie. He is very strong."

"Of course. I know that. Didn't he pick me up out of the snow and carry me home. He moved as though he had a feather on his arm. You are very strong too, Pete—*very* strong. Are *your* eyes hazel?"

"No; blue."

"I always liked blue eyes. I like to imagine that Hugh is just the Viking sort of man I dreamed about when I was a little girl. You think I'm a silly goose, don't you?"

"Yes, rather."

"Don't keep trying to pull your hand away, dear; you can't guess how it comforts me. I'm awfully alone here, and strange. I don't suppose you know how queer and frightening it's been—

this getting lost and being brought here in the dark and then—living on in the dark, just trusting my instincts, my intuitions, instead of my eyes. Voices tell a lot about people, don't they?—more than I ever dreamed they could. Pete, there is nothing in that—that splendid, generous thing Hugh did, the thing I am not to talk about, nothing to keep Hugh now from going back to the worldsome place—that is, far away from where it happened—and beginning again, is there?"

"I hope not, Sylvie."

She sighed. "Of course it was wonderful. If he hadn't told me of it, I never would have known half of his greatness; yet I can't help wishing he were free. It's sad to think there will always be the memory of that dreadful suffering and danger in his life."

fored a liar and got a clip that did for him."

"Very sad," said Pete.

"How alone we both are—he and I! Bella and you, Pete—don't be angry, please,—I don't think you quite understand Hugh, quite appreciate him."

"Perhaps not."

"He has always been lonely. You are so young, and Bella is so stupid—stupid and cross."

"No, she isn't, Sylvie. I know Bella a lot better than you do. She's not stupid or cross—"

"Well, I like you to stick up for your old nurse. She certainly must have loved you a lot to bring you way out here and to stay here all these years to take care of you. I wonder where she'll go and what she'll do when Hugh and I get married. You're too old for a nurse now, Pete. Do you mind if I lean back against you that way? It's so comfortable. I'd be happier without Bella, Pete, you know."

"Would you, Sylvie? Well, Bella and I will have to go away together somewhere, I guess."

"I didn't say you, dear. I love you a lot—next best to Hugh. There's something awfully sweet about you—you great strong overgrown thing! Your heart goes *thump-thump-thump-thump*, as though it was as big as the sun. . . . . I feel much better and happier now. Things have got steady again. Only—I wish Hugh would come back."

Pete gave a strangled sigh.

"He'll be back." And he began to draw himself away from her. "I think I hear him now, Sylvie."

"Stay where you are," she laughed. "Don't be ashamed of being found with a sister leaning against you and holding your hand. Are you afraid of Hugh? I think sometimes he's rather hard with you—I'll have to speak to him about that. Oh,"—in a sudden ecstasy—"how happy I am! I feel as light as the air. I want everyone to be happy. Tell me when Hugh comes in how happy he looks, Pete—promise me, quick! There he is at the door now."

"Yes," he whispered, "I promise. Let me go, please, Sylvie."

He pulled himself away and stood up. At the instant, the door was opened and shut quickly, stealthily. It was Hugh, breathing hard, gray with fear.

"They're coming," he said harshly. "Pete, they're after me. Men are coming across the flat."

CHAPTER VII

"DID they see you?" Pete demanded anxiously.

"I don't think so." Hugh was breathing fast; he had evidently fled across the snow at top speed.

"Get in, then, quick—out of sight." Pete was already rearing up boards above that long-waiting place of hiding. Hugh was about to step down into it when he glanced up and saw Sylvie. She was standing as the unseeing stand in moments of frightened bewilderment, her hands clasped, her head turning from side to side. "Look here," whispered Hugh, still absorbed in his own danger, "don't let them know that Sylvie just wandered in here. Don't let them start asking her any questions; it's too dangerous. Let her be—one of the family." He smiled maliciously. "Let her be your wife, Pete." Then, as though that picture had fired his love through its hint of jeopardy, he held out both arms suddenly: "Come here, Sylvie—lead her to me, Pete."

The boy obeyed. But as her uncertain arms trembled about Hugh's shoulders Pete turned sharply away. He heard the quick anxious murmur of their voices:

"Hugh, dearest—are you afraid?" And his: "Trust me, little darling. Love me." A kiss.

Then a sharp, whispered summons: "Quick, can't you, Pete? Get these boards down."

When Pete turned, Hugh had dropped into the darkness, and Sylvie stood flushed and with her hands over her face.

Bella had meantime been collecting the most characteristic of

Hugh's belongings—those that could not be supposed to belong to Pete—and now thrust them down into the hiding-place. The boards were rearranged, the rug laid evenly over them. Then the three stood staring at one another, listening helplessly to the nearing sounds.

"Oh, Pete," Sylvie gasped, "tell me what I must do—or what I ought to say."

"Tell them," said Bella, "what Hugh told you—that you are Pete's wife. They'll be looking for a different household from that, and it will help to put them off."

"But—but Pete wont look old enough."

"Yes, he will. He looks older than you," Bella declared harshly. "You sit down and keep quiet; that's the best you can do; and for God's sake don't look so scared. There's a grave outside to show them, and nobody digs up a six-year-old grave. They wont find Hugh. Nobody's ever seen him. Don't shake so, Sylvie. They may not even be after him; this country has sheltered other outlaws, you know. Hush! I hear them. I'll be in the kitchen. Pete, be taking off your outdoor clothes. They'll have seen Hugh's tracks even if they haven't seen him, so somebody's got to have just come in. Be whistling and talking, natural and calm. Remember we're all at home, just quiet and happy—no reason to be afraid. That's it."

THROUGH her darkness Sylvie heard the knocking and Pete's opening of the door, the scraping of snow, the questions, the simplicity of Pete's replies.

Then she was made known. "My wife, gentlemen!" And a moment later: "My mother!" And she heard Bella's greeting, loud and cheerful like that of a woman who is glad to see a visitor. Chairs were drawn up and cigarettes rolled and lighted. She smelt the sharp sweetness of the smoke. There was brief talk of the weather; Sylvie felt that while they talked, the two strangers searched the place and the faces of its inmates with cold, keen, suspicious eyes. She was grateful now for her blindness. There came a sharp statement:

"We're looking for Ham Rutherford, the murderer." Sylvie's heart contracted in her breast.

"Well, sir," laughed Pete, in his most boyish light-hearted fashion, "that sounds interesting. But it's a new name to me."

"It's an old case, however," said the man, the man who spoke more like an Easterner than the sheriff. "Fifteen years old! They've dug it up again back East. The daughter of the man that was killed came into some money and thinks she can't spend it any better than in hunting down her father's murderer. Now, we've traced Rutherford to this country, and pretty close to this spot. He made a get-away before trial, and he came out here fifteen years ago. About two years later he sent back East for his kid brother—he'd be about your age now, Mr.—what you say your name was?—Garth. Peter Garth. You'll have to excuse the sheriff; he's bound to search your place." Sylvie had heard the footsteps going through the three rooms. "A woman named Bertha Scrane, a distant cousin of Rutherford's to whom he'd been kind, brought the child out. Now, Missis—what's your name?"

"Bella Garth," she said tranquilly. "I came out here with my husband, who died six years ago. He's buried out there under the snow. I've lived here with my son and my son's wife."

"Yes. It's not the household we'd been expecting to find. It's a lonely place, Missis." He looked at Sylvie. "I should think you'd prefer going to some town."

"We're used to it here now," Bella answered.

"How'd your husband happen here, ma'am?"

"His health was poor; he'd heard of this climate, and he wanted to try trapping. He got on first-rate until the illness came so bad on him, and Pete's done well ever since. We haven't suffered any."

"No, I guess not. You don't look like you'd suffered."

The talk went on, an awkward, half-disguised cross-questioning as to Bella's birthplace, her life before she came out, her husband's antecedents. She was extraordinarily calm, ready and reasonable with her replies.

"Well, sir," the sheriff strolled back into the room,—"I reckon these aren't the parties we're after. But look a-here, this is a description of Ham Rutherford. Likely you might have had a glimpse of him since you came into the country. When he made his get-away he was about thirty-two, height five feet eight, ugly, black-haired, noticeable eyes, manner violent. He was deformed, one leg shorter, one shoulder higher than the other, mouth twisted and a scar across the nose. He'd been hurt in a fire when he was a child—"

Sylvie broke into a spontaneous ripple of mirth, the full measure of her relief. "Goodness," she said with utter spontaneity. "There's certainly never been a monster like that in this house, has there, Pete?"

It did more than all that had gone before to convince the inquisitors. From that minute there was a distinct relaxation; the evening, indeed, turned to one of sociability.

"We hate to inconvenience you, ma'am, but it seems like at this distance from town we've got to ask you for supper and a place to sleep."

If it had not been for the thought of Hugh in hiding, that supper and the evening about the hearth would have been to her a pleasant one. The men, apparently laying aside all suspicion, were entertaining; their adventurous lives had bristled with exciting, morning, humorous experiences. It was Sylvie herself, prompted by curiosity, believing as she did that the monster the sheriff had described bore no possible resemblance to the man she loved, who asked suddenly:

"Do tell us about the man you're hunting for now—this Rutherford? Tell us about what he did."

The Easterner gave her a look, and Bella, seeing it, chimed in: "Yes, sure. Tell us about his crime."

Pete stood up and rolled another cigarette. Try as he might to steady his fingers, they trembled. He had never heard Hugh's story. He did not want to hear it. The very name of Rutherford that had, in what now seemed to him another age, belonged to Hugh and to him was terrible in his ears. A sickness of dread seized him. Fortunately the eyes of neither of the men were upon him. Sylvie had their whole attention.

The detective spoke. "He was a storekeeper back in a university town, way East, where I came from. He kept a bookshop and had a heap of book-learning. I remember him myself, though I was a youngster. He was a wonderful astonishing sort of chap, though as ugly as the devil; had a great gift of narration, never told the truth in his life, I guess, but that only made him all the more entertaining. And he had a temper—phew! Red-hot! He'd fly out and storm and strike in all directions. That's what did for him. Some fool quarrel about a book it was, and the man, a frequenter of the shop, a scholar, a scientist, professor at the university, accused Rutherford of lying. Rutherford had a heavy brass paper-cutter in his hand. The professor had a nasty tongue in his head. Well, a tongue's no match for a paper-cutter. The professor said too much, called Rutherford a bumped-faced liar and got a clip on the head that did for him."

"It's an ugly story," said Sylvie. Bella and Pete retained their silence.

"Murder aint pretty telling, as a general thing," remarked the sheriff.

"No, though I've heard of cases where a man was justified in killing another man—I mean to save some one he loved from dreadful suffering," Sylvie replied.

"Well, ma'am, I don't know about that. I've read stories that make it look that way, but in all my experience, it's the cowards and the fools that kill, and they do it because they're lower down, closer to the beast, or perhaps to an uncontrolled child, than most of us."

"But there was a time," Bella said with a smothered passion, "when an insult to a gentleman's honor had to be avenged."

"Yes, ma'am," drawled the sheriff, "in them history days, things was fixed up to excuse animal doin's, kind of neater and easier and more becomin' than they are now. Well, Mr. Garth, can we have our beds? We've kept these ladies up talking long enough. Your mother looks plum wore out."

THEY slept in the bed usually shared by Pete and Hugh. Pete lay on the floor in the living-room not far from his brother's hiding-place—lay there rigid and feverish, staring at the night. Sylvie, at Bella's side, slept no better. Her imagination went over and over the story of Ham Rutherford's crime. She saw the little dark bookshop, the professor's thin, sneering face, the hideous anger of the cripple, the blow, the dead body, Rutherford's arrest. And when her brain was sick, it would turn for relief to the noble story of Hugh's self-sacrifice, only to be balked by a sense of unreality. What the detective had told, briefly and dryly, lived in her mind convincingly; but Hugh's romance, that had glowed on his tongue, now lay lifeless on her fancy. Back her mind would go to the bookshop, the gibing professor, the heavy paper-cutter.

In the dawn she heard Bella get up with a deep-shaken sigh and go about her preparations for breakfast. But it was noon before the two men left.

(Continued on page 96)

"Some one's coming—it sounds like a mob—so much yelling."

CHRISTMAS EVE AT PILOT BUTTE

By

COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

Illustrated by DOUGLAS DUER

IT WAS cold in the tumbled, box-strewn freight-room of the rambling station at Rawlins, cold and dark except for the faint, reflected rays of a street lamp outside, and the weak spray of light splattered from the dusty, old lantern in the hand of the freight-agent as he made his trip of inspection before locking up for the night.

Perfunctorily he inspected the shipments that awaited loading in the morning: case after case of shoes, of shirts and overalls from the workrooms of the State prison just outside town, the work of men who day by day thus expiated their rebellion against the law.

It was an old story to the freight-agent, this evening inspection before locking up. He raised the lantern high above his head, peered about in a squinting effort to pierce the heavier shadows at the far end of the room, then, whistling out of tune, turned his back upon the piles of boxes in the freight-room and slammed the door. With the sound, another man, eyes projecting with pain, muscles knotted, face contorted, breathed evenly again for the first time in a long, horrible moment. He had held his breath since the first cluttering sound of the agent's approach; if the lantern had revealed so much as the vapor of his breath in that frigid, crackling room—

But he had won. A long wait, while the sound of steps sounded faintly from the waiting-room beyond. Then the jingling of keys, the clack of a heavy lock, and silence—silence which lasted, minute after minute, broken only by the slow pounding of a heart, like a triphammer to the only ears that could hear.

Then a new sound broke the stillness; it came from the biggest of the packing-cases. Crackling, a board broke from the nails which bound it. Again, for a third time, a long, splintering crash; and then as the boards flew back, a great figure rose from the box, his tall, heavy-shouldered form casting a monstrous shadow on the back wall as he stood an instant listening. A leap, and he had emerged completely from his hiding-place; another, and he was peering out the smoke-smeared window. Only the swirling snow, the swaying shadow of the arc above—he saw

nothing more, and a thin smile bent his boyish lips. His lithe, sinewy hands, still brown, opened and closed nervously. The bright, sharp eyes, catching the gleam of the street-light, seemed to radiate it, like freshly cleansed jewels. Tense he stood, breathing deep at the cold, refreshing air only to shake himself suddenly into realization of his freedom, and with swift, noiseless steps, strode toward the door.

Beyond, the office was dark, but instinct guided him to the hat-rack and the agent's work-cap which hung there—then to the drawer of the bill-desk. He fumbled, then clutched tight at a black-muzzled forty-five six-gun, and a box of cartridges. Again a smile bent the boyish lips. He thrust the gun and cartridges into a pocket of his prison suit and reached for the lock of the nearest window. Only the snow and the screaming wind of the blizzard greeted him when, cautious and alert, he clambered out into the night and closed the window behind him.

He sought the side-streets and alleys with the fevered desire that only a fugitive can know. At a bright corner he stood huddled in the shadows for a long time summoning the courage to cross. Then he grinned; the siren at the prison had not sounded. Thus long no one knew, except the comrades who had nailed him into the box; and they would never tell. He strode out into the light of the thoroughfare, the splattered snow on his prison suit neutralizing its telltale gray, the freight-agent's cap pulled low over his eyes.

His long, gangling, half-swaying stride was that of a man off the range; the swing of his shoulders and arms was that of one accustomed to the saddle and the wide stretches of Wyoming's vast expanses: passers-by saw nothing more in him than a young, strong, good-looking cowpuncher in town for a night of movies; that was all. He even brushed the sleeve of a policeman as he passed him on a corner. The officer nodded patronizingly:

"Tough night, aint it?"

"Shore is!" was the drawling answer: and the man who an hour before had been Convict No. 43,726, passed on.

Two blocks further along he came to a doorway, leading, by means of a worn, wooden staircase, to lodgings above. He turned in swi'fly and with stealthy steps ascended. A light shone through the grimy transom above the door. The man squared his shoulders, stood hesitant a moment as if to summon something more than physical courage—then knocked.

"Who's there?" It was a feminine voice, sharp, somewhat fearful. The only answer was a repetition of the knock. Steps approached beyond the door and the lock clicked. A wave of light swept over him, and with it came the gasp of a fright-whitened woman.

His gun hand dropped to his side. "I can't fight a woman," he gasped.

"Bart! Bart, what are you—"

"Better not talk so loud," he drawled softly. "That aint a good name to be shouting around now. Nobody knows yet that I'm out."

He brushed past her into the room, closing the door behind him, then half in defiance, half in appraisal, gazed at the woman who stared at him in dumb surprise.

She was small and dark, with alluring eyes and a face at once babyish and sophisticated, quite the type of child-woman whose lot in life would seem to be solely the molding of a man to her own desires—with little hands that could caress and soothe, and lips that could tempt and cajole. Weakly she leaned against the table for a second, and put forth a tiny hand.

"Bart, you frightened me so! How—"

He smiled coldly.

"How'd I get out? Oh, it don't make much difference. Here I am."

"But why—"

"It's just about a week till Christmas. I got to turnin' it over in my mind that—that maybe you might want me for a Christmas present."

"Of course! Old Bart!" She straightened then, and came toward him, arms outstretched, lips pursed. But he made no move. Suddenly she pouted. "Aren't you going to kiss me?"

"Let's wait," he drawled. "It'll taste sweeter after while. Listen!"

From far away sounded the wail of the prison siren carrying across the storm the news that one number was missing on the night check, that one steel-barred cell stood empty, that walls and locks and tempered bolts had failed and that a gray-clad fugitive was somewhere fighting to safety. For a long moment it screeched and roared while they stood poised and listening. Voices rose from the street beneath; five times the club of the policeman clattered against a clanging electric-light pole in furtherance of the warning. Some one called a name. The woman looked up wide-eyed.

"They know! They're calling your name."

"Yeh!" The cold smile had not left his lips. "That's what comes of having a reputation. But then, we don't care, do we? I never paid no attention to anything—I jest thought about how much you loved me and how I was doing it all for you—and I know you'd never forget."

"Of course not, Bart!" The baby hands were touching his shoulders, creeping upward toward his neck.

He whirled, almost savagely, his head bent toward the street.

"What's that?"

"Some one's coming—it sounds like a mob—so much yelling!" She clutched him frenziedly, then sighed, as if with relief. "No, it's only the boys with the papers. They must have gotten out an extra!"

"So? Go get one."

"But—"

"I'm safer here than anywhere else. Hurry and get a paper. I want to see how much they know."

A moment of indecision, then the woman reached hastily for her cloak and left the room. The fugitive waited only for the sound of her steps on the stairs, and with a leap he crossed the room to where a few scattered letters lay on an untidy writing-desk. A glance—a sneer, icy-cold, malignant.

"His writing!"

The convict's eyes shot toward the beginning of the missive as he pulled it forth and the pupils contracted.

"'My darlin',' eh! Fine way for a brother to write to a sister." Then to the end of the letter and the words: "Loads of love and kisses, your loving husband, Walter.'" It was enough. He jammed the letter deep into a pocket and crossed to the shaded window, there gently to draw back the curtain and peer down upon the white thoroughfare beneath. The woman was crossing the street. A shouting newsboy flaunted a paper before her, but she shook her head; straight on she went, and through the frost-whitened doors of the corner drug-store.

"The telephone!" He said it naturally, calmly, almost as though he had expected it. And five minutes later the opening of the door found him lounging easily in the center of the room, where she had left him.

"Well?" He shot the question quickly, "What's the reward?"

"A thousand—" Then she colored and rattled the sheet bought hastily on the return-trip. "Why, it—it doesn't say. It just tells—"

"'Bart Carson, Train-robber, Escapes Prison,'" he had cocked his head and was reading the headlines, then, still with that slow smile on his lips, he improvised: "Man who confessed to Overland train robberies to save sweetheart's supposed brother, wakes up at last. Doesn't care to serve prison sentence for another woman's husband—"

"Bart, what on earth do you mean?"

A different man was looking down at her now, all the boyishness gone, the once trustful eyes narrow and vicious, the mouth grim and hard.

"Just what I'm saying! I aint in the habit of going to prison for lying women's husbands!" His hands clutched and rose above her, and the short, jagged sentences of pent-up hatred streamed forth: "Don't answer me! It wouldn't be nothing but lies! I know—I've got one of his letters in my pocket. I read it while you were over there, telephoning for the sheriff. So I went to the pen to save your brother, did I? And he signs himself 'your loving husband.' Keep them lips closed—they don't get nowhere with me! I found it all out afore I'd been in the pen a week—old Dad Cushman, who went up the same day I did, told me. He knew. He ought to. He'd worked with you both! Get that? He laughed at me for the sucker I'd made of myself; then he went to the warden and tried to tell him the truth.

"But it didn't do no good. So we waited for our chance—there aint any prison that can hold a man when there's others helpin' him. They smuggled me out tonight in a case of shirts and—and I'm different now. I aint that s o f t - e y e d cowpuncher a n y more, that come in off the range to h a n g on every word you said—until I was willin' to go to the pen for a thing I'd never done, willin' to take my chances for s o m e b o d y that I thought I was savin' from disgrace and who'd be workin' and pleadin' for a pardon for me and—well—"

He straightened suddenly, and his arms dropped limp a second before they extended toward the d o o r. "Now I'm out! I've ridden range; I've bulldogged steers; I've rode the worst sunfishers that the bunch could corral, and I aint afraid of beast, man or devil. I've got a name now! And I'm going to live up to it! If I go back, it'll be for something worth while! Remember that! Something worth while. Good-by!"

Suddenly galvanized into spasmodic action, she sprang toward him as he reached the door, her baby hands clinging to him, her lips pleading.

"Please, Bart!" she begged. "You haven't heard everything. You've just—"

"Haven't I?" it was the drawl again. "I'm thinkin' different. Dad Cushman told me ever'thing I need to know. Why,"—and a break came into his voice,—"he aint even your own husband, Lou. You took him away from another woman—a woman who's got to look day after day at her little kid and know that his blood's in 'er, that—"

"It's a lie!" Her voice was a snarl. The fire came back into Bart Carson's eyes.

"A lie, is it? I can lead you to her place—the old busted down Hurd ranch in the worst part of the Pilot Butte country. Don't tell me it's a lie! I can tell you what she looks like—I've seen her. Only—only I never knew who she was until Dad Cushman told me. And I'll believe Dad Cushman—if he is a forger. He took his own medicine; he went up for his own jobs. He didn't hide behind no woman's skirts to keep out of it!"

Again he reached for the door. Again she strove to block him.

"Bart—honey—it's all a mistake. Bart, wait—wait—"

"What for? The sheriff?" A big brown hand caught her wrists and tore them from his neck. "Wait, huh? So you can get that thousand dollars? For a Christmas present?" He sneered. "No, you wait! It's going to be a lot more afore I'm finished—and you wont get it! That's my satisfaction!" He laughed at her. "You wont get it! Understand that?. And you aint going to get one other thing you want, because I'll get him first! Remember that too! Now get out of my way!"

Sobbing, she sought again to halt him. One fling of a great arm, and she was swept aside; the key grated as he drew it forth. Then the door swung open, to be slammed and locked. He was in the hall, hearing, in almost v a c a n t fashion as he crept along, the hysterical screams of the woman he had left behind.

There were steps on the stairs. A voice said:

"That's her yelling. Must be beating her up. Take it easy, boys—we'll sneak up there and break in on 'em."

The head of Bart Carson sank close to his shoulders. Stealthily he crept to the edge of the wall where it stopped sheer at the stairway. They were halfway up now, three of them coming together. Two more steps, and four after that! Then with a sudden sidelong, sprawling motion, the convict sprang to the center of the entryway and leaped!

Five swimming feet, and he struck them, one shoulder smashing the sheriff full in the chest, each wide-spread arm catching a deputy full under the chin and sending them backward. A tangled, clattering mass, they tumbled and rolled down the reverberating old wooden stairway and into the street. Then one form sprang to its feet, brushed aside the breathless few who scurried forward at the unexpected turmoil, and dived across the blizzard-dimmed brightness of the thoroughfare to the blackness of an alley beyond.

Pursuit would be a matter of several minutes, he knew. A glance over his shoulder revealed to him a quickly thickening crowd before the doorway, seeking explanations and the satisfaction of immediate curiosity before taking the trail. And the

As the boards flew back, a figure rose from the box, stood for an instant listening.

delay would be sufficient. He swerved into a cross-alley, skirted the darker streets which led to the railroad yards, and there, a huddled figure in the shadow of a switch shanty, waited until the local freight, just pulling out for Creston, should gather speed before he scrambled to the iron stirrup of a box-car, and thence to the dangerous blackness of the bumpers.

It all seemed to come naturally, easily, to Bart Carson, this new life of the fugitive. Time had been when his sole interest in life consisted of a good horse, the chuck-wagon within easy range during the round-up and a garish reward each year for the toil and the exertions of long hours in the saddle when Frontier Days rolled around and he, with the rest of the "wild bunch," sprawled and laughed in front of the rodeo grandstand during the wild-horse race, or clung grimly to the hurricane deck of some sunfishing, twisting outlaw in the contest for the bucking-horse championship of the world. Nerve had been only a matter of second nature then, a thing which came without bidding. Now, however, it was being summoned in all its crude strength for the only thing that an outraged, naturally primitive man could know—revenge for a trust that had been misplaced, for trickery, for connivance and for betrayal. Deliberately, almost calmly, he had taken the law into his own hands.

When the train stopped at Creston, he clambered down and crept back to the caboose, deserted now as the conductor, at the station platform forward, superintended the unloading of local freight. He entered the car boldly. Paper, envelopes, pencil and stamps were on the little makeshift desk. There, with thoughtful prelude, he began the writing of a letter to a person who to him represented the world—the editor of the Rawlins *Bugle*.

> deer sir, i am writting you this so you can tell the people that i am nott as bad as i am painted. i escaped from the Pen becaus i found out i had been done wrong and i don't intend to stand for it. i am accused of robbing trains. Well after i have robbed a few trains you will see that my methods are different from the fellow that i went up to the Pen for. i am out now and i am going to find him and if the officials wont punnish him i will. tell the R. R. people to put on as many guards as they want to, i don't care. I'l get past them and after i have got the money to hunt down this other man and bring him to justis then i will stop robbing trains.
>
> Yours very truely,
> BART CARSON.
>
> p. s. i wont hurt anny Wimen or Children.

Ahead (in answer to the "highball") the sharp whistle of the engine sounded. Quickly, Carson addressed the envelope, stamped it, then dropped from the caboose as the conductor swung on at the opposite side. Quietly he made his way to the little station mail-box and deposited the letter, to be carried on to Rawlins by the two-forty-one express. And the next night—

A CRASH sounded in the vestibule of the cross-country limited as it pulled slowly out of Medicine Bow. Glass splintered; a door swung open. Guards, on duty since the train had left Cheyenne, leaped from their seats. It was to no purpose, for they were already covered by a tall, unmasked figure in prison gray that stood in the doorway of the Pullman.

"Lay down them six-guns!" he ordered. "I aint here to hurt nobody—I just want money. I'm Bart Carson!"

The name was enough. Staring headlines had carried the news of a train-robber's escape all over the Rocky Mountain region. The telegraph had clicked his letter broadcast almost the moment it reached Rawlins. Gasping passengers rose from their seats, hands above their heads. Women screamed. The man who once had been a cowpuncher bowed toward them with the old gallantry of the plains.

"I don't hurt women and kids," he assured them, and smiled as he said it. "And I don't take nothing from 'em. But as for you men—" His face went suddenly grim, and the large revolver spat suddenly toward the roof of the car. "I'm out to sort o' corral a little Christmas present for myself. Dig!"

White-faced, the male passengers of the coach lined up before him, presented a study in contrasts. Some strove to smile; some were frankly panicky; others cried—as the hysterical women crouched in the seats were crying. One alone was calm, the man who held the revolver, whose eyes had lost their set, staring expression, to give way to the old boyishness of the plains, the old recklessness and love of danger.

He was taking no risks; he could only be recaptured for a prison escape already accomplished. The physical hazard did not even enter his mind—he had faced death many times before, for instance, during bad moments with a milling herd at round-up. This was more like some sort of game. One by one he corralled the conductor, the porter and the brakeman as they entered the car, so that they might not pass the word along to the rest of the train. Then he ordered the frightened passengers—and the guards—to pass before him, dropping their contributions into his cap as they came. For each of them he had some joking remark; to one man who sobbed, he returned a gold watch, a professed gift from a dead mother. To another a tiny ring—a baby had worn it. To a crying child he tossed a silver dollar with his one free hand and made the chuckling announcement that he'd bounce her on his knee if he wasn't so busy. Then suddenly scooping the money into a pocket, he replaced his cap, pulled hard at the air-signal, and as the brakes set, fired a second shot through the roof of the car to hold the crowd, and made for the vestibule.

A well-traveled road lay not fifty feet away where he made the leap from the coach, and he ran toward it, his footprints showing plainly in the clean snow. There, however, the possibility of telltale tracks eliminated in the hard-pressed path of automobiles, he whirled swiftly, ducked into the shadows, then dived for the truss-rods beneath the very coach he had just left. Sprawled upon the ice-coated trusses, he watched the feet of the crowd as they milled about the car, followed his tracks to the road, to lose them there.

The conductor and brakeman were attaching a telegraph key to the main trunk line by means of a "short" elevated to the singing wires above on a bamboo pole, carried for the emergency of wreck or fire. Soon the key began to click; Bart Carson knew that the news of his first real train robbery was being sent to Rawlins and thence to the world.

Presently he heard: "Get those passengers back into the cars." It was the conductor who issued the command to the brakeman. "All they're doing is stamping out the trail. Rawlins is sending a *posse* and horses on a special train. We'll wait for 'em at Barbee Junction."

The train rolled on through three frigid miles to Barbee, carrying beneath a forward coach a man who shivered in the icy wind that swept the truss-rods. Hours passed, it seemed before the special arrived. Hurrying railroad agents dragged their clattering horses down the runways and sped back to the scene of the robbery. The Pacific Limited thereupon resumed its journey across the continent, leaving behind at the little deserted station a half-frozen man who crept to a tool-house and huddled there in comparative warmth. Presently he crept forth and skirting the deserted "special" on the siding, climbed the steps of the caboose.

Like a curious boy, he entered the car which had brought a posse—to capture him. Clothing was scattered about; a rifle or two had been left in the rack. On a table lay a pile of sandwiches and cans of coffee. Swiftly he slipped into coat, trousers, heavy shirt and sweater from among the variegated clothes, stuffed sandwiches into the pockets and then, as he found a stub of a pencil, wrote hurriedly on a bit of wrapping paper:

> deer Sheriff. never go so far away to look for me. I'm only going to rob a few more trains, so you better hurry. look for me tomorrow night.
>
> BART CARSON

BRAVADO, perhaps! But in the mind of the desperado was another, a different impulse. He had confessed to a crime that he had not committed when detectives were nearing the trail of the right man. He had been tricked—but when he had told his story, they would not believe him. There was at least one way, to him, that he could prove it—and this was the way. Walter Walker, whom he had saved from prison, had robbed express-cars and mail-coaches in the ordinary manner and striven his best to hide his identity. They must at least admit that Bart Carson's method was different. When the early morning train for Salt Lake stopped for water just before dawn, a tall man applied to a sleepy porter for a berth in the tourist sleeper—and got it. But when that porter gave the first breakfast-call the berth was empty. And that night another train was robbed.

And the night following! In vain posses sought to trail the tracks in the snow—but in some way they were always defeated, tricked into ludicrous mistakes. For working against them was a man who had spent his life in the open, who knew the hills and scraggly country of that portion of Wyoming as a teacher knows his text-books. Out into the open country he led them, hot upon the scent, only to double like a jackrabbit almost within their range of vision. Another train would be robbed that night!

The reward climbed from a thousand to two, then to five, to

seven—finally to ten. The guards were doubled—but a guard is only a human being with a gun, and the advantage depends upon the man who first gets the drop. Bart Carson always held the winning cards of surprise. Once they loaded the vestibules with armed men, waiting for him. And while they waited, he stepped from a closet of a Pullman where he had secreted himself at a division point and held up the one car without the guards being the wiser. The immediate task completed, he backed to the door, stood at one side, shouted and shot. As the guards ran in—he ran out. That was all.

his lantern on the floor. A blow on the wrist! The rifle flew over the brass rail of the observation car, and a gasping guard stared into the muzzle of a six-gun, and into Bart Carson's grinning countenance.

"Into the coach, boy, and tell 'em I'm coming!"

The door opened. The usual shot cut through the room; a trembling, fear-dumbed crowd obeyed his orders. Bart Carson laughed with a joy he had not felt before. It was his last holdup!

"Christmas is comin'," he mocked as his revolver waved the passengers from their chairs. "Only a few more and—"

"Put them there bracelets right there, honey. . . . . You'll have to act just like I tell you. Understand?"

It was four days later that Bart Carson crouched in the shadow of the water tank at Landslide for what was to be his final "round-up." He had counted his proceeds; a few hundred dollars more would put him past the three-thousand mark he had set. With that sum in his possession he could go where he chose, could take the trail and hold it until he had gained the thing he sought. After that—

The glare of a headlight interrupted his speculation. He flattened himself against the heavy timbers, fastening, as he did so, the last buttons of a dirty "jumper" suit that he had pilfered from a switch shanty, together with an equally grimy railroader's cap and a lantern. His face was smeared with engine-grease. The cap visor was low over his eyes. As the locomotive took on its supply of water, he came forth, his lantern lighted, and chatted with the engineer. Then down along the train he went, his lighted "hayburner" over his arm, and as the porter swung aboard at the "highball," he followed, to pass the guards, and to stride slowly through the Pullman as the train gathered speed.

There was one coach that he had left untouched on every train—the observation car at the rear; instinctively he knew that the guards would not be watching for him there tonight. Quietly he opened the door, putting on the snap-lock as he closed it, walked through without even glancing at the passengers, and out upon the rear platform. One man with a rifle was there but he paid no attention to the greasy "railroader," as the latter set

The gun suddenly trembled and sagged in his grasp. His grin faded. His eyes became set, and a green pallor crept upward under the natural brownness of his skin.

"You, eh!" The snarl was almost beastlike. Forgetting for the instant all others in the car, he stared down at a small, dark-haired woman, clothed in black, whose eyes were red from weeping. But Carson, apparently, did not observe that—he only knew that it was she—she who had kissed him—and lied. The lines of his face deepened into hard, black gutters. The eyelids twitched; the corners of the lips grooved into straight lines. "Going to him, eh? Trying to beat me? You wont do it! I'll get there—I've got his address; it's on that letter. And if he's gone, I'll trace him—I'll—"

He stepped backward suddenly, one hand extended. His gun hand dropped to his side.

"Don't!" he pleaded as he backed toward the door. "I—I can't fight a woman!"

But the plea was in vain. The woman had drawn a small revolver from her handbag and covered him. The hammer clicked upon a dead shell! Bart Carson turned his eyes, dull now, and beaten, upon the others in the car.

"I can't fight a woman," he gasped, "I can't—"

There was a flash—and a biting sting cut through Bart Carson's extended hand. He stared at it. A blue spot—then blood! Blood—and outside clean, white snow! *(Continued on page 91)*

A taking girl was Hat Bailey at twenty—and growing more so.

WHAT IF THE GIRL WOULDN'T GO BACK?

By

LUCIAN CARY

Illustrated by

LESLIE BENSON

YOU have read the story of the misguided girl who went to Bohemia and learned to smoke cigarettes before breakfast and to drink claret with her dinner and to look upon promiscuous kissing without a tremor—or at least without a murmur.

In the standard versions she is rescued by the sturdy and wholesome young man she left behind her in the old home town.

He has read between the lines of her letters to her mother. At the right moment he draws his money from the savings-bank and boards the train for New York.

He arrives just as—well, just at the right moment, dashes the glass from her lips and tells her precisely what sort of a place Bohemia is. She goes back with him—back home, back where all the houses have yards and all the streets are lined with spreading maples and the young men preserve the reverent custom of waiting outside the church of Sunday evenings.

The story appeals to everybody because everybody has an impulse toward Bohemia—a desire, let us say, not to be too plain-spoken about it, for freedom. Nobody wishes to yield to so immoral an impulse. Entirely practical considerations such as a good conscience, a good reputation or a good job prevent. The story that explodes Bohemia answers the universal wish to see Bohemia exploded—so it wont be so much of a temptation to us. It is a proper enough story, as any story that has been told so many times must be. But you do feel (or perhaps you don't) that it might not always come out that way. What if the girl wouldn't go back? What if—but consider the case of Hattie Bailey, whose mother baked the best salt-rising bread in Indiana. . . . .

Hattie Bailey lived with her mother in the flat over the Woman's Exchange. It was a small two-story building between the Goodman Block and Willing's grocery. Originally the ground floor had been a photographer's studio. Hattie's father was the photographer. He was a tall, gaunt man with a small beard, worn, disappointed but gentle, so gentle that he could photograph twins without once raising his voice. He had gently faded out of the picture when Hattie was six, leaving Mrs. Bailey with an equity in the building, a large-view camera, a property tree, a patent rug which looked, when draped over a box and photographed, like a grassy knoll, one of those chairs with an iron bracket to hold the head of the restless sitter, and the other miscellaneous paraphernalia of a country photographer, "weddings, family groups and children a specialty." It may be that he left his daughter something else, some germ of art, some microbe of personality, and that this explains her extraordinary conduct after she was grown. There was, however, no evidence of it at the time. Hattie was a sturdy little girl, with freckles on either side of a slightly turned-up nose—the kind of little girl who slides down cellar doors and loves kittens and stubs her new shoes.

The Woman's Exchange was a milestone of the woman's-club movement in Belleville.

The Browning Club had started it on the theory that it would provide the impecunious gentlewomen of Belleville with pin-money. The impecunious gentlewomen were to make doughnuts at a cost of nine cents a dozen, sell them through the Woman's Exchange at twelve cents a dozen, pay one penny tribute to the Exchange, and make a net profit of two cents on the dozen. (Of course, this was many years ago, when a penny was a penny and there was no war-tax on doughnuts.) One of the earlier results of the enterprise was a triple split in the Browning Club. The four radicals in the organization formed the Ibsen Club and refused to speak to their former colleagues of the Browning Club except when they met at church. The seven conservatives formed the Longfellow Club, declaring that they had always felt that the author of "Fra Lippo Lippi" to be less wholesome than the author of "Evangeline." The remaining three members of the Browning Club, consisting of the president, the secretary and the treasurer, endeavored for some weeks to reconcile the fact that there were more women in Belleville who thought they could make proper doughnuts than there were women who would buy other women's doughnuts. It was not very long before Mrs. Bailey, who had been hired to manage the Exchange, found herself in possession of the black and gold sign, the plate-glass show-cases, and the magnificent range that the Browning Club had so hopefully installed.

Mrs. Bailey knew better than to make doughnuts where the very word doughnuts was like a red flag to a chief of police. Mrs. Bailey had specialties of her own: one was salt-rising bread; another was devil's-food cake which, while hardly more expensive to compound than the ordinary bakery product, was excellent and good to eat.

In the course of the years the Browning Club, the Ibsen Club and the Longfellow Club died of inanition. And though they were resurrected at intervals under such names as the Drama Club, the Current Events Club, the Arts and Crafts Club, the Belleville Improvement Society, the Indiana Woman's Suffrage Society and the Wabash County Anti-Suffrage League, Mrs. Bailey went on providing salt-rising bread and devil's-food cake and whole-wheat bread and rye bread and Parker House rolls to all alike. The art of baking bread was gradually lost in the kitchens of Belleville's aristocracy; everybody depended on Mrs. Bailey.

Mrs. Bailey, who was plump to begin with, grew plumper. Have you ever observed how general is plumpness among good cooks? And Hattie Bailey, who might otherwise have started at fourteen in the Bon Ton department store as an errand girl, went through the high-school before she went to Lincoln's Business College to learn stenography and typewriting. At twenty, when other girls were selling notions in the Bon Ton at eight dollars a week, Hat Bailey was teaching in Lincoln's Business College at sixty dollars a month. (Of course this was a number of years ago, when a dollar was a dollar and even self-respecting stenographers wore cotton stockings to the office.)

A taking girl was Hat Bailey at twenty—and growing more so. She could dance until four in the morning and appear at Lincoln's Business College with color in her cheeks and a sparkle in her eye and a ready tongue in her head at eight sharp. And though she had a short way with overconfident suitors, she could have had her choice of men in that town, and everybody knew it.

Hat's particular chum was Mabel Davis, who was neither so blonde nor so lively as Hat, but who had definite charms of her own in addition to her willingness to serve as background. The winter that Hat was twenty-three, Hat and Mabel spent most of their spare time with young Tom Allenby and Wid Dugan. They went, the four of them, to all the dances in Belleville, and to all the dances at Hart's Corners and Red Oak besides; they went to the moving pictures at the Orpheum regularly twice a week; and every Sunday night they had supper at either Hat's or Mabel's—until the town took it for granted that Hat was going to marry young Tom. Indeed, when Easter came and went, and Decoration Day, and the Fourth of July, and the circus, and August got hotter and dustier without bringing any change in the foursome, Mabel decided that the town was right—and Mabel knew as much as anybody knew.

On the last Sunday in August, toward six o'clock, Hattie swung along on her way to Mabel's, and the usual supper for four. She was late—Mabel had called her up a half-hour back to inquire what was keeping her, but Hat was not thinking about that. She was thinking about herself, and young Tom Allenby, and Belleville, with a vague discontent that troubled her because it was new to her. Hattie had always taken life as is. And now a phrase out of a song she had heard recently—the phrase "for to admire and for to see," for the song was a setting of some verses by Kipling—kept running through her head, until she was walking to the rhythm of it, and wishing that life were somehow different, and reminding herself that young Tom was a nice chap who had

Hat walked up behind the young man and looked over his shoulder.

already taken over most of his father's law practice, and wondering why it was that nothing ever seemed to happen any more—which is a mood that all of us have and that is no more dangerous in our cautious selves than the mildest of indigestions. But Hattie Bailey was not cautious.

At the corner of Main and Walnut streets is a vacant lot of two acres, where the Graney place stood until it burned down, and which is used as a pasture and a ball-field and which is crossed by a path that cuts off a few yards. Hat struck off across the lot by this path, which wound through the old trees of Graney's orchard, past a great clump of lilac, past the barn, still standing, and on to Sycamore and Grant streets. Hattie was passing the lilac clump when she saw a man sitting on his heels before a thick paper pad, painting. Hattie paused. She did not recognize the man at first glance, but at the second she was sure that he was the chap who clerked in Hall's hardware store, and whom she passed on the street frequently, and with whom she maintained a nodding acquaintance, although she did not know his name and had never exchanged a word with him. She remembered now what an odd-looking person he was, very tall, very solemn, with deep-set eyes under heavy eyebrows, and a small, thick tuft of beard just under his mouth, of a fashion common enough a generation ago but not affected by the young man of the day. Hat was startled—as startled as if she had seen the Methodist minister coming out of the Indiana House bar (which she never had), and she was curious. Hat walked up behind the young man and looked over his shoulder.

He was, she guessed, just about to put the last touch on his small picture. He was painting the Graney barn, with a gnarled apple tree to one side. And he was painting it not as it was—a harmless old barn, with only a few shingles missing from the roof, and a board or two off the side-wall, and the mow door carelessly open—but as if it were something infernal. Hattie did not notice the colors he was using, except that on his pad the open door of the mow looked like a yawning black pit, from which she knew not what evil genii were about to appear, looked like the mouth of a dragon out of a nightmare, evil and obscene. The sight of it gave her a turn, as if she had looked on something forbidden, and she had to remind herself that it was only a picture that the young man who worked in the hardware store was painting with water colors.

The young man looked up at her—he had apparently been oblivious of her presence—and said, "Well?"

His gesture and the look of him startled her even more than his picture; it was as if she had been in this same spot before under the same circumstances looking over the shoulder of a man who was painting—as if this unique circumstance were merely a repetition of something that had happened before. (It was probably one of those curious tricks of memory from which we all suffer; Hattie had often, as a child, looked over her father's shoulder when he was retouching photographs.) Hat recalled her wits with a conscious effort.

"It isn't very pretty, is it?" she said.

"Of course not," he said. "It's just pretty damn good."

Hat considered a moment; but her next remark was a child-like one.

"Don't you want it to be pretty?"

The young man leaned back, looked at his picture, and slowly applied a bit of black to the outline of the apple tree.

Mrs. Bailey stood looking into Hattie's room. "What are you doing?" she said. "Packing my trunk," said Hattie. "I'm going to New York."

"No," he said patiently. "Not if I can help it."

The young man emptied a small jar of water, now dirty, that he had been holding in his hand and put it in his pocket; snapped his paint box shut and put that in his pocket; stood up.

Hat just stood there watching him without knowing why.

"Is there anything else you'd like to know?" The young man grinned sardonically as he spoke.

"Why—why don't you want it to be pretty?"

"Because," he said. "I don't see it that way."

"Oh!" said Hat.

The young man stooped to pick up the pad, holding it by one corner between his thumb and finger, to avoid smudging the wet painting.

"Well," Hat began. She had nothing to say; she was sparring for time; the young man was about to go and she did not want him to go. So she said "Well—"

"You're a pretty girl," he said abruptly, "and you live in a pretty little town and you think prettiness is everything. I don't. To hell with prettiness. To hell with your pretty little town. I hate it."

He started off down the path, the way Hat had come.

Hattie Bailey did the inexplicable thing; she started after him.

The man turned on her savagely.

"I don't like this town any better than you do," she said as she fell into step with him.

They walked in armed silence across the field to the corner of Main and Walnut Streets.

At the corner the man paused.

"Which way do you go?" he asked.

"Either way," said Hattie blandly. She was beginning to get hold of herself.

"Well," said the young man, not unkindly. "I'm hungry and I'm going home and eat."

"I want to talk to you," said Hattie. "I'll feed you."

They went down Main Street to the little flat. Hattie lit the lamp in the front room and laid the table in the dining-room. There was cold ham, and her mother's inimitable bread, and quince honey, and pickled peaches, and devil's-food cake and coffee. The man ate in silence but he ate heartily and when he had finished he leaned back and lit a cigarette and regarded Hattie with a certain curiosity.

"You're an odd one," he said gravely.

"I've got nothing on you," said Hattie. She was no longer as much afraid of him as she had been. She felt that there was after all a portion of ordinary human weakness in a man who had so good an appetite.

"Well," he said. "I'm a painter."

"Is that why you're so bitter?" Hattie asked.

"Yes," he said, and told her briefly the story of his life. He had been born on a farm; he had worked, as boys on a farm must work; but he had managed somehow to find time to paint. Two years back he had packed his paintings and, with fifty dollars in his pocket, gone down to New York. He had spent his mornings tramping Fifth Avenue, with his portfolio under his arm, calling on one art dealer after another. He had spent his afternoons in the galleries, seeing pictures for the first time in his life.

"You didn't sell any pictures?" she asked.

The telephone rang sharply. Hattie took the receiver off the hook and let it hang. She was in no mood to be interrupted by Mabel or young Tom.

"I didn't come anywhere near selling *(Continued on page 110)*

She realized that she was willing with all her might that he should kiss her, and willing it without the slightest effect.

THE IMMEDIATE JEWEL

By
BEN AMES WILLIAMS

Illustrated by
E. F. WARD

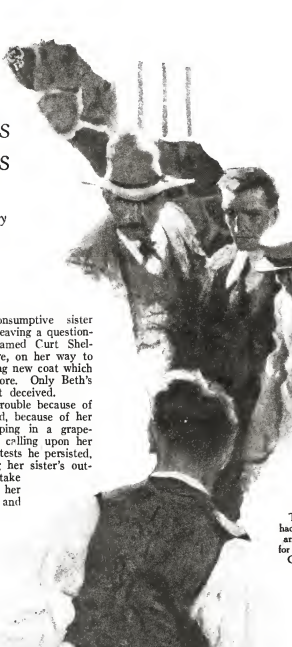
The story so far:

BETH ELDER'S consumptive sister Lyn had been seen leaving a questionable inn with a rounder named Curt Shelling; next morning Beth wore, on her way to work at the Furnace, a striking new coat which Lyn had worn the night before. Only Beth's fiancé Trav Hartley was not deceived.

Now Beth was in deeper trouble because of Lyn. The younger sister had, because of her precarious health, been sleeping in a grape-arbor; Shelling had taken to calling upon her there. In spite of Beth's protests he persisted, until one night Beth, hearing her sister's outcry when Shelling tried to take Lyn in his arms, picked up her father's heavy cane, ran out and in a fury struck Shelling over the head, killing him.

Lyn fled to the house. Beth managed to drag the body out to Shelling's car in the alley, but was unable to lift it in. Then she too fled to the house—and shortly some one turned on the lights of the car so that they lighted up Beth's face as she stood at the window! Then the car moved away.

Next morning the town learned that Curt Shelling had been killed in the wreck of his car far out on a country road; but that night Beth heard that Trav Hartley had murdered Shelling—that he had been seen in Shelling's car the previous night, a girl huddled beside him, near where the wreck occurred.



Trav had been arrested for killing Curt.

CHAPTER XIII

IT is one of the ironical conditions of existence that in great moments of life the epic and the commonplace must still rub elbows. Man, engaged in spanning the width of the Atlantic on wings that man has made, nibbles milk chocolate. Napoleon, the battle of Waterloo half done, snatches a hasty lunch. The orator pauses in his topmost flight of rhetoric to take a sip of water; the painter puts the finishing touches on his masterpiece with one hand, and with the other helps himself to a ham sandwich. Beth, while her whole world seemed ready to crumble about her ears, went into the kitchen to wash dishes.

Lyn went with her. The younger girl was oppressed by something like panic; she could not bear to be alone, and so stayed close at Beth's heels. They passed the dishes through the slide, then carried them to the sink and stacked them there. Lyn sat down while Beth drew a pan of hot water and whipped the water to suds with the soapholder. The two girls talked together in hushed tones, trying to piece out the story, trying to conjecture what part Trav had had in the tragedy of the night before.

Beth was able to guess, to fill in the missing details. Somehow—and the reason for his coming did not greatly matter—Trav must have chanced upon Curt's car in the alley behind the house and found the body of the dead man there.

"He must have known," Beth told Lyn. "Or if he didn't, he must have thought everyone else would know. So I suppose he lifted it into the car and drove out of town and then jumped out of the car and let it run wild down the road—hoping it would look like an accident, when they found the wreck."

"But they saw him!" Lyn cried; and Beth nodded, and said:

"Yes, that was the chance he took."

Lyn wondered who the girl could have been; and Beth said there was no girl. "But people saw her," Lyn protested; and Beth smiled a little, sorrowfully, and shook her head.

"They must have seen it, on the seat beside Trav, and thought it was a girl," she explained, and Lyn shuddered, and her eyes widened with fright at the picture. Beth was sloshing the dishes about in the hot water, wiping them clean with the cloth, setting them to drain. Lyn said slowly:

"He'll be arrested, Beth."

Beth nodded. "Yes."

But Lyn flung out her hands in protest. "Oh, they can't arrest him, Beth. They won't. Anybody knows Trav wouldn't hurt anyone. They can't arrest him, Beth. They never will."

Beth said slowly: "If they do, I'll have to tell them."

Lyn stared at her. "Beth! What did you say?"

"I said if they arrested Trav, I'd have to tell—what happened."

Lyn began to tremble: her frail body was twitching and shaking with the torture of her nerves. "He'll tell, himself," she cried. "He'll never let them arrest him. He'll tell. Oh, Beth, everybody will know."

Beth shook her head. "Trav will never say a word."

"He won't? Of course, he will He—"

"I know Trav," Beth insisted. "He won't tell."

Lyn's eyes widened with desperate hope. "Beth! Don't you think he—"

"I know he won't."

"Then no one will ever know!" The younger girl's voice was pitifully triumphant. Beth looked down at her sister, a little sadly.

"I'm afraid they'll have to, Lyn," she said. "We can't let Trav take the blame, you know."

Lyn whispered desperately: "Beth, you—"

"Of course, dear," Beth told her. "We couldn't let him take the blame. We'd have to tell the truth."

Lyn flung herself toward Beth, caught her sister by the arms, shook her feebly to and fro. Beth had never so fully realized Lyn's physical weakness as in that moment. She was so much the stronger that Lyn's tugging hands were like the hands of a child. The younger girl protested desperately:

"Beth, you wouldn't! You wouldn't tell! Oh, I couldn't bear it, Beth. Trav wouldn't want you to. It would kill me. I couldn't stand people's talking. I—Beth, please promise me you wont. Oh, Beth, promise me. You wont tell, will you, Beth? You mustn't. I wont let you tell."

Beth said gently: "There, Lyn! Please don't tire yourself out. Don't you see we would have to."

Lyn's eyes flamed with a sudden rush of anger. She almost screamed at her sister. "Beth Elder, if you do, I'll never—I'll get even with you. I'll tell some things myself. I'll tell them that I loved Curt. I'll tell them you were jealous of me. I'll tell them he and I— Oh, I'll tell them the worst thing I can think of, Beth, if you do. I wont let you, Beth. I wont. I'll kill myself if you do. I—"

Beth's eyes were weary and troubled. "Please, Lyn! You're only thinking about yourself. Think of others, Lyn—of Trav. Please don't make me ashamed of you, Lyn."

"Ashamed!" Lyn let go her sister's arms with a gesture like a blow. "I should think you're the one for me to be ashamed of. I'm not the one that killed him. I'm not a murderer, Beth. You're the one to be ashamed of. Be ashamed of yourself, Beth, if you've got to be ashamed of somebody. You've made trouble enough. You sha'n't make any more. I wont let you. I'll—"

She broke off, coughing; for minutes on end she could not speak at all, while Beth tried to make her comfortable, made her sit down, pleaded with her, gave her water to drink, sugar to relieve the coughing. "You mustn't get so angry, Lyn," she pleaded. "It's bad for you. You mustn't, Lyn. You mustn't."

Lyn, still coughing, was pressing her handkerchief to her lips; and Beth saw a faint stain upon the linen—unmistakable. This was not the first time. With an access of strength of which she would not have believed herself capable she gathered frail Lyn into her arms and carried her from the kitchen through the hall to the stairs. She tried to carry her upstairs, but could not, so let her down; and Lyn managed to climb slowly, with Beth's arm about her, to her room. She reached her bedside, sank down, submitted to Beth's ministrations.

It seemed to Beth that it was hours before Lyn could rest, could speak. The younger girl smiled a little now and then; and in the end did manage to whisper: "You see, Beth— Can't—stand very much. Be good to me, Beth. Please!"

Beth could not catch the words, but the tone was easy for her ears—Lyn's voice raised in the room above.

"Yes, Lyn," Beth promised. "I'll do everything I can, dear. Now rest. Go to sleep. Don't try to talk at all. Just go to sleep, Lynnie."

Lyn did sleep presently; and in her sleep it seemed to Beth that she became even more frail, and there was a translucent tint upon her cheeks. Beth, standing beside her sister, knew that Lyn was right, knew that if she did tell the truth, it would kill Lyn as surely as a blow.

She could only pray mutely that the choice be not presented to her: that she should not be forced to decide between Trav and Lyn.

PRESENTLY Beth went downstairs and telephoned to Mary Thurman. There is a Mary Thurman in every small town—a woman past middle-life, a widow or a spinster in whose hands there rests the gift of healing: a woman who gives her life to sick and ailing folk—a woman born to nursing, without formal training, but with all the lore of the sickroom in her sympathetic finger-tips.

Beth asked Mary Thurman to come and care for Lyn; and the woman said she would come next morning.

When Jim Elder came home, Beth told him what she had done. He would have protested, did protest; but Beth for once was able to overbear him. She had her way. Mary Thurman came

before Beth left the house next morning; she stayed thereafter till the end. For Lyn was never again to leave her bed.

BETH went to the Furnace that morning weary and sick and dumb, passive before whatever blows the day might deal. And Trav, there before her, set himself at once to reassure her.

He was cheerfully amiable; he did not remark that she looked tired or worn. He told her she was looking unusually well. This always acts as a tonic to a woman, and Beth was only a woman. Then Trav asked:

"And by the way, have you heard the joke?"

Beth had heard no joke; she told him so, smiling a little wistfully, and she asked what the joke might be.

"Why," said Trav, "they're saying that I was driving Curt's car, night before last, saying that I was with him!"

That did not seem to Beth to be a joke. She said slowly: "Yes, Father told me."

"Next thing, they'll be saying I killed the poor chap, Trav told her cheerfully. "Will you send me fruit and flowers when I'm in the calaboose, Beth?"

"Trav!" she protested weakly.

"You don't believe it, do you?" he asked, and chuckled reassuringly. "True as gospel, Beth. Honest! Carl Winsor told me, last night. Sheriff Brant says I look like a bad egg to him. So don't be surprised if they come down here with a posse today and drag me off to durance vile."

"Please," she begged. And then, her hand dropping to rest on his: "Oh, Trav, you're a dear. But what did you do it for?"

He stared at her in a mystified fashion. "Do *it*? Do what? Lord, Beth, you don't think I—"

"You know what I mean, Trav."

"I don't even know what you're talking about. Just because some fool tales are floating around town— Don't you worry, Beth. Not a thing to worry about. It's just talk; that's all."

"You took it away—"

He interrupted her. "Hush! Don't talk like that, Beth. You're imagining things. You don't know anything about this, anyway. Honestly, there's nothing to worry about. No reason why you should worry, and no reason why I should worry. People think they saw me. But you'll find they wont be able to swear to it. I was at home in bed all the time. I can prove it by the bed, Beth. Don't you—"

"Please, Trav. Be frank with me. I know—"

"Beth, I tell you you're imagining things." He laughed abruptly. "Why, you know what I'm thinking of. Remember when I thought it was Lyn I saw in Chillicothe, and you told me it was you, and I thought you were trying to fool me, and told you so, and you said you didn't know what I meant. That's just like this, Beth. Don't you see? You think I'm trying to fool you now, and I don't know what you mean."

"Trav, I know—"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You took it—"

"I don't know what you mean."

Beth smiled a little. "Ah, Trav, you are a dear."

"I don't— I mean I do know what you mean. Bless your heart, Beth! Don't worry. It is going to be all right. Honest, it is."

"I—"

"Beth, don't talk to other people like this. Just keep still and look wise and say nothing. Leave it to me. I'll be all right."

"I'll never let you—"

"I don't know what you mean. Promise me not to be foolish, Beth. You'll spoil everything."

"But if they arrest you—"

"Pshaw, what does that amount to? I've got a perfectly good alibi. They only think they saw me. You leave it to me, Beth."

"You—"

"I don't know what you're talking about, and you don't either; and neither of us knows what the rest of the town is talking about. You just remember that, Beth. You'll see it will come out all right." He touched her arm suddenly, pointed through the window. "There. I told you. Beth, promise!"

She looked where he pointed and saw three men coming toward the laboratory—Carl Winsor and Sheriff Brant and Trav's father. And she turned as white as death. "Trav—"

He swung her quickly across the room, flung open her locker, caught up her hat and pressed it on her head. "Beth, go uptown on an errand for me. Go on—quick! And remember what I said: don't worry. Please, Beth."

Automatically adjusting her hat, she tried to speak, would have spoken; but he almost thrust her toward the door, and in the doorway she came face to face with Carl Winsor, the others at his back.

Carl lifted his hat, said: "Hello, Beth! Going somewhere?"

She stammered: "N-No. I—"

"Yes, she is," Trav interrupted. "Hurry, Beth. He's expecting you right away. I told him you'd be there. Come in, Carl. Why, hello, Sheriff. Dad—"

Beth found herself outside; she stood for a moment helplessly while the three men went in. Trav stepped outside for a moment and said again:

"Go ahead, Beth. You can do it all right. Remember what I said, or you'll spoil the whole thing. 'By."

He saw that she would have spoken; and he shut the door in her face. Beth hesitated for a moment; then she went slowly out along the path between the ore-piles, and past the office to the street. Without knowing what she did, she turned uptown.

She had no illusions. She knew they had come to question Trav, knew how that questioning must surely end. And with all the strength that was in her, and with all the love for him that she abruptly recognized in her heart, she wanted to go back and burst in upon them and cry out the whole pitiful story. But like a barred gate before her was the picture of Lyn, so terribly weak and sick and small, lying in her bed at home.

She walked aimlessly toward the center of the town, turned at length and retraced her steps, turned again like a sentry on his beat. And after a while she heard an automobile coming from the direction of the Furnace, and looked back, and stood still.

It was Carl Winsor's car, and he was driving. In the back sat Sheriff Brant and Trav.

As they passed where she stood, Carl tipped his hat. Trav smiled at her and waved a reassuring hand. Then they were gone.

She walked back toward the Furnace like a person in a dream. And her thoughts went round and round in a ceaseless circle. Trav had been arrested for killing Curt. But she had killed Curt. But if she told the truth, Lyn would die. And if she did not tell the truth, Trav must answer to the hideous charge.

She reached the laboratory, found no one there, sank down at her desk. Her head toppled wearily forward, cradled itself upon her arms. She cried and cried, as though her heart were breaking.

CHAPTER XIV

BETH had the laboratory to herself for long enough so that her tears passed; and she washed her face and bathed her eyes and readjusted her hair, and tried to remove the traces of her grief. Then she saw Ed Hartley, Trav's father, coming toward the building; and her heart began to pound so that she could hardly stand. She had to lean against one of the tables to steady herself; and she faced the door, waiting for him to come in.

She saw that the man's face was sober and troubled; and she wanted to cry out the truth, and comfort him. But the compulsion of Trav's words was upon her; she was still.

Trav's father looked at her steadily; he smiled a little and said in a gentle tone: "There, you've been crying!"

Beth tried to answer his smile with another. She nodded. "Yes. But I thought I didn't show it."

"You know about Trav, then?"

"I saw them taking him. He told me—what he expected."

"And you cried?"

She tried to say, "Yes," but was so near tears again that the word became only a sound of assent. Ed Hartley came over to where she stood and put his arm about her shoulders.

"That's all right, my girl," he said affectionately. "No need of crying. But I'm glad you did. Trav thinks a lot of you, and I judge you think just about as much of him."

She said: "Um-hm!" And he laughed and asked:

"Have you told him so?"

She shook her head.

"Well, you'll want to break the news yourself, I guess. I promise not to tell."

Her eyes were full of tears, but she managed to smile; and he patted her shoulder clumsily, and said: "That's the stuff. Trav wanted me to tell you not to worry. I guess there's no need of that, though, is there?"

"Of course, I'm going to w-worry," she muttered.

He protested: "See here. You don't mean to say you believe Trav—"

Jim Elder wrapped his arms around her in a desperate embrace and clung to her like a frightened, lonely child.

"Oh, I know he didn't. I *know* he didn't," she cried in bitter anguish.

"Well, that's more like it. Of course, I don't like this any better than you do. But I know Trav. He's my boy; and I'm not afraid of his having done anything very seriously wrong. Neither are you, I guess."

"Oh, no, no."

"We know him too well, don't we?"

She nodded her head.

"Trav's a man, anyway," said Trav's father. "I'm proud of the boy even if those damned fools— I'm sorry, Beth."

She smiled mistily. "That's what I think, too," she said. "Say it again."

"Those damned fools!" he repeated. "That's what they are. But the thing is to keep a stiff upper lip. Young Winsor's got sense. But the sheriff's pig-headed. He took the responsibility. Said he had to. But Trav's not worried, and neither am I, and you're not going to worry, either. Bound to come out all right, in short order."

"Oh, it is, it is," she agreed.

He patted her shoulder roughly again. "Now, the thing is, I can't shut down the Furnace, just for a little thing like this. So you'll have to hang on here. You can do it, all right. Can't you?"

"I think so."

"Sure you can. And you will, too. I can count on you, can't I?"

"Yes."

"You'll do the work?"

"Yes."

He exclaimed: "That's the stuff. And of course, since you'll be doing Trav's work, you'll get Trav's pay."

The hideous irony of this made Beth protest; there was such panic in her eyes that Hartley was startled. She cried: "No, no. I can't. You mustn't. I wont. I can't take the money for it. Oh, I can't."

He cried: "Why not? You'll he earning it. That's what money's for—to be earned. You—"

"I can't take money. I can't, Mr. Hartley."

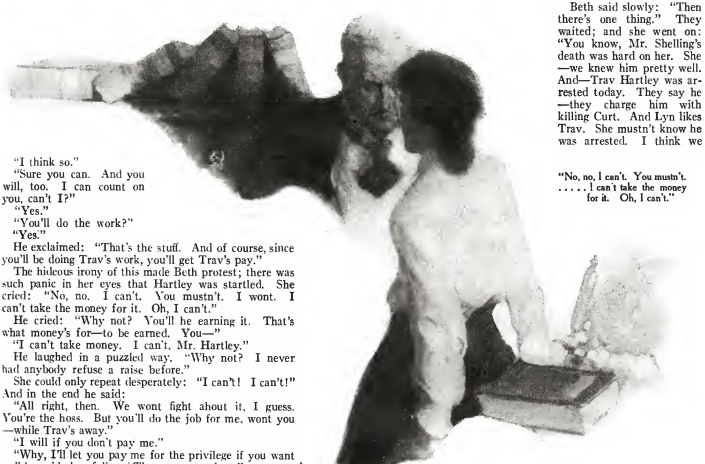
He laughed in a puzzled way. "Why not? I never had anybody refuse a raise before."

She could only repeat desperately: "I can't! I can't!" And in the end he said:

"All right, then. We wont fight about it, I guess. You're the boss. But you'll do the job for me, wont you —while Trav's away."

"I will if you don't pay me."

"Why, I'll let you pay me for the privilege if you want to," he said cheerfully. "There now, you're all unstrung. Don't you worry, Beth. Just have it your own way."



"No, no, I can't. You mustn't. . . . . I can't take the money for it. Oh, I can't."

AFTER a little he went back to the office, leaving Beth alone. She was glad when he was gone; she thought that if he had stayed a minute longer she must have cried out the truth to him. Her secret trembled on her lips; she felt that she must pour it forth. It was in solitude that her only safety lay. When she was alone, she struggled for self-control, tried to apply herself to her work, did manage some measure of concentration. But at eleven o'clock she took her hat and left the laboratory and started home. She must see Lyn, must talk with her.

As she reached her own front door, Doctor Hilton came out; and Beth saw Mary Thurman at his back. Beth said: "Why, Doctor!" She was white to the lips with a sudden, paralyzing fear. He took her hand; and Mary Thurman said softly:

"I sent for him, Miss Beth. Lyn's mighty sick. It's a shame she aint had a doctor before, and been sent away somewhere. I called Doctor Hilton this morning."

Beth asked huskily: "Is she worse?"

The physician looked down at her, his eyes gentle. "She couldn't be much worse and be alive, Beth," he said. He had known Beth and Lyn all their lives, and he knew Jim Elder. "I know it's not your fault. She should have been sent to some healthier climate, a long time ago. Now she's a pretty sick girl."

Beth's lips were stiff with fright. "Is she going to—die?"

"I wouldn't say that."

She caught his arm. "Can't she be taken away now?"

He shook his head. "She's too weak, Beth—too sick. Maybe we can get a little of her strength back, though. Then we'll see."

"There's a chance?"

"There's always a chance. Of course, she's got to be kept quiet —absolutely quiet. I've told Mary Thurman what to do. Sleep, and rest, and lots to eat, and lots of air, and no excitement."

Beth repeated, half to herself: "No excitement!"

"That's positive," the Doctor repeated insistently. "She musn't be bothered about anything, or worried, or anything. Keep her quiet. Don't disturb her. Feed her and make her sleep. Then, maybe in a couple of months we might be able to get her out of this and give her a real chance."

Beth said slowly: "Then there's one thing." They waited; and she went on: "You know, Mr. Shelling's death was hard on her. She —we knew him pretty well. And—Trav Hartley was arrested today. They say he —they charge him with killing Curt. And Lyn likes Trav. She mustn't know he was arrested. I think we ought to tell her he hasn't been, or that he's not going to be, or something."

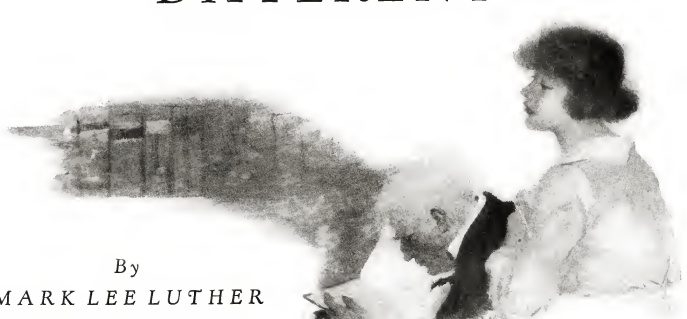
Doctor Hilton nodded. "Absolutely."

"I think we ought to tell her they've decided Mr. Shelling was killed when his car was smashed up. Don't you? Then she wont have to worry about that. She *has* worried, Doctor. I think that brought on this—attack."

Mary Thurman said: "I'll tell her, Miss Beth. You leave that to me. I'll fix her up. I'll take care of her."

"That's right," Doctor Hilton agreed. "You leave her to Mary. Beth. I'll trust Mary Thurman, any *(Continued on page 82)*

SOMETHING DIFFERENT



By

MARK LEE LUTHER

Illustrated by

HAROLD LUND

WHEN he had lost the battle, the Judge composed an advertisement which he deemed at once seductive and chaste, and before mailing it to a New York paper, strolled across the village square to show it to Nora Burns. She isn't the heroine of this tale. She is a real-estate agent who used to type letters and conveyances for the entire Rockhaven bar. The bar consisted of two lawyers, both judges by courtesy, which painlessly explains why Nora took up real-estate.

Our Judge by courtesy laid his copy on Nora's orderly desk with the mock diffidence of a young author.

"What do you think of this?" he asked. "I'm open to suggestions."

Rockhaven, L. I. For summer season, at moderate rental, twelve-room house on Quohonk River. Barn, garden, hens, cow. Chas. Ransom, P. O. Box 93.

Nora reached for a pencil even as she read, nibbled the end a moment and then fell to scribbling like one inspired. And this is what she wrote:

WHY NOT ENJOY YOUR SUMMER?

There are hollyhocks in the dooryard.
A river bathes the foot of the lawn.
Green peas crisp from the garden.
Fresh eggs from White Leghorns you feed yourself.
Creamy milk from the Jersey that grazes in the old apple orchard.
N. Burns, Agent, Rockhaven, L. I.

The wounded young author in the Judge was stung to sarcasm.

"It costs to run poetry in the advertising columns," he said.

"You should worry!" said Nora. "I'll make it up out of my commission when I close the deal."

"You mean 'if,' don't you?"

"Not for a minute. Put the place in my hands, and I'll get a third more for it than you could. Lay those ads side by side, Judge, and ask yourself which is the dead one."

He declined the test and without ostentation dropped his copy in the waste basket.

"Bring your prospects any time of day," he said. "You know the kind of housekeeper my wife is."

"I know—topnotch. But you need never expect me till high tide."

"High tide?"

"When the river is bathing the foot of the lawn," said Nora. "My clients might not care for the five acres of mud you overlook at low water."

He did not confide the reasons for his decision to rent his earthly paradise. They were a mighty host of two. The topnotch housekeeper was weary of well doing; she demanded something different. And daughter Mary,—here's the heroine, as fetching a girl as ever lived,—Mary had launched a sympathetic strike. Their ideal of a summer resort was the snug little island which lies in the mouth of the Hudson. They were sick unto desperation of gardens which produce merely flora and food. Roof-gardens were what they aspired to cultivate. Not that they disclosed their full ambition to the Judge at the outset! He had too sensitive a pocket nerve. The first and pressing need was to divorce him from Rockhaven.

And this Nora Burns deftly accomplished. She did it as per schedule. The J. Forsythe Brownes came, saw and were conquered at high tide. The river bathed the foot of the lawn; hollyhocks, though not in bloom, indubitably throve in the dooryard; shoots in assorted greens, which would yet yield succulent vegetables, were pushing up the loam. Nora endowed the Brownes with the eye of imagination. They beheld hollyhocks, larkspur and foxglove in flower, and plucked fancy fruits of the earth, moist with dew. With less mental strain they also looked upon the Jersey grazing in the old apple orchard, and as the iceman had deigned to call that morning, were regaled with deliciously chilled samples of the pretty creature's milk. Moreover, thanks to quick action on the part of the grocer, there was an abundant supply of eggs. No, Mary did not slip store eggs into the patent nests of the hen-house. That would have been deceitful. She merely tossed them into an omelette which the grateful New Yorkers devoured just before they caught their return train. The Quohonk was still brimming its banks.

A fortnight later the Brownes were in possession and the Ransoms were without a home. Their hail-and-farewells were not long drawn out. While Mrs. Ransom revealed the mysteries of the oil stove to Mrs. Browne's sour-faced maid, the Judge handed

Mr. Browne a combined ménu card and time-table for the White Leghorns and casually mentioned that an old chap named something-or-other might help out with the chores. The latter piece of information went over the New Yorker's head. His mind was intrigued by scratch-food, greens, powdered oyster-shells, cracked corn and the drink-habit to which, it appeared, poultry were slavishly addicted.

"I thought you simply chucked them the kitchen refuse once in a while," he said.

"Not if you want results," returned the Judge blandly. "But you'll soon learn their ways."

"It looks to me like a job for a trained nurse," said Browne. "I believe I'll pass it on to my nephew. We expect him next week. It will be a nice change for him. By the way, where can I reach you if I have further questions to ask?"

"Better call up Miss Burns," said the Judge. "Only God and my womenfolks know where I'll land."

But on this point even his nearest and dearest were for some time in doubt. Other people, it seemed, regarded New York as a summer resort. From noon till dusk the Ransoms besought hotel-clerks for shelter and were at last admitted to a skyscraper near the station, but only on terms which appalled the Judge. With one accord they promptly avoided the dining-room and wandered upstreet to a restaurant which displayed the reassuring sign of the White Tile.

It was plainly no time to suggest a roof-garden, and the Judge was permitted to pass an economical evening in the hotel lobby. He assured his wife that she and Mary were as up to date as any New York women he saw about him, which was true. Barring the hours he checked hats, no New York woman fell under his roving eye. But, whencesoever they came, the patrons of the skyscraper threw off an air of opulence which presently got under his skin. With unthinking abandon he lighted a second Manila, at moments quite forgot the price of his rooms, and beguiled by the orchestra, even toyed with the fancy that it would be pleasant to spend many evenings thus.

So relaxing indeed were his surroundings that he next morning rashly proposed that they breakfast in the hotel. The impulse cost him upward of five dollars without reckoning his mental anguish and the tip. When it was all over, he looked a broken man, and taking pity on him, his family vowed that they would find a reasonable boarding house before night and persuaded him, meanwhile, to seek the soothing atmosphere of the Aquarium. The Judge was fond of fish.

FIND a boarding-place they did; but only in comparison with the robber castle from which they fled could it be deemed reasonable. They had clung too close to spendthrift Fifth Avenue. The cook was said to be French, but the Judge, a hearty feeder at home, ever rose from table unappeased. From *hors-d'œuvres* to pastry it seemed to him that he was offered merely samples. He felt, too, that the sterling worth of his cigars was not appreciated by the household. After he finished his morning paper in the back drawing-room, the servants opened windows with needless vigor. A man who roomed across the hall speculated audibly whether the gas-main had sprung a leak.

Yet, whatever its drawbacks, this establishment proved the gateway to a dazzling opportunity. It was under this roof that they met that remarkable woman, Mrs. Ponsonby Duke. She was a Southerner—almost a professional Southerner; but together with that one-knows-not-what which distinguishes the descendants of Cavaliers, she possessed a resourcefulness not unworthy of Mayflower stock. She and the Judge had much in common. She always gave him his title by courtesy; she liked the aroma of his cigar; she shared his still cherished views on the League of Nations; she was as eager as he to discover how one might live cheaply in New York. Furthermore, seeing how the wind blew, she did not fail to ingratiate herself with his wife and daughter. All three succumbed to her charm and her plan.

The plan was masterly in its simplicity. The solution of their joint problem, she declared, was a furnished apartment. The expenses would be shared pro rata. The care should be hers. She protested that she adored the details of housekeeping which Mrs. Ransom had abandoned home to escape. She and dear Mary might feel free as air. The Judge's only responsibility would begin and end with his weekly check. It would not be of alarming proportions, the check. Trust her instinct for bargains. It was as sure as her judgment of human beings, and she recognized true gentility at a glance.

The apartment of her choice overlooked Riverside Drive. The family had already deserted it for country delights. It was in charge of an agent's youthful clerk who, like Mrs. Ponsonby Duke, prided himself on his judgment of human beings. Each saw in the other the infallible signs of true gentility. He felt it unnecessary to verify the references of a Southern gentlewoman. Besides, she was in funds. The Judge had left the negotiations in her capable hands, and into her hands paid his quota of the full summer rent. It equaled the amount which Nora Burns had extracted from J. Forsythe Browne, but after the cruel experiences of the past two weeks, he rejoiced to break even henceforth.

Mrs. Duke confided that she had told the young man at the agency that she should have cousins with her.

"It looks better," she explained. "And anyhow, Judge, I'm positive that in a way we *are* cousins. If my memory serves me, my great grandfather's brother Colonel Marlborough Duke married a Ransom just after the Revolution."

The Judge felt the tug of kinship.

"Treat me like a relation," he begged, "—in every respect."

He was supremely content as he smoked his first after-dinner cigar in his new quarters. Undoubtedly the Hudson was in some particulars superior to the stream he beheld from his windows at home. He marveled that people so comfortably situated should pine for change. He had not inquired who they were. Possibly here in the book-shelves at elbow he would find a clue to their identity. He reached lazily for a volume and then straightened rigidly in his chair. Imagine his surprise when he found the neat inscription of the bookplate ran:

Ex Libris
J. FORSYTHE BROWNE

THERE was no mistake. Volume after volume bore the same name. He had changed places with his own tenant.

"What a joke!" said Mary. "You'll drop him a line, wont you?"

"I suppose I ought."

"Of course," said his wife, as if it were the simplest thing in the world. "He'll be delighted that his apartment is in such good hands."

The Judge tried to frame a graceful note, but his phrases refused to trip as lightly as he wished, and he put the matter off till he should be in just the right mood. Morning was the time for graceful note-writing. But in the morning his Muse was still coy, and giving up the effort to woo her, he paid a visit to the bank in whose care his mail was forwarded. There awaited him the last issue of the Rockhaven *Weekly* and a letter from Nora Burns. He opened the paper first and with a thrill of satisfaction glimpsed his name among the personals. The paragraph itself, however, gave him goosefiesh.

J. F. Browne, who has rented Judge Ransom's residence for the summer, had an unpleasant experience his first evening in our midst. He took Mrs. B. for a row on the river and forgot about the tide. Owing to fall of same, he was unable to make his own dock on his return after dark, and in trying to land by the coal-yards broke both his oars and drifted downstream to the Sound. Fortunately, Ed Speers, the well-known lobsterman, had his launch, the *Addie G.*, out for a run and towed the said parties to Crystal Beach, where they caught the midnight trolley home. Better luck next time, neighbor!

After digesting this piece of news the Judge, with a premonition of worse to come, slit Nora's business-like envelope. She wrote:

I've had my troubles with J. F. B. I went go into his debut on our disappearing river—you'll read about it in the local rag—but merely state in passing that a madder castaway was never rescued in these parts. I didn't see him till five days later, and he was still hot. He wanted to know why in tunket (substitution by censor) this (adjectives omitted) town doesn't collect its garbage? Was he expected to bury it in the back lot or phone for a hearse? Why haven't we gas? That oil stove has bereft them of the best cook they ever had. And where in this benighted dump could he find a man who'd condescend to do the milking, weed the garden and in his spare moments cut the fool lawn? His own time, I gather, has been filled to repletion by a poultry strike. I advised kindness and *Lay-or-Bust* hen food, and agreed to try to induce Jake Bumpus' boy to accept a position as first groom of the cow-stable. After I cheered him up a bit, J. Forsythe thought he could stagger along by himself a few days more. He expects a husky nephew any hour. I wonder—in case the heir of the Bumpi scorns his gold—I wonder whether the nephew can milk?

He spent much of his leisure trying to ascertain her notion of an ideal husband.

THE Judge had an intuition that this was not the psychological moment to write J. Forsythe Browne. No note from him, be it ever so graceful, could at this juncture receive a dispassionate reading. And yet, as between gentlemen? The problem was so delicate that he took counsel with his assembled relations by blood, marriage and adoption. Mary, with the distressing candor of youth, felt that, come what might, he should face the music. His wife, haunted by the secret fear that the Brownes might propose an immediate exchange, was for deferring their enlightenment till they had grasped the solid advantages of country life. Then Mrs. Duke, who held her peace till the Judge appealed to her, in her lucid way pointed out that there was no problem to solve.

"Why write at all?" she questioned. "Aren't you losing sight of the fact that it is I who have taken the apartment?"

To Mary the distinction seemed hazy, but it satisfied the Judge's legal mind, and he settled himself to enjoy the gracious society and astonishing executive skill of Mrs. Duke. The table that woman set was a marvel. He could not conceive how she did it. Could it be that, too-generous souled, she was contributing more than her due share to the weekly budget? She looked after the accounts. He could not ask to inspect them. Yet he wondered every time he drew a check.

Mrs. Ransom also wondered, but she was less interested in market prices current than in the cost of clothes. She and Mary had really done very well as regards summer finery, and they still cherished hopes of penetrating a cabaret and mounting to a roof-garden. But though the Judge, inspired perhaps by Mrs. Duke's filmy wardrobe, had been surprisingly liberal for clothes, he remained stoutly conservative as to entertainment. He preferred to organize parties to a museum or the zoo on free days. The Metropolitan was his prime favorite, and he hit on an ingenious fillip to the memory for avoiding pay days. One had only to recall that on wash-day and fish-day art cost a quarter. Mrs. Ponsonby Duke never joined these educational junkets. She was a home body, she declared, and at home they ever found her, on their return to a perfect dinner perfectly served.

Such felicity could not last. It was too flawless. For a blissful, fleet-footed month it endured, and then one afternoon when the Judge's natural protectors were absent, the end came.

"I'm leaving you, Judge," said Mrs. Duke softly, "—very soon, in fact today."

He nearly bolted the stub of his cigar.

"You can't mean it!" he gasped. "What am I—what shall we do without you?"

"You wont miss me as much as you think," she reassured. "As for my part of the rent we have advanced, I insist on your keeping it. That would be only honorable. And may I not tell you what a privilege it has been to know you all? I wish it might go on forever. But it can't. I must embrace an opportunity that has come to me."

"Is it a—a husband?" asked the Judge feebly.

"Ah, no, dear friend!" She trilled a silvery laugh. "Nothing so romantic. Yet it is romantic, as you shall see. The other day a gentleman made me a unique proposal. He said: 'I have a luxuriously furnished apartment in an exclusive neighborhood. There are two Japanese servants, and they and the whole place, save one room, are at your disposal absolutely without expense. You may live there as you please, disturbed by no one. It is your home. The only conditions are that the room I reserve shall remain locked, and that every Thursday evening you will go away—visit your friends, perhaps—and not return till Friday morning.' Well, there you are! I have seen the apartment; it is all that he represented it to be; and I have accepted his terms."

"Without knowing more than you've told me!"

"Yes. And so would you in my place. You'd trust him implicitly."

"Not me. Why he may be a—a Bolshevist!"

She smiled at his fears and continued affably:

"A switch-house—that's what this swell dame's been running."

"A capitalist more likely, I should say. He is as American as you, Judge, and like you a perfect gentleman. Why should I pry into what no doubt is simply one of the little mysteries of big business? Nothing ought to surprise us in this wonderful city. I'm so sorry I must run away without a word to Mrs. Ransom and dear Mary. But mayn't I hope you'll come to see me when I'm settled?"

She had followed her trunks out of the door before he could credit the fact that she was going; and so stunned was he by her flight that it did not dawn on him till much later that he was in total ignorance whither she had flown. His wife and Mary assisted the dawning. Mrs. Ponsonby Duke's new and splendid address was the first thing they wanted to know, and when he could not tell them, they exchanged one of those glances by which women now and again betray their real opinion of the mental apparatus of mere man. He pretended not to see it, but it blighted him nevertheless, and he suffered them to depart kitchenward without uttering so much as a whisper in defense of Mrs. Duke's natural abstraction in setting forth on so strange an adventure.

This was well. Other proofs of absent-mindedness straightway came to light. She had forgotten to order dinner, and still more annoying, to pay the past fortnight's wages of the maid. Pertaining to finance, the latter omission was referred to the Judge, who cross-examined the girl exhaustively and bared the shocking truth that they owed nearly all the purveyors of food in the neighborhood. Yet even while he shuddered, he admired. That remarkable woman's talents had been misapplied in so narrow a field as domesticity. She should have been floating oil-stock or Russian loans.

No wonder they had lived on the fat of the land! No wonder that she had waived her share of the summer rent! But *was* it paid? His suspense was agonizing till among the early bills she had settled while establishing her credit, he found the blessed receipt. Still, even with this frightful anxiety dispelled, the situation called for strong measures. The maid went at once. The table was reduced to wholesome simplicity. And while the pas-

sion for retrenchment clutched him, the Judge advertised Mrs. Duke's vacant room.

He did not confide in his family till the day the advertisement appeared and their illogical minds fixed, not on the concrete benefits of the plan, but on the purely abstract question of the feelings of the J. Forsythe Brownes. Mary asked how he would like it if the Brownes rented one of his rooms; and his wife, with greater irrelevance, asserted that now, at any rate, the Brownes should be told who were their real tenants.

"I don't care a tinker's damn what they think," said the Judge with sudden bitterness. "Those people make me sick. They're getting nice fresh vegetables, and milk with cream on it, and eggs that are eggs—"

"And a river that bathes the foot of the lawn," prompted Mary.

"Which they don't appreciate," he went on, frowning at her levity. "That man must spend half his time in Nora Burns' office belittling our town. He says the mosquitoes are so thick he wears his nephew's old gas-mask when he forages in the garden. That's his idea of a joke. And he's tacked netting all over the side veranda I just had painted. What are a few mosquitoes? I've been stung by worse things here every day since I came. I'm tired of it. I wish to heaven he'd trade back. I'll put it up to him, if you women are too high-toned to rent this room."

So they rented it—or rather, Mary did. Her mother was marketing, the Judge simmering in the bath, when the bell rang and a bronzed young man with an expression stern for his years loomed over her at the threshold.

"I see you're advertising a room," he said, flourishing a folded newspaper.

"Yes," she replied, appraising his tailoring. "Are you looking for yourself?"

She had the sort of voice a pretty girl ought to have. Consult any poet for details. The caller's stern expression melted. He became her contemporary.

"Don't you want a man?" he asked anxiously.

"It depends," said Mary. "Come in, wont you?"

She piloted him down the corridor, past the bath where, unseen but not unheard, the Judge was hurriedly reaching for towels, and into the room once graced by Mrs. Ponsonby Duke.

"You seldom come across anything like this for rent," he said.

"Don't you?"

"Not once in a blue moon. Perhaps you haven't had much experience in hunting rooms?"

"No," she smiled, "nor in renting them. This is our first attempt."

"I wonder that you're willing to take an outsider into such a place."

"We've more space than we need. It's not our home, you see. We're here only for the summer, and anyone who comes with us must leave when we do."

"It's square of you to tell me that," he said. "I'd like to stay as long as you do. It would suit me exactly. Shall we call it settled?" he urged in conclusion.

"Don't you care to know the price?" countered Mary.

An undertint of red warmed his tan.

"Somehow it doesn't seem a business matter," he confessed. "Then too, when I really want a thing, I'm apt to make a dash for it regardless. I do want this room—I feel at home here already. How much is it?"

"I'll ask," said Mary.

The Judge did the rest. He came forth, ruddy as Bacchus, but with soap, not vine-leaves, in his hair. His faculties were at their best, however. Before the stranger left, he divulged his name, occupation, politics and advanced a week's room-rent. The first item alone interested Mary. It seemed to her that John Hughes was precisely the name he ought to have.

He came at once, and with his coming, a sweet spirit of tranquillity descended on the Judge. Once again he was breaking even—nay, better than even. Young Mr. Hughes was appreciative of the circle to which he had been admitted. He smoked cigars of an aroma rather more suave than that of the judicial Manilas; he bought them by the box; and the box was ever at the Judge's service. He had also a genius for pleasant excursions, the expense of which he bore with a generosity that brooked no rivalry. The nimble youth paid the score before one perceived that it was time to pay. Cabarets and roof-gardens disclosed their shining mysteries. And it didn't cost a cent.

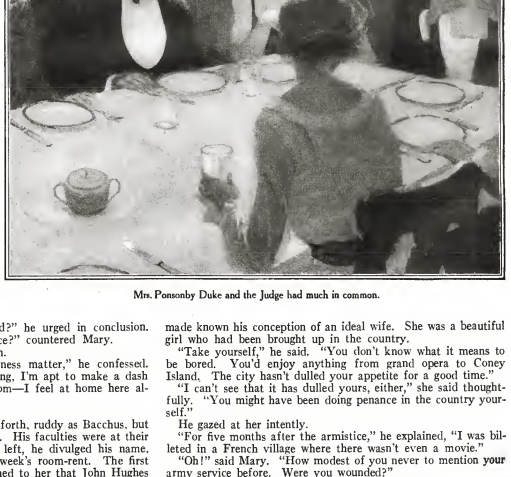
But one evening, without consulting him, his wife declined an invitation and regarded him with such fixity that he declined too.

"Now, why on earth did you do that?" he demanded when Mary and the roomer had gone their unchaperoned way. "I wanted to see that play."

"*Tchk!*" she said. "Where are your eyes?"

Thereafter his attitude toward the lavish youngster was paternal. He called him John, and out of the mine of his experience bestowed on him many a golden nugget of advice. He maintained that even a man of means ought to form habits of thrift early. They stood him in good stead at the time when he acquired greater responsibilities. And John would reply, "You said it, Judge!" and cock his ear for the rustle of Mary's tempestuous petticoat.

It was her attitude which was his chief concern, and he was long uncertain whether it was humanly friendly or officially neutral. Even in the moments when she came nearest to approving of him, she seemed still to be making up her mind. He spent much of his leisure trying to ascertain her notion of an ideal husband, but if she pictured a tall, tanned, well-tailored gentleman, she kept it to herself. He himself practised no such reserve. He freely



Mrs. Ponsonby Duke and the Judge had much in common.

made known his conception of an ideal wife. She was a beautiful girl who had been brought up in the country.

"Take yourself," he said. "You don't know what it means to be bored. You'd enjoy anything from grand opera to Coney Island. The city hasn't dulled your appetite for a good time."

"I can't see that it has dulled yours, either," she said thoughtfully. "You might have been doing penance in the country yourself."

He gazed at her intently.

"For five months after the armistice," he explained, "I was billeted in a French village where there wasn't even a movie."

"Oh!" said Mary. "How modest of you never to mention your army service before. Were you wounded?"

"Not till my return," he said. "Back here in New York I got a shot in the heart."

(Continued on page 114)

THE HIGH BROTHERHOOD

By GEORGE MARSH

Illustrated by FREDERICK J. GARNER

FROM the shoulder of a scrub-covered bluff which overhung the valley, the half-breed watched the far flash of a setting-pole wielded by a canoe-man battling slowly up the swift wilderness river. The eyes of the breed narrowed, while the muscles of his lean face set hard as he followed the progress of the craft, marked solely by the play of sunlight on the dripping pole.

So they were still on his track—these men who had hunted him through the northern summer from Lac St. Jean over the Height-of-Land and deep into the fastnesses of Rupert Land. For a fortnight back he had believed his pursuers distanced, for he knew he had set them a pace into the wide North which but few canoemen had the endurance to follow. Lately he had been leisurely ascending the river, occasionally stopping to hunt and look over the country; and now, on this day, following his custom before making camp, he had climbed to a point commanding a view of the river behind him to discover to his surprise that the bloodhounds of the law were still hard on his trail.

Jean Garnier stood as if hewn from the jack pine against which he leaned while the canoe labored in the quick water a mile downstream. That there was but one man poling, his trained eyes assured him; but what he could not as yet make out was whether the canoe carried a passenger.

However, that was a small matter; he was at the end of his tether; he would travel no farther. If he were to survive a winter in this country it was high time he built a shack and started smoking and drying a supply of fish and game. He had seen many game-signs in the valley, in fact had been gorging on moose-meat after a summer of semi-starvation and had intended to winter on the headwater lakes of the river. And now, here was this canoe!

Swiftly the half-breed had arrived at his decision. The coming night should decide whether he were to leave his bones in this lonely valley for the foxes and wolverines to snarl over, or shake off at last the relentless pursuit which for three months had driven him ever deeper into the trackless wilderness of the North.

More than once, in the past summer, he could have emptied a canoe of his enemies by a few well-aimed shots as he lay hidden on the shore; but Jean Garnier was not a cold-blooded assassin, even though the Government notices posted at Lac St. Jean branded him as murderer and outlaw. He had killed, but he had killed as any man in the North would have killed, in defense of his honor and his home. He had no regrets for the knife-thrust which had wiped out the man he found, on his return, had stolen the wife he had left on the Roberval when he went overseas as a soldier of the King. But with these unknown men whom the law had loosed on his trail he had no personal quarrel. To shoot them from ambush had not been to the taste of one who for three years had lived through the hell of German shell-fire and gas in the Ypres salient.

So the half-breed had pushed on and on, past Mistassini and Nichikun and the half-mythical Fading Waters into the labyrinth of unknown lakes and streams of the Labrador watershed, trusting to wear out the pursuit by sheer stamina and speed. And for some time he had been convinced that the parties searching for him, hardened *voyageurs* though they were, used up on the trail, had turned back.

But he was wrong. The Montagnais hunters, whom he had passed two weeks before at the forks, must have met a canoe of Provincial police still seeking him, and betrayed the fact that he had taken the east branch.

Twice during the summer he had looked at his pursuers over the sights of his rifle, and held his fire. Now it was his life or theirs, for he was through. He would turn and have it out.

SHORTLY, as the canoe swung across-stream with the channel, Garnier saw that but one man stood between him and his freedom—the freedom, if game proved scarce, to face starvation through the long snows of the winter which would soon shut in with its withering cold.

The sun had reached the ridge west of the river when the half-breed left his point of observation and hurried down through the

thick timber to his canoe cached back from the stream, to procure extra shells for his rifle. It would be simple enough to ambush this canoe-man, unaware of the nearness of his quarry. So pumping a shell from the magazine into the chamber of his thirty-thirty, he stole down along the river shore. In a thicket of alders he awaited the coming of the canoe.

Time passed, but to the straining ears of the outlaw there drifted no familiar click of a pole striking the stony bed of the stream. From his ambush he could see but a short distance below him; so crawling nearer the beach, he parted the alders and looked. Before him the river opened up for a quarter-mile. But the canoe was gone.

One of two things had happened: either his man had gone ashore below the bend to make an early camp, which was unlikely, or—something had aroused his suspicions.

The half-breed raked his memory to recall having dropped anything from his canoe, which, held up in an eddy or along shore, might have been noticed. He had always made camp back from the water, always obliterated his trail and fires, even in the last two weeks when he had fancied that the pack were no longer at his heels. At one time he had not made a fire for three days, so closely had the pursuit come to him among the islands of the great lake Mistassini. His man could not be making camp so early; something had driven him ashore; but what?

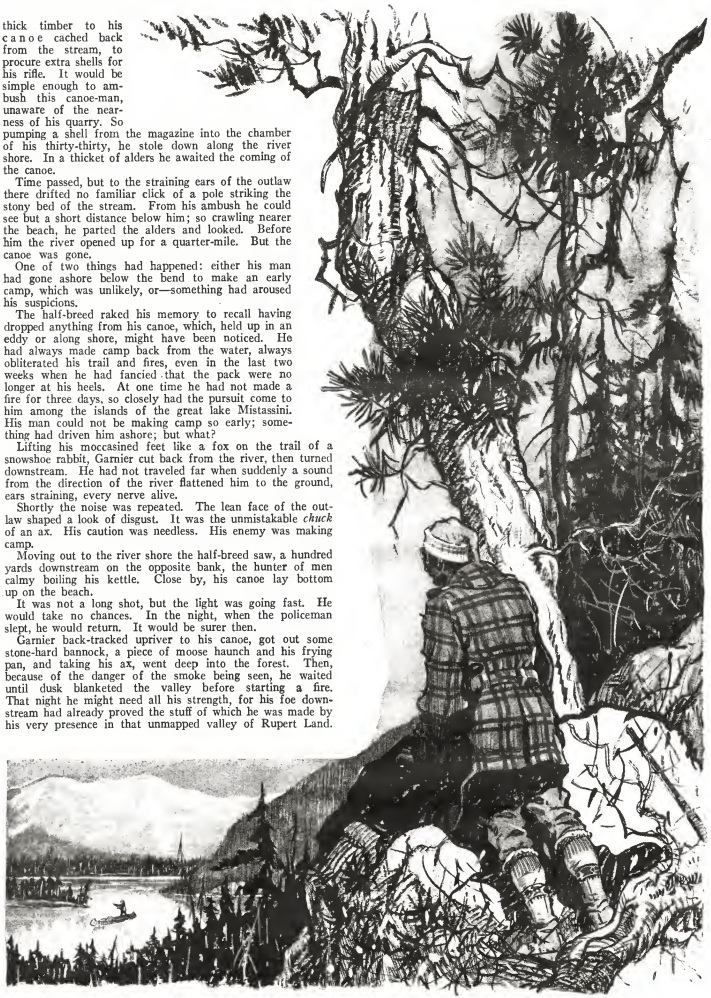
Lifting his moccasined feet like a fox on the trail of a snowshoe rabbit, Garnier cut back from the river, then turned downstream. He had not traveled far when suddenly a sound from the direction of the river flattened him to the ground, ears straining, every nerve alive.

Shortly the noise was repeated. The lean face of the outlaw shaped a look of disgust. It was the unmistakable *chuck* of an ax. His caution was needless. His enemy was making camp.

Moving out to the river shore the half-breed saw, a hundred yards downstream on the opposite bank, the hunter of men calmy boiling his kettle. Close by, his canoe lay bottom up on the beach.

It was not a long shot, but the light was going fast. He would take no chances. In the night, when the policeman slept, he would return. It would be surer then.

Garnier back-tracked upriver to his canoe, got out some stone-hard bannock, a piece of moose haunch and his frying pan, and taking his ax, went deep into the forest. Then, because of the danger of the smoke being seen, he waited until dusk blanketed the valley before starting a fire. That night he might need all his strength, for his foe downstream had already proved the stuff of which he was made by his very presence in that unmapped valley of Rupert Land.



He alone had survived the heart-breaking pace up the white waters and over the blind portages from Mistassini to the Fading Waters, in which but few white men had ever wet a paddle. With such a foe Jean Garnier would take no chances. He would eat heartily and wait for the moon to set before dropping downstream to make an end of it.

Later on, deep in the night, a canoe crossed the river, and then, snubbed by a pole muffled with moose-hide, slid silently with the current, until at length it was turned in and left on the beach.

But not until the moment was smothered by an indigo ridge did the hunter begin the stalk. The river was low, so he chose the shore. The fretting of the swift current on stones and ledges alone marred the silence of the night. Noiseless as a lynx stalking ptarmigan, the half-breed made his way slowly down the shore, grasping his thirty-thirty in his right hand, with his left parting willows and alders where they grew close to the water. At times he entered the river and waded, to avoid making a noise in the "bush."

At last he reached the strip of beach on which lay the upturned canoe. He crouched, listening to hear the snoring of the sleeper, before he stood up behind some willows. There, near the embers of a dying fire, lay his man. Close by a rifle rested against a spruce.

The half-breed marveled at the recklessness of this man who had thus made his camp in the open, seemingly regardless of the fact that he was hunting an outlaw who would not be taken alive.

Garnier raised his rifle and covered the blanketed form. There lay all that now stood in his way, helpless in his hands. Just a pressure of his finger, and he was a free man! He thought of the months of grueling toil and hardship he had undergone because of this man and his breed. Now the last of these wolves of police was out of the way.

But Jean Garnier did not crook his forefinger. Something of the instinct of the cat to play with the mouse caused him to lower his rifle. He wished to see the face of the man who had followed him six hundred miles, past the Chutes of the Fading Waters into the Labrador wastes.

Retracing his footsteps up the shore, he slowly worked around behind the camp. As he wormed his way through the thick scrub something broke the quiet of the deep night. For a moment the half-breed lay breathless. Again the sound was repeated. It was only the *hoo-hoo* of a gray owl hunting wood-mice in the forest across the river.

Garnier ground his teeth in disgust for not having shot his man when the chance offered. Now at any moment the owl might wake the sleeper. He must move fast. Swiftly the half-breed crawled to within a few feet of his man. The policeman slept on his back, half covered by his blanket, with the light from the stars full on his face.

Despite the stubble of beard, it was clearly the face of a young man, drawn lean with the hardships of the long trail. On one side, from cheek-bone to ear, the sleeper's face was furrowed by a deep red scar. Death had once missed him by a hair.

The half-breed was so near now that he could have touched his man with the muzzle of his rifle. The night was not cold, and the shirt of the policeman lay open at the neck, exposing his bronzed throat. Garnier rose to his knees, thrusting his rifle before him, then changed his mind, and reaching back with his right hand, drew the knife in his belt. He would kill this man as he had killed the other who had made him an outlaw—as he had killed more than one enemy in that far land overseas.

He moved nearer the motionless form in front of him, and raising his right hand, gripping the knife, braced his knees for the thrust, every muscle tense as wire cable. But as he started to drive the lunge home, the eyes of Jean Garnier widened in amazement; his right arm relaxed, dropping to his side, while he stared at the neck of the one who slept so calmly on the lap of Death.

There, attached by a narrow ribbon to a small gold chain encircling the neck of the sleeping man, lay a Maltese cross of bronze.

The half-breed bent nearer to see more clearly in the dim starlight.

Yes, it was the Cross. Jean Garnier nodded his head, convinced.

He glanced at the knife in his right hand which, but for the glitter of gold in the starlight a moment before, would have been smeared with the blood of this man—this man who had done some great deed of bravery, to wear that bit of bronze there at his throat.

The left hand of Jean Garnier sought his own neck and drew from beneath the tattered shirt a duplicate of the cross at the sleeper's throat. He also had once been numbered among the high brotherhood of the brave.

Slowly the shape by the dying fire faded before his eyes, and they looked upon another land, a treeless waste tortured by three years of ruthless war. It was night, and rocket, star-shell and flare pulsed and glowed fitfully over a landscape of mud, crossed and recrossed by trench and wire, pockmarked by shell-hole and mine-crater.

Through an inferno of machine-gun and shell-fire, across the refuse and litter of the Land-of-No-Man, but the hell of all who entered it, the eyes of Jean Garnier beheld a lone figure moving slowly, carrying a burden on its back. At times it stopped for a space, to crouch in a shell-hole; then it continued, now crawling, now rising to stumble along with its load, until at last it was swallowed in the refuge of a Canadian trench.

The scene changed. A battalion of Canadian infantry was drawn up in line at a rest-camp in Flanders. Before the battalion six men stood stiff at attention. Facing them were a brigadier general, the colonel and the battalion adjutant. As the adjutant read a name from the paper in his hand, the general pinned something on the blouse of each soldier. Then the adjutant called:

"Jean Garnier!" and read from the paper: "For extraordinary heroism beyond the call of duty, in going back after a bombing raid and carrying his wounded commanding officer, through heavy shell and machine-gun fire to the Canadian lines—the Victoria Cross!"

Gradually the vision faded, and the outlaw's eyes again rested on the cross at the sleeper's neck, then fell to the bit of bronze he touched with his left hand.

Slowly he shook his head. This man, his enemy, also now had come out of that blood bath of Flanders wearing the bronze badge of bravery.

The knife went back to its sheath.

Taking the policeman's rifle, Garnier crept down to the canoe. There, with stones, he propped the rifle on the beach, pointing down river. Near the gun, on a strip of sand, which he ringed with stones, the outlaw scrawled with his knife these words:

You av cros
I av cros
You brav man
Go back.

In the sand near the words he etched the outline of the Victoria Cross. Then Jean Garnier returned to his canoe and crossed the river.

AT daybreak, Craig, of the Government police, rolled out of his blanket, started his fire, and, when he went to the river for water for his kettle, found strange moccasin tracks, his rifle, and the scrawl on the sand.

Craig read the scrawl, scratched his head, and instead of speedily getting out of range, calmly cooked and ate a slim breakfast, loaded his canoe, and poled out to midstream. There he did a strange thing.

Standing bareheaded, with his right hand raised to his forehead in the British salute, he faced each shore in turn, then he waked the silence of the valley with the wild yell which on many a bloody day had blanched the face of the enemy:

"Hi, Canadians!"

Turning, the policeman paddled downstream.

At the same time, from the willows of the river shore a swart half-breed rose and stood like a spruce, with his right hand at his forehead, until the craft of the hunter disappeared from the sight of the one no longer hunted.

"Happy New Year—how I'll greet it!
Here is my pledge. Can you beat it?
Such resoluting
Is easy as shooting
Campbell's—You betcha I'll eat it!"

A happy resolve

The trouble with most New Year's resolutions is they're too negative, too much "I will not" about them. You give up something you like. There's no joy in it. But here's a resolution that says "I will!" And you can be happy over it.

"I will eat good soup at least once every day!"

Not a very big sounding resolution but it is big in results if you keep it. For good soup eaten daily supplies a distinct need of the human digestive system in a way that no other food can exactly duplicate.

Make this resolution today. Stick to it through the year. It means better digestion, sounder health, more of the real joy of living.

21 kinds **15c a can**

Campbell's Soups

LOOK FOR THE RED AND WHITE LABEL

THE IMMEDIATE JEWEL

(Continued from page 72)

time, with sick people." He smiled at the woman affectionately. "She's worth a dozen of us doctors. And Beth, don't be too discouraged. We'll see, in a few weeks. But she mustn't be worried."

Beth nodded; and then she saw her father coming up the street, and touched Doctor Hilton's arm. "Please speak to him," she said. "He'd better not even see her. Lyn loves him, of course; but he does aggravate her."

"I'll give him his orders," Hilton agreed. "Mind, now, you're not to worry either. Don't want two sick people on Mary's hands."

Beth tried to smile. "I wont," she promised.

When Jim Elder saw the doctor on the porch, he hurried forward, and called as soon as he was within hearing: "What's the matter, Doc? What are you doing here? Aint anything wrong, is there?"

The physician hesitated for a moment, till Elder was on the porch. Then said: "Not so loud, Jim. Don't want Lyn to hear."

"Lyn?"

"She's a pretty sick girl, Jim."

Beth saw her father's lips tremble faintly, saw him try to laugh. "Oh, now, Lyn's all right. Gets tired easy; that's all."

"If she gets any more tired, Jim, she'll die," Hilton told him. "She ought to have been sent somewhere, months ago, so she could take care of herself. Too late for that, for the present. But we're going to try to get some strength back into her, and then send her away. Meanwhile, you've got to take orders from Mary Thurman, Jim."

"I— Lyn's all right. She don't mind me. She—"

"You're not even to see her, Jim. Let her alone. She's not to be bothered—not to be talked to. You stay away from her."

Elder seemed to realize for the first time that Hilton was in earnest. "You really mean she's sick."

"Near dying, Jim." The words were brutal, but Beth knew their intent was kindly. Nevertheless, watching her father, she was suddenly terribly sorry for him. He seemed to shrink and shrivel a little before their eyes, seemed smaller, less important. Beth realized that he was beginning to grow old. "Near dying," the physician repeated. "I've given strict orders. If you see her, if anyone sees her unnecessarily, I'll not be responsible."

Old Jim Elder nodded his head in a puzzled way. "That's all right, Doc," he said humbly. "That's all right. I'll do anything you say. I declare, it don't seem like Lyn could be sick. But if you say so, I'll take your word for it, I will, Doc. Don't you be afraid of anything I'll do. She—"

When Doctor Hilton was gone, Beth got her father's dinner, and saw him start back to town. She did not go up to see Lyn. Mary Thurman said Lyn was asleep. "I told her what you said," she explained. "Told her they'd decided Curt Shelling got busted in the wreck, the way he deserved. It seemed to quiet her. She said she wanted Trav to come and see her—"

"Trav to come?" Beth echoed desperately.

"Yes, Miss Beth. Said she wanted to talk to him. I guess she likes him pretty well, don't she?" And no wonder, either. He's a nice fellow—even if they have arrested him."

"You told her he couldn't come."

"I told her he might come when she got rested up some. And she went right off to sleep like a baby, Miss Beth. You leave her to me. I'll take care of her all right. You—"

Beth had much time for thought, on her way to the laboratory, and alone there through the afternoon, and afterward while she walked home. She knew, beyond doubt now, that if she told the truth, Lyn must die. Yet if she did not tell—

She took a weary sort of comfort from the fact that Lyn would be either better or worse before very long. If she were better, Beth would be free to speak; and if she were worse—if Lyn should die, the whole black story could be told.

That night after supper Carl Winsor stopped at the house with a message from Trav. "He told me to tell you not to worry," Carl said. "Told me to promise you everything would come out all right."

Beth nodded, unable to speak; and Carl added: "I didn't arrest him, you know. I'm not at all sure there's any real evidence. But Brant insisted."

When he was gone, Beth had two straws of hope to which she might cling. Trav might be freed; or—Lyn might die.

She took this small and dreary comfort with her to her dreams.

CHAPTER XV

A CERTAIN number of days dragged slowly by, and Lyn kept to her bed, and Mary Thurman tended her, and Trav Hartley was still in jail, and Beth by day at the laboratory and by night at home fought over and over again the endless battle.

Nothing seemed to happen, nothing seemed to be changed from day to day; but there were changes. When Lyn had been a week abed, Beth went to call her father one morning and found Jim Elder already awake. This in itself was unusual. But when he told her that he was tired, that he would stay in bed for a while and rest, Beth felt as though a cold finger had touched her lightly on the bosom. For Elder was, physically, an alert man; he was accustomed to sound sleep, to early rising; and he had always taken a keen delight in the coming of each new day.

She did not urge him to get up; she went to the kitchen and prepared breakfast, and was not altogether surprised when he came downstairs to eat it at the usual time. "Thought I'd rest for a while," he explained. "But it seems like there aint much comfort in a bed any more. I got tired of just laying there. Lyn better this morning, Beth?"

Beth said: "I haven't seen her. Mary says she slept pretty well. I heard her a few times, in the night."

"I declare, I'll be right glad to see Lyn up and around again," Elder remarked. "Don't seem like the same house with her not around and all. Course, she never was down to breakfast anyhow; but I kind of miss her at supper-time."

Beth could not bear to speak. He murmured, under his breath: "Wouldn't be quite so bad if I could go in and talk to her, in the evenings. Don't you think she'd like to see me, Beth?"

"Doctor Hilton says she needs quiet, more than anything else. I don't go in except for a minute, once or twice a day."

Been in this morning, have you?"

"No. I haven't seen her since last night, Father."

"How's she looking, Beth? Better, I guess, with all the rest she's getting. It's all she needs—lie in bed and eat and rest and get rid of that cough. I always told Hilton that. He thinks he knows a lot, but I guess I know Lyn."

Beth was glad he did not insist that she tell him how Lyn was looking. She could hardly have found words to do so. It seemed to her that Lyn was shrinking into herself, was literally growing smaller every day. Her cheeks were very thin. "She don't seem to get the good of her victuals," Mary Thurman said. "It's hard to put flesh on a person when they're that-a-way."

When Elder left for town, Beth, watching him from the window, thought he seemed to stoop a little, wearily; and she was sure his hair was more thickly streaked with gray than it had been a week before.

She went in to see Lyn before leaving for the Furnace; and Lyn smiled at her and murmured cheerfully: "'Member me to Trav, Beth."

"I will." Beth promised automatically.

"And tell him I want him to come see me pretty soon," Lyn urged. "You tell him to just come and not mind what Mary Thurman says. I want to see Trav, Beth."

Beth was glad the blinds were drawn, so that Lyn could not see how her cheek had paled. She said huskily that she would tell Trav; and Lyn watched her shrewdly, and exclaimed:

"I don't believe you will at all, Beth. I think you're jealous of me. You needn't be afraid. I wont steal your old Trav. Besides, if you want him, why haven't you grabbed him long ago?" Her tone was gay, but it was also malicious. Lyn had always the power to hurt Beth, and delighted in exercising this power. When Mary Thurman interrupted and told Beth to go along and let Lyn take a nap, Lyn laughed in the taunting fashion with which Beth was so utterly familiar. Beth went downstairs and started for the Furnace.

"Out of the crowd of faces, one face, exquisite, flower-like in its charm"

The face that one remembers in a crowd

SUDDENLY—out of the crowds of faces—one face so exquisite, so flower-like in its charm, that it stamps itself forever upon the memory.

Innate distinction — daintiness — breeding — are nowhere more clearly expressed than in the possession of a fresh, beautiful skin.

Don't let your skin become pale, sallow, lifeless—marred by blackheads or ugly little blemishes. Every girl owes it to herself to keep her skin so clear, so soft and smooth, that at first glance it awakens admiration and delight. Remember—you yourself are responsible for the condition of your skin—you *can* make it what you will. For every day it is changing—old skin dies and new skin takes its place. By the right treatment you can free this new skin from the defects that trouble you and give it the lovely clearness it should have.

What a skin specialist would tell you

Perhaps you are continually made uncomfortable by the appearance of little blemishes which you attribute to something wrong in your blood. But a skin specialist would tell you that blemishes are generally caused by infection from bacteria and parasites, which are carried into the pores by dust and dirt in the air.

To free your skin from this distressing trouble, begin tonight to use this treatment:

Just before you go to bed, wash in your usual way with warm water and Woodbury's Facial Soap, finishing with a dash of cold water. Then dip the tips of your fingers in warm water and rub them on the cake of Woodbury's until they are covered with a heavy, cream-like lather. Cover each blemish with a thick coat of this and leave it on for ten minutes. Then rinse carefully, first with clear hot water, then with cold.

The first time you use this treatment you will notice it leaves your skin with a slightly *drawn, tight* feeling. This means your skin is responding, as it should, to a more thorough and stimulating cleansing than it has been accustomed to. After a few treatments, the drawn sensation will disappear. Your face will emerge from its nightly bath soft, smooth and glowing. Use it every night and see how much clearer and lovelier your skin becomes.

This is only one of the famous Woodbury treatments for improving the skin. Get the booklet of famous treatments that is wrapped around every cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap. Study the treatment recommended for your particular type of skin—then begin at once to use it regularly.

Woodbury's Facial Soap is sold at all drug stores and toilet goods counters in the United States and Canada. The booklet of treatments is wrapped around each cake. Get a cake today — begin your treatment tonight. The same qualities that give it its unusually beneficial effect on the complexion make it extremely desirable for general use. A 25-cent cake lasts for a month or six weeks of any treatment and for general cleansing use.

"Your treatment for one week"

A beautiful little set of the Woodbury skin preparations sent to you for 25 cents

Send 25 cents for this dainty miniature set of Woodbury's skin preparations containing *your complete* Woodbury treatment for one week.

You will find, first, the little booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," telling you the special treatment your skin needs; then a trial size cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap—enough for seven nights of any treatment; a sample tube of the new Woodbury's Facial Cream; and samples of Woodbury's Cold Cream and Woodbury's Facial Powder, with directions telling how they should be used. Write today for this special new Woodbury outfit. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1701 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1701 Sherbrooke Street, Perth, Ontario.

She wished there were some way to make Lyn forget her desire to see Trav Hartley. But the idea seemed to obsess the younger girl. Mary Thurman said Lyn spoke of him half a dozen times a day. "I declare, it keeps me busy thinking up lies to tell," she said good-humoredly.

"Don't let her guess," Beth pleaded; and Mary promised.

THAT day, as always, Beth found her thoughts forever turning to the problem that confronted her. There were half a dozen elements in the situation with which she tried to justify herself in keeping silence. First of these and above all others was the fact that Trav wanted her to do so. She had not seen him since his arrest, but she had heard from him, through Carl Winsor and through Trav's father. Each time the message was the same, though set in such phrases that only she could fully understand it. Each time he bade her keep a stiff upper lip, bade her not worry, bade her let matters take their course. And each time he sent her the promise that all would come right in the end.

Beth loved him for these messages, and tried to convince herself that he was right, that she was doing no harm by silence. But—she was fundamentally honest, and she could not deceive herself for long.

She thought, for a while, that Trav might be freed at once. He said there was no evidence against him; Carl Winsor declared that even though the evidence might exist, he believed Trav innocent. In fact, the whole town thought Trav's arrest a mistake, and believed that he would soon be released. Beth put off her decision day by day in this hope. If he were freed, she could keep silent without misgivings. So she waited. But Trav stayed in jail.

There was another possibility. Doctor Hilton had said that Lyn would be either better or worse before very long. Beth tried to persuade herself that she might wait for this eventuality. Yet Beth knew the issue was inescapable. It must be faced; there could be no avenue of escape which she could take without hating herself for cowardice. Beneath all her hesitation, Beth knew she must, in the end, decide.

Her decision came abruptly. On Monday of the third week of Trav's imprisonment Ed Hartley stopped at the laboratory to talk with her. He told her that the grand jury would take up Trav's case next day.

Beth, hardly able to breathe, stared at him; and she half-whispered: "Already?" She had not thought of this; it seemed to force the issue upon her.

Trav's father nodded. "Yes. Coming in tomorrow. That is, they'll take it up if Carl Winsor makes up his mind. I've been talking to him, trying to pound some sense into him. He knows, well as I do, Trav never did it. But the sheriff's after him all the time. He can't make up his mind."

"Could he—what could he do?"

Hartley laughed a little, grimly. "Lord, the prosecuting attorney can do pretty near anything he pleases—if he's man enough. I don't know. I'm kind of disappointed in Carl. He don't seem to know what he wants to do. I wouldn't give a hoot for a man that couldn't make up his own mind."

He stayed some while longer, talking with Beth; but this sentence stuck in her mind, sounded over and over, so that she hardly heard what else he was saying: "I wouldn't give a hoot for a man that couldn't make up his own mind." It was what she had always thought. The quality of decision was, for Beth, a thing to be respected—the lack of it a thing to be despised. She took home with her what Hartley had said; it was in her thoughts all evening, and after she had gone to bed it sang in her ears, over and over, like a refrain.

That the grand jury would convene next day had its force in Beth's thoughts. It seemed, to her, to set a time limit on her hesitation; she found herself accepting the thought that she kept silent till the jury should have acted, she must keep silent evermore. One way or another, she must decide—now. And—"a hoot for a man that couldn't make up his own mind."

When daylight came through her windows, Beth had decided. And with the decision there had come to her a great peace, and a measure of happiness more profound than she would have thought possible. Once or twice, as she dressed, she smiled a little, and she caught herself humming a tune while she prepared breakfast. When Jim Elder came downstairs and saw the radiance that dwelt in her eyes, he spoke of it.

"Why, Beth," he said to her. "You're looking pretty chipper this morning, like you'd had good news, Lyn better, is she?"

"I hope so, Father," Beth told him.

"That why you're so spry?"

"No-o!"

"Well, then—"

Beth interrupted. "Father," she said, "when you go uptown, go to Carl Winsor's office will you? Tell him I want to see him before he goes to court. Tell him I'll be up pretty soon."

"Carl? Why, Beth, what are you—"

His daughter laughed softly, happily. "No matter, Father. Just tell him, will you please?"

He promised, flowing off into one of his cascades of conversation, forgetting his curiosity as to Beth's good spirits, and as to why she wanted to see Carl. And when his breakfast was done, he started for town.

Beth, left behind, worked swiftly to put all in order, below stairs and above. She was very happy, and at the same time a little wistful. She did not expect to come home after she had seen Carl. He would have to put her in jail. So she must leave the house in shape so that Mary Thurman might take care of it.

Once or twice while she worked, she heard Lyn's voice, and Mary Thurman's. She decided not to go in and see Lyn, decided she dared not see her sister again. And so, when her tasks were done, she came downstairs and got her hat and coat and prepared to put them on.

She was adjusting her hat before the mirror when she heard Lyn's voice raised, in the room above. Beth could not catch the words, but the tone was easy for her ears to read—She had heard it so many times before. Lyn was angry, was working herself into one of those squalls of rage that were habitual with her. And Beth, white-faced and alarmed, started toward the stairs, climbed halfway, hesitated, stopped.

For Lyn's voice had been suddenly hushed and Beth could not move from where she stood. She was still there when Mary Thurman came swiftly from the room above and shut the door behind her and ran down the stairs. As she passed Beth she spoke one word that made Beth's heart stop beating then reached the telephone and gave a number.

While Mary waited for the answer, Beth tried to speak; her voice broke huskily. But Mary Thurman understood, and told her in jerky phrases. "Guessed it," she said. "Asked for him again—Trav Hartley. I told her something. She saw I was lying. . . . She got so mad, Miss Beth. Couldn't quiet her. Terrible—"

Beth heard a sound in the telephone, and the woman gave her attention to the instrument. "Doctor Hilton? Yes. Miss Lyn's worse. Got mad. Screaming. . . . Yes sir."

She listened for a little, then hung up the receiver. Beth whispered: "What—"

Mary Thurman shook her head. "Says there's nothing he can do," she said. "But he'll come."

They stood, for a space, side by side, looking up the stair toward the closed door of Lyn's room.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER a long moment, while the strength to meet that which was to come flowed into them, Mary Thurman and Beth went quietly up the stairs. Beth held Mary's arm; and the woman, who could heal with the very touch of her fingers, laid her hand on Beth's in a fashion infinitely comforting. Lyn's room was quiet; no sound came from it. The two paused for a moment in the upper hall, listening, watching the closed door. Then Beth whispered:

"I wont go in yet."

Mary nodded. "Wait awhile," she advised. "Wait a little while. You go downstairs and eat something, Miss Beth. There's nothing better than food and drink at a time like this. You go along."

"I'll wait here, so that if you need me—"

"No, downstairs. You can bring the doctor up when he comes. There's a good girl, now."

Beth went obediently downstairs again, pausing for a moment to watch Mary Thurman go into Lyn's room, and to hear the murmur of Lyn's low voice greeting her. From the lower hall this sound was indistinguishable. She could only hear Mary's footsteps, as the woman moved to and fro.

Beth was at this time faintly tremulous, uncertain of herself, hardly knowing what she did. She could not think at all. She had forgotten her purpose to go to Carl Winsor and tell him that which must be told. Equally she forgot that her father should be summoned, that he would want to be there. Beth loved Jim Elder in a certain automatic fashion; he was not a commanding, not an overwhelming per-

Cutting the cuticle makes it grow more rapidly and leaves a ragged, rough, unsightly edge

Discard cuticle scissors. Try this modern Cutex way of removing surplus cuticle

Cutting will ruin your cuticle

WHEN the cuticle is cut the skin at the base of the nails becomes dry and ragged and hangnails form.

A famous skin specialist says: "On no account trim the cuticle with scissors. This leaves a raw, bleeding edge, which will give rise to hangnails, and often makes the rim of flesh about the nail become sore and swollen." Over and over other specialists repeat the advice—"Do not trim the cuticle."

It was to meet this need for a harmless cuticle remover that the Cutex formula was prepared. Cutex is absolutely harmless. It completely does away with cuticle cutting, and leaves the skin at the base of the nail smooth, firm and unbroken.

The safe way to manicure

In the Cutex package you will find an orange stick and absorbent cotton. With a bit of this cotton wrapped about the stick and dipped in Cutex, gently work about the nail base, pressing back the cuticle. Then wash the hands, pushing the cuticle back when drying them.

To remove stains and to make the nail tips snowy white, apply Cutex Nail White underneath the nails. Finish with Cutex Nail Polish. This comes in cake, paste, powder, liquid and stick form.

To keep your cuticle so soft and pliable that you need not manicure so often, apply Cutex Cold Cream at night.

Cutex Cuticle Remover, Nail White, Nail Polish and Cold Cream come in 35 cent sizes. The Cuticle Remover comes also in 65 cent size. At all drug and department stores.

Six manicures for 20 cents

Mail the coupon below with two dimes and we will send you a Cutex Introductory Manicure Set, large enough to give you six manicures. Send for this set today. Address Northam Warren, 114 West 17th Street, New York City.

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sonality. She would not willingly have hurt him; she simply did not think of him at all.

She was standing quite still by the front door when Doctor Hilton's sputtering car drove up and stopped before the house; and she went out to the porch to greet him. He touched her shoulder lightly, said something in an undertone, and stepped in while she held the door open. In the hall, she took his hat and hung it on the rack; and he went at once up the stairs. Beth could not follow him. Her strength ebbed and flowed, she was uncertain of her footing and dared not attempt the climb. So she stood still, watching, and when he was out of sight she listened. Mary Thurman must have heard his arrival, for she opened Lyn's door to him, and Beth heard Mary murmur something. Then they went into Lyn's room and the door was closed again.

Ensued another interval of waiting, for Beth—an interval that seemed interminable. Every minute of this morning was to drag itself out to wearying proportions. Half a lifetime was crowded into these few hours. When she heard Dr. Hilton come out of Lyn's room, Beth had no idea how long he had been inside.

He came down the stairs, and she went slowly to meet him. There was no question in her eyes, for there was no question in her thoughts. She had known, beyond doubt or peradventure, since Mary Thurman first came down to telephone. There was no inquiry in her eyes; yet Hilton spoke as if to answer a question she had not uttered. He nodded his head and said quietly:

"Yes—"

Beth caught herself nodding back at him like an automaton. She held her head still with some effort, and she asked: "How long?"

He lifted one hand in a gesture that said: "No one can tell." And he added, aloud: "I will stay. She wants to see Trav Hartley, and Carl Winsor."

Beth whispered: "Trav? Carl?"

"Yes. Winsor can manage it, I guess. Do no harm. Might, conceivably, do some good."

"I'll get them," Beth promised. "I'll get them."

She would have lifted the telephone, but Doctor Hilton checked her hand. "Go to some neighbor's," he said. "She'd be disturbed. Voices, and so on."

Beth turned without answering, slipped out and across the lawn to the Wardwell's. Her thoughts were slumbering. She did not so much as wonder at Lyn's purpose; she did not think at all. She simply called Carl Winsor's office, and when he answered, said:

"This is Beth Elder."

Carl said: "Oh, yes. Your father said you wanted to see me."

Beth had forgotten that. It was now of such slight importance. She told him: "Lyn's—going to die, Carl. She wants to see you and Trav."

"Lyn?" he repeated. "Why, Beth! I'm terribly—"

"Will you bring him, soon?"

"Trav? I don't know—"

"Doctor Hilton says it might—help."

"I'll bring him," Carl told her gently, "—right away."

Beth hung up the receiver, put aside the sympathetic curiosity of Mrs. Wardwell, and went back across the lawn, under the apple trees, to her home. Doctor Hilton was in the sitting-room, idly turning the pages of a book. Beth told him softly: "They'll come."

He nodded. "You might go up and see her now," he suggested. "She spoke of you. Stay just a minute." He added: "I've given her a stimulant. But don't stay too long."

Lyn's door was closed, and Mary had not heard Beth's footfall, so that she did not come to open it. Beth was caught by a strange timidity; but she put this aside with some return of her usual resolution, and turned the knob and went in.

The room was darkened, the blinds drawn. Beth saw Lyn dimly. The younger girl lay very still upon her pillow; and her slender body was so shrunken its outlines were scarce marked by the soft coverlet. Her eyes turned toward Beth; and as Beth approached the bed, Lyn smiled. It was the very ghost of a smile, yet there was in it all the old triumphant mockery. It seemed to Beth to shadow forth the invincible spirit of the younger girl. Beth said gently:

"Hello, Lynnie!"

Lyn's head moved slightly in response. Her lips fluttered, formed a soundless word, compassed, at length, its utterance, "Hello," she said.

Beth touched her sister's forehead. She did not know what to say; she did not know what she did say. What she said was: "I love you, Lynnie."

Something like a chuckle stirred Lyn's white throat. There was the faintest note of teasing gayety in her reply. "Sure, Beth," she whispered. And then: "Don't worry. I'll be—all right, Sis."

Beth laid her hand on Lyn's and held it for a moment; and Lyn asked slowly: "Where's—Father?"

Contrition swept Beth, at the question; she was suddenly terribly ashamed that she had forgotten him, terribly remorseful. Lyn must have seen this in her sister's voice; for there was a flare of anger in her ejaculation. "You forgot!"

"I'll send for him, Lynnie," Beth promised. "Right away."

Lyn exclaimed: "Oh—" She cut herself short, as though there were many things she might have said. And Beth, already turning to go, saw the warning in Mary Thurman's eyes, and moved more swiftly.

She heard Lyn's voice, protesting and accusing, while she went down the stairs.

Her father's clerk told her that Jim Elder had gone to the post office; and Beth left word that he should come swiftly home.

While she was telephoning, Doctor Hilton passed her and went upstairs. When she had given her message, Beth went into the sitting-room to wait.

CHAPTER XVII

TIME, for Beth, had ceased to exist; she had lost all sense of its passing. She was acutely conscious of every sound that came to her, of every object that caught her eyes; but she could not think at all. The familiar sitting-room photographed itself upon her brain, bit by bit, as her eyes wandered here and there. The gilt clock on the mantel, under its bubble-like dome of glass, fascinated her; and she studied its every line and figure, inch by inch. The littered magazines upon the oak center-table; the dog-eared music on the upright piano at one end of the room; the books, leaning at eccentric angles on the shelves; the broken end of a wicker strip in her father's armchair; the lace curtains at the windows, faintly gray as evidence of their need of laundering; the framed print of Queen Louise descending her eternal stairs; these details held her eye for minutes on end. Her senses were unnaturally acute. The ticking of the clock, the stir of footsteps on the floor above, the crowing of a rooster half a block away, all seemed clamorous, ringing in her ears.

Thus her attention was instantly attracted by the sound of an approaching car; and she went to the door and saw Carl Winsor's machine in front of the house; Trav and Sheriff Brant were in the rear seat. The three men got out and started toward her; and Trav was a little ahead of the other two and his eyes were shining.

Beth was so glad to see Trav that she wanted to cry; she was so glad to see him that it seemed her heart would burst. She stood trembling, her hands dropping at her sides, while he approached her; and her eyes were blinded by the glory and happiness of it when Trav took her in his arms, as naturally as though she had always belonged there, and kissed her on the lips. She clung to him for an instant.

Carl said, behind them: "Beth, your father said you wanted to see me, but I didn't know it was so urgent. I'd have come before."

Beth turned toward him, Trav's arm still across her shoulder. "That was something else," she told him. "I was coming to tell you—"

Trav's hand gripped her shoulder. "It's Lyn that wants us, Carl." He looked toward Sheriff Brant. "Mind staying downstairs, Sheriff?"

Brant shook his head. "Not a bit. I'll smoke, in the car."

As he descended the front step, Mary Thurman came down the stairs and toward them. Her face was sober, her eyes steady. "She's ready," she said. "Come up with me."

How to Shampoo Your Hair Properly

Why the Beauty of Your Hair Depends on the Care You Give It

Illustrated by ALONZO KIMBALL

THE beauty of your hair depends upon the care you give it.

Shampooing it properly is always the most important thing. It is the shampooing which brings out the real life and lustre, natural wave and color, and makes your hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

When your hair is dry, dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy, and the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch, it is because your hair has not been shampooed properly. When your hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soap. The free alkali, in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why discriminating women use Mulsified Cocoanut Oil Shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure and it does not dry the scalp, or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

If you want to see how really beautiful you can make your hair look, just

Use plenty of lather. Rub it in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips

Follow This Simple Method

FIRST, wet the hair and scalp in clear, warm water. Then apply a little Mulsified Cocoanut Oil Shampoo, rubbing it in thoroughly all over the scalp and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Rub the Lather in Thoroughly

TWO or three teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp

When thoroughly clean, wet hair fairly squeaks when you pull it through your fingers

The final rinsing should leave the hair soft and silky in the water

When you have done this, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly, using clear, fresh, warm water. Then use another application of Mulsified. You can easily tell when the hair is perfectly clean, for it will be soft and silky in the water, the strands will fall apart easily, each separate hair floating alone in the water and the entire mass, even while wet, will feel loose, fluffy and light to the touch and be so clean, it will fairly squeak when you pull it through your fingers.

When the hair is dry always give it a good thorough brushing

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing, the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of good warm water and followed with a rinsing in cold water.

After a Mulsified shampoo you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it is.

If you want always to be remembered for your beautiful, well-kept hair, make it a rule to set a certain day each week for a Mulsified Cocoanut Oil Shampoo. This regular weekly shampooing will keep the scalp soft and the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage, and it will be noticed and admired by everyone.

You can get Mulsified Cocoanut Oil Shampoo at any drug store or toilet goods counter. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.

Splendid for children—Fine for men.

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COCOANUT OIL SHAMPOO

Carl and Trav had dropped their hats on the rack; and Carl followed Mary, while Trav and Beth came behind, together. Carl asked Mary some question, and while she was answering him, Trav whispered to Beth:

"Careful, dear. Everything's all right. I'll see—"

She told him of Lyn then; and he said: "I know, dear."

Then they were in the upper hall, and Mary bade them wait for a moment, and she went into Lyn's room, closing the door behind her. They stood together, watching the door, and no one of them spoke. They could hear Mary's voice, and Doctor Hilton's, and then Lyn's murmuring faintly. And after a moment, Mary Thurman opened the door for them and they went in.

BETH saw that the blinds had been raised, so that the room was bathed in sunlight. A shaft of it fell upon the headboard of Lyn's bed, and was reflected down upon her face. Lyn's eyes were on them as they came into the room; and her lips moved a little, smilingly.

Doctor Hilton sat beside the bed; Mary Thurman, having opened and closed the door, stood just behind him. Trav and Carl stopped in the middle of the room. But Beth, when she saw Lyn, found herself unable to move at all. She leaned her shoulders against the wall by the door, and stayed there, eyes half closed, listening and watching yet insensible to all emotion.

It was Lyn who spoke first. She said softly: "Hello, Trav." And Trav answered huskily. Then she smiled a little at Carl and told them:

"I'm glad you've—come."

Carl said: "We came right away."

"You don't need to look so—worried, Trav," she murmured. "I'm going to be —all right. Soon."

Trav moved a step forward, toward her. "Sure you are, Lyn."

The old gay note of mockery crept into her tone. "Trav, you're fibbing. I know it. And so do—you."

"Why, Lyn, you'll get well."

"I wont get well, Trav. But I'll—be all right."

Doctor Hilton, they saw, had his finger on her pulse. But Lyn paid no attention to him. She seemed to grope for strength to go on; her words came with an effort; yet they came.

"I wanted to see you, Trav."

"Bless your heart, Lyn. If I'd known—"

"They tried to fool me." She lifted her eyes to Mary Thurman, above and behind her, and smiled. "They—couldn't. Not all the time. I guessed, at last."

Trav hesitated. "Why Beth, I—"

Lyn looked toward Carl Winsor. "Carl, come—here—by me," she bade him. And Carl went forward and stood beside the bed, bending above her. Tears were running down his cheeks; and she saw them and said a little impatiently: "Stop it, Carl. I want to tell you something." He brushed his hand across his eyes like a boy. "You oughtn't to have put Trav in jail."

He said huskily: "I—"

"He didn't kill Curt." he said; and her voice was a little louder, as though there were a relish in the words for her. "He didn't kill Curt at all."

"Lord, I know that, Lyn. He—"

"He just—took Curt out into the country. He was just trying to—help me, Carl."

Carl forgot that he was her friend and remembered only that he was the prosecuting attorney. He leaned forward, suddenly, intent. "Helping you?" he asked.

Her head moved in assent. "Yes, me." Trav stepped to Carl's side, touched his arm. "Don't, Carl," he begged. "She doesn't know. She's feverish. She—"

Lyn said impatiently: "Trav, be still. You—"

Doctor Hilton interrupted. "Lyn, you're getting tired. They'd better go, now."

The girl shook her head with a faint access of strength. "No, Doctor. A little more. . . . He didn't, Carl."

"But how do you—"

"I hit Curt with father's cane, Carl. I was mad at him. I hated him so."

"You? Lyn, you? Why you're not strong enough, Lyn."

No one sought to interrupt them now; even Trav was silenced. Beth, by the door, could not stir from where she stood; she was leaning against the wall, and the room was swimming before her half-closed eyes. Her posture seemed careless, idle, indifferent. Actually she was torn and shaken by a very tempest of emotion. Yet she stood utterly still.

"It's a heavy cane," said Lyn. "I took a good whack at him, Carl. I didn't mean to kill him; but I hated him, anyway."

Carl asked: "Why, Lyn? What did you hate him for?" Trav's arm gripped his arm too late to stop the question.

Lyn did not answer at once; she hesitated, eyes on Carl's; then she looked at Trav, then across the room toward Beth. When her eyes met Beth's the old impish light leaped into them. She had always loved to tease Beth, and to bother her. She hesitated no longer.

"I hated him because—what he did to Beth," she said, in a rush of words.

The room became very still. Into it crept a multitude of sounds from the outer world, but no one heard them. Doctor Hilton sat like a stone man, but looked at Beth. Mary Thurman looked at Beth. Carl Winsor stared down at Lyn, shocked into immobility. Only Trav stirred; he moved back across the room to Beth's side, put his arm through hers in a gesture infinitely protecting.

Lyn herself, having spoken, smiled a little at their silence and their consternation. And then her smile faded as she met Carl's eyes. Her eyes left Carl's; they went past Carl to Beth. They rested on her sister's face.

Her smile was gone; and when she looked at Beth, what faint color there was in her countenance ebbed like a tide. Into her eyes, no longer mischievously dancing, crept a slow sorrow; and while the long seconds ticked away, they were suddenly filled with a very anguish of regret.

Unconsciously, Lyn tried to rise from her pillow. Beth saw repentance, and entreaty in her countenance, entreaty for forgiveness. When she tried to rise, Doctor Hilton held her; but she struggled weakly with him for an instant. And so cried aloud:

"Oh, Sis! Oh, Beth, I—"

Then that flutter of strength which had helped her lift her head was exhausted. She lay still. Mary Thurman hurried them from the room, into the upper hall. They waited there for a little while. Then the doctor came out of the room and shut the door behind him, and looked from one to another. He said nothing.

Beth followed him downstairs; and when she reached the lower hall, Jim Elder came in through the front door. The father stopped at sight of them. His eyes were fixed for a moment on the Doctor; then they wandered, almost listlessly, from face to face.

Beth went to him and put her arms around him. She said slowly: "Lyn's gone, Father."

Old Jim Elder—he would always be "Old Jim Elder" from that day—took off his hat. Then he said, in an humble and apologetic voice:

"Well, I declare, I never thought Lyn would go and do that."

Beth pressed her face against his thin old shoulder and began to cry; and Jim Elder wrapped his arms around her in a desperate embrace, and clung to her like a frightened, lonely child.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME of the sharper tongues in the town said that Trav and Beth might have waited a little while; but Beth was weary, and she was very lonely, and Trav wanted desperately to take care of her. So they were married, almost at once, and went away together; and Beth thought she would never want to come back.

Old Jim Elder was pretty lonesome, with Lyn gone and Beth gone; and because people were sorry for him, he had a readier audience than he had ever had before. One day when Trav and Beth had been perhaps a month away, Fannie Driscoll, the milliner, stopped in his store for a pound of steak and a bunch of celery for her supper table. He fell, as always, to talking of Lyn; and Fannie Driscoll was sufficiently kind of heart to wait a while and listen to him.

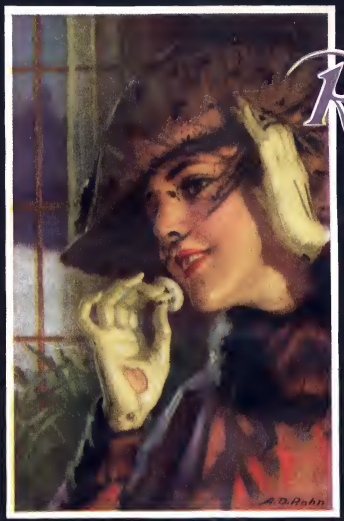
"But there, you know how Lyn was," Elder said at last. "There aint no need of my telling you what she was like, I guess. Wasn't she the happiest young one, though? I never did rightly believe Lyn had grown up. I guess she never did. Now, Beth she was always a grown woman, even when she was a kid."

"I know," said Fannie Driscoll.

Elder chuckled, but there was not the old mirth in his chuckle these days. "I guess you had your times with her, all right," he suggested. "Bought a lot of hats, and things from you. Hard to suit, though, wa'n't she?"

"I never minded," the woman told him. "Every one liked Lyn; and she was so pretty."

"Yes, she was," Lyn's father assented. "Pretty as a picture, as they say. But I never saw a picture could touch Lyn. She liked to look pretty, and I guess that's half of it, don't you think. Al-



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Eye Brow Pencil	Smelling Salts
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mighty particular about clothes and all." He slapped his knee, chuckled again. "I declare, I've seen her fuss around in front of a mirror by the hour."

"She could afford to," the milliner said. "If I were as pretty as Lyn, I'd spend more time before the mirror myself."

"Half the time, too, she didn't know what she wanted," Elder exclaimed. "I've seen her put on a brand new hat and look like a flower in it and all; but she'd tear it off and throw it on the rack and say she hated it. Clothes, too!"

"I know," Mrs. Driscoll agreed. "I know—"

"I remember a coat she got last summer," Jim Elder interrupted. He was never one to wait until another had finished. "A sort of a tan! Brought it home one night, and wore it that evening when she went to ride with Curt Shelling, and never would wear it again. Sold it to Beth." He laughed shrilly. "That's the way Beth got most of her clothes. Buying them from Lyn."

The milliner's eyes had widened with a sudden interest; she forgot to be sorry for Jim Elder, and she asked quickly: "You mean that long tan coat?"

He nodded his head. "Sure. You ordered it for her from out of town, I guess. When I came home for supper that day, she had it on, dancing around, pleased as Punch; and Curt drove up after supper to get her, and she went a-running out. I can see her just as plain. I liked that coat. It never did look so good on Beth."

Fannie Driscoll said slowly: "I saw Beth wearing the coat the next day. But it was she who went riding with Curt that night, wasn't it. Not Lyn."

"Beth?" Elder shook his head. "She never had a bit of use for Curt Shelling. Hated the sight of him. Mostly because he kept Lyn out late when Beth thought she'd ought to be abed, I guess. No, Beth never went anywhere with Curt." He laughed. "I declare, it's funny to think of it."

She asked him intently: "Are you sure? The very night she took the coat home."

He nodded, inattentively. He was entirely blind to her interest, to the excitement in her tone. "Oh, yes, it was Lyn," he insisted. "I remember she said they got caught in a thunder shower in Chillicothe. Made them awful late coming home."

When Fannie Driscoll left him, she had something to think about. She was, as has been said, a gossip; but who is not. She had helped spread that ancient tale; but who had not. Fundamentally, Fannie Driscoll was infinitely kind of heart; and as she thought upon this matter, and remembered Beth's countenance that morning, and realized what Beth had done, her eyes frankly misted. And she said, half to herself: "Why Beth Elder, bless your heart. . . . ."

If Mrs. Driscoll was a gossip, she was at least as ready to spread a pleasant tale as an ugly one. Halfway to her store, she met Kit Wells; and before that afternoon was done, she had told a dozen more. And that dozen another dozen, each and every one. . . . .

When Beth went away with Trav, she thought she would never want to return; and when it was time for them to come home, she had one hot moment of rebellion. "I can't, Trav; I can't!" she cried. "I'll be so terribly unhappy there. Oh, you don't know, Trav. There's nothing so cruel as a little town."

But Fannie Driscoll was a good missionary; and Beth had not been long at home before, in a rising tide of happiness, she realized that if there is nothing so cruel as a little town, there is also nothing half so kind.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT PILOT BUTTE

(Continued from page 63)

The bandit sprang straight forward. One sweep of his wounded hand, and the weapon was knocked from the grasp of the woman and sent crashing through a window. Thereupon he whirled, oblivious of the suddenly brave crowd, seized a newspaper from a lounging chair as he ran, and, wrapping it about the bleeding hand, crashed out upon the rear platform. A vaulting leap which carried him high above the platform rail, a catapulting journey through the air, and he landed in a snowdrift. The lights of the train far down the track indicated that no one as yet had thought to pull the signal-cord.

"Bart Carson wrapped the cold paper tighter about his wounded hand, plunged to his feet, and fighting his way out of the drift, scrambled for the scraggly underbrush beyond. Farther on he came to a stream too swift even for the grip of zero weather, where hardening his nerves against the shock to come, he splashed into the icy current in which there would be left no trail.

A mile, and gasping with the clutch of the cold, he dragged his numbed legs toward the bank, there to stamp his feet and kick them against a scrubby tree in an effort to restore circulation. A dull aching had begun to creep from his injured hand upward toward his elbow, for the bullet still lay embedded in the flesh. There was no blood now for the paper had long since frozen against the wound, sealing it. Doggedly he struck forth, on toward the shadowy hills and black ravines of the far-away country of Pilot Butte, lonely, unfrequented, haunted by death in a hundred forms, but to Bart Carson, a haven of shelter in this time of storm.

He was safe for a space, he knew—safe from humanity. The wind had risen, bringing with it the first flakes of another snowfall. It would be hours before the posse train could reach the drift into which he had plunged from the observation platform. Hours more must follow in useless reconnoitering. And by that time his trail even from the creek where he had emerged would be lost in the thickening snow.

THIS was his country. He knew every foot of it, every gully. Times without number he had ridden it in just such weather as this in search of a lost bunch of cattle, blinded and driven from the home-feeding area by the fury of a mid-winter blizzard. Two miles over the hill, just before the country became a mass of drift-filled gulleys, he knew he would find the first of a series of cattlemen's caches, a small, low-set log cabin, with dry fuel beside the square, sheet-metal camp stove, heavy, coarse clothing and big leather boots—awaiting the cowpuncher who might become lost as were his cattle—canned food, and shelter. Bart Carson took the trail instinctively, his frozen clothing scraping against his body, his numbed feet clumping heavily through the snow, his injured hand, still wrapped in the newspaper, pressed close against his breast, the other hand pressing it firmly in place. For the ache was growing more insistent now, and the puffy tightness of his wrist told of a constantly increasing swelling. Now and then he stopped to shake himself, like some harassed animal—then on again.

A mile—two. He stumbled into the cabin, and with his free hand tore loose the lacings from his shoes. For a while he stamped about against the temptation of a fire and the resulting illumination. But, cold and suffering won; he reached upward to where experience gave him to know he would find matches swinging from a line against the marauding pack-rats. Presently he crouched and with eager eyes watched the blaze gather life and strength.

Warmth! It was worth all the danger that the light of the fire might cause. Comfort! He had not known it for days. Sleep! He groaned, as in turning he struck his injured hand against a chain. That bullet must come out! The throbbing had crept almost to his shoulder now! He filled a pan with snow and set it on the stove. Then, bending close to the blaze, he thawed the newspaper from his wound and began his agonizing task.

It was in vain; only the probes of a surgeon could withdraw that bullet from its resting-place; only a surgeon's skill and antiseptics could stay the infection that he knew had already set in. Slowly he laved the wound, taking painful comfort in the touch of the hot water. Then with a strip of cloth torn from his shirt he bandaged his hand and turned to the warmth of a change of clothing and the old sheepskin jacket hanging on a hook near the bunk.

He was ready for food now, and he devoured it eagerly—the canned provisions left there in the autumn for the lost men of winter. Then he prepared to go, to travel onward, through the night in his circular trip back to the railroad.

Carefully he hid the clothing he had discarded. He bent to cast the blood-stained paper on the flames. As he opened the stove door, the firelight gleaming on his tired, pain-lined face. He raised the paper—his jaw dropped, and he knelt there staring at the sheet. A name in the headline, a short dispatch from San Francisco; that was all, but it

turned the world back for Bart Carson. Cheated!

So that was why she had been on that eastbound train! That was why her eyes were red from weeping, why the courage had sprung to life within her, why she had shot him! Cheated! He read the dispatch tonelessly:

San Francisco, Dec. 23: Walter A. Walker, 37, formerly of Rawlins, Wyo., was struck and instantly killed by an automobile here today while crossing a street. Failure to hear the horn of the motorist was responsible for the accident.

And beneath it was the "office note:"

Walker was the husband of Mrs. Lou Walker, who achieved much notoriety several months ago by inducing Bart Carson, the train-robber, who now is terrorizing Wyoming railroads, to confess. On the night of his escape from the penitentiary, Mrs. Walker was almost successful in effecting his recapture, but Carson made his get-away just as the sheriff arrived. She prepared to leave for San Francisco immediately upon receipt of the telegram announcing her husband's death.

Cheated! Tricked again—beaten, harried, outwitted! Slowly, Bart Carson stuffed the paper into the fire and watched it burn, watched it until it had become only a black, crinkled mass amid the embers. Then heavily, wearily, he rose and stalked from the cabin back into the night.

The snow had ceased falling. The sky had cleared, and the stars were shining through the branches of the few pines about the little shack. Dully Bart Carson wondered what they resembled, then after a long time he realized. "Candles," he muttered, "on a Christmas tree! Well—I've got my present!"

And he stood for a long moment staring at the night—the vacant gaze of a beaten man. He had stolen for a single purpose, that he might gain the money with which to track an enemy. In the light of what he had read, the romance of his quest had faded. The future held nothing now; he was only a lonely, broken, cheated cowpuncher, racked with pain, gaping out into a world of tangled, snow-laden pines and underbrush, mottled hills, drift-filled ravines—and a spot which moved in the distance!

THERE was no need for conjecture. The smoke, the faint lights of a fire, visible for miles, had done their work. A moment the convict stood undecided. Then, a flash of the old recklessness flooding over him, he turned and reëntered the cabin. An hour later a sheriff left his horse a hundred feet away and creeping soundlessly to the little snow-banked window, peered within. On the bunk he descried the outline of a human form. It was enough. He went to the door and opened it carefully, only to halt.

"That you, Price?"

The tone was sleepy and petulant. The sheriff hesitated. That was not his name—and he had never heard Bart Carson's voice. Perhaps—a mistake—

"No!" He blurted it. "It's Sheriff Henry. Who are you?"

"Quit yer kiddin', Price. I aint feelin' set for it. Gimme a drink, will you?"

The sheriff moved closer to the bunk. For a second his gun hand dropped. A cry! A thudding kick as a heavily booted foot shot forth; the gun clattered to the floor as the sheriff doubled from the blow in his stomach; a second more, and he was prostrate, Bart Carson standing over him with the six-gun, calmly regarding him in the dying light of the fire. A grin came to the cowpuncher's pale lips as his gaze caught the glint of handcuffs protruding from a pocket. He forced his bandaged hand slowly forward, and hooking the manacles with a crooked finger, dangled them appraisingly.

"I reckon you meant these here little trinkets for me?" There was almost a return of his old boyish insouciance.

"Yeh, I reckon they were for me. I reckon I'd better corral 'em—we might meet again."

His uninjured hand shoved the revolver into one pocket of the sheepskin coat, the handcuffs into another. Then he whirled; the door slammed behind him; a scurrying figure, he showed for a moment black against the snow as he raced to the sheriff's horse, swung to the saddle and was gone.

His eyes were fever bright as he rode along, guiding the horse through the lesser drifts naturally, instinctively, half slouched in the saddle, riding easily and gracefully. Horseback again—after months of longing; horseback again in the bleak country where he had ridden in the old glad days of the free life, when shadows in the distance meant only cattle

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Thousands of beautiful women have learned how to protect their skin against the cold that dries and chaps, the dust that flies into the pores and coarsens them; how to keep the skin free from a wretched glisten and make the powder stay on; how to keep the skin clear.

How to protect your skin from cold and dust

Cold weather whips the moisture out of your face, leaves it rough and red. You can prevent this by supplying the needed moisture. Your skin requires a special cream that meets this need, a cream that gives your skin the moisture it needs without leaving a trace of oil on the face. Pond's Vanishing Cream is made entirely without oil; the moment you apply it, it vanishes, never to reappear in an unpleasant shine. This delicate cream has an ingredient especially designed to soften the skin and offset the parching, roughening effects of cold and wind. Before going out always rub a bit of Pond's Vanishing Cream into the face and hands. Now the cold cannot dry or chap your skin, the dust cannot injure the pores. In this way your skin will be satiny all the winter through.

By heeding another little secret you can keep the powder on two or three times as long as ever before. Women who understand how to bring out their hidden beauty, realize that powder couldn't be expected to stick to the dry skin and stay on. The best of powders needs a base to hold it and to keep it smooth.

How to make the powder stay on

Here again you need a greaseless cream. Pond's Vanishing Cream is especially effective for this purpose. Before powdering, rub a little Pond's Vanishing Cream into the skin. Then apply the powder. See how smoothly the powder goes on, how soft and natural it looks. Skin specialists say that such a powder base protects and benefits the skin.

How to keep your skin clear—the pores clean

The secret of keeping your skin looking clear and vigorous is the thorough cleansing of the pores regularly. For this your skin needs an entirely different cream—a cream *with* an oil base. Pond's Cold Cream was designed especially for this purpose. It contains just the amount of oil to work down into the pores where the dust has become deeply embedded. This oil dissolves the dusty particles that clog the pores, and leaves the skin clean. Before you go to bed, and whenever you have been out in the dust or wind, rub Pond's Cold Cream into the pores of the skin. Then wipe it off with a soft cloth—when you see the dirt that comes out you will realize how much cleaner your skin has become.

You can get a jar or tube of these two creams at any drug or department store. Every normal skin needs *both* creams.

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Sample of Pond's Cold Cream

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A 5c sample of Pond's Vanishing Cream
A 5c sample of Pond's Cold Cream

Name.....

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City..... State.....

and not a pursuing posse. Riding once more—but to what?

Gradually he lost the thrill of the moving animal beneath him. He felt once more the pain of that wound—almost forgotten in the temporary joy of being again in the saddle. It had been a dream; his free days were over. He was a hunted thing now, his own objective gone, the money which he had combatted the dangers of a railroad's every fighting resource to procure, useless—a mere weight in his pockets. For he knew that sooner or later the man he had left behind in the cabin would fight his way back to his companions. There would be a fresh horse and a new trail—and pursuit again.

QUICKLY, almost spasmodically, Bart Carson dug his heels into the flanks of his mount and veered its course toward the dim distant shadows which marked the wildest, most desolate section of Pilot Butte. There in the ravines, and amoug rocky hills and close-grown underbrush might lie a chance. There too—Bart Carson smiled grimly with the knowledge that the slopes of Pilot Butte, where one victim of the dead Walker still struggled against enveloping adversity, soon would shelter another—and that other himself! He pressed the horse to greater speed.

Dawn broke, to reveal a slouched figure nodding over the back of a swaying horse. By noon the bleak outline of Pilot Butte was nearer. Sunset—horse and rider were in the shadow now. Then, without warning, the horse coughed, stumbled and fell, the rider sprawling at one side and groaning pitifully with the pain of the impact against an arm swollen to such proportions that it stretched the coat-sleeve which bound it. Hazily, dizzily, the man crawled to his feet and floundered toward the struggling beast.

"Up boy!" he begged. Then a gasping sigh. "His leg's broke—I can't—"

Hesitating, almost fearful, he looked about him and drew the revolver. He aimed, turned away his head. A booming report, thrown back in hollow, mocking reverberations from the hills and gulches. Then a figure staggered on—alone.

Miles it seemed—furlongs in reality. A stumbling exit from a clump of underbrush, and Bart Carson drew himself up in surprise. He had floundered onto a roadway; not fifty feet away, a man was plodding toward him on horseback—

"Merry Christmas!" It was the "star route" mail-carrier. Carson pulled the sharp, cold air cuttingly into his lungs.

"Christmas eve!" he muttered. Then louder: "Merry Christmas!"

But the other man said nothing more. His eyes were centered on that bandaged, telltale hand; the rowels of his spurs had cut deep into his horse. Bart Carson reeled into the brush again—the first telephone would carry the news, and horses could travel swiftly on that road! More, he knew that by now every rancher had been made a deputy, every cowpuncher a man appointed in the service of the law, and hot for the advertised reward! He ran, aimlessly, how far he never knew, to stop at last, panting and gasping, the pull of blood pounding through his swollen arm and wrist. His head ached—but not as much as that arm. But not even the arm itself ached half as much as something else which Bart Carson never had felt before—his heart.

Alone on the top of a knoll, he stood looking down into a little valley and at the ramshackle house it held. He recognized it—the home of the woman whose husband Walker had been, deserted for another, herself now a kindred spirit in a world of enemies. Smoke feathered from the chimney. In the window a light gleamed, faintly against the dull glow of the fading winter sunset. There was warmth and—

Water! Hot water in which to bathe the blackening wrist and angry, swollen arm. Hot water and poultices and temporary surcease from pain. And there was no telephone—to send a warning.

But Bart Carson shook his head.

"She's a woman. It might scare—"

A start! Something had moved in the underbrush at his right. A hand went to the gun, halted there, then dropped. A great, dark object was moving through the snow, head stretched forward, natural timidity forgotten in the call of preservation—a starving elk, following the scent of hay even into a ranch yard. And Bart Carson watched, watched while the emaciated beast clattered through the stream at the foot of the hill, edged through the half-open gate and to the haymow, watched as a woman came forth, patted the hunger-tamed beast, pulled forth fresh hay for it and returned to the house. Bart Carson waited no longer. Like the starved elk, he too went forward.

TIMIDLY, almost haltingly, he passed through the gate and approached the door. He knocked—then stood hesitant as the woman faced him in the lamplight. At last—

"I—I guess you know who I am."

She held the lamp closer.

"I've seen you somewhere. But I can't—"

A child, a girl of perhaps seven, had come to the door and was peeking from behind her mother's skirts. The bandit looked down at her, and smiled. Then he faced the woman again.

"I'm Bart Carson. I guess you've heard of me?"

"Oh!"

"I'm hurt. I followed that elk down here. Me'n and him's a lot alike. Can I come in—please?"

There was a moment of indecision. The child, bolder now, edged forward and stared up at him.

"Why don't you let him in, Mamma?"

The woman drew back. The way was open. Bart Carson stepped within and closed the door. The woman set the lamp on the table. The bandit faced her.

"I reckon we kind of belong to the same brand, Mrs. Walker," he began. "I know about you."

"You?"

"Yeh." The old drawl had come back into his voice. "I went up to the pen the first time to save your husband. That is—I thought he was the brother of—of that other woman."

She didn't answer—merely stood studying him through the glow of the lamp.

"He's dead," he said. "Got killed in San Francisco."

A wave of relief seemed to pass over the prematurely aged face.

"It's wrong to say it," came at last. "But I'm glad. He never—" She stopped. "You can't stay here—"

"No." Bart Carson forced forward his blackened hand, the swollen flesh protruding between the interstices of the bandage. "No—if I could just have a little hot water and some arnica if you've got it—and a little grub. Then I'll—go on."

She turned to the cook stove without a word, and Bart Carson sank into a chair, soon to feel the relief of hot water and a soothing lotion. Then as he bound the wound with fresh cloths and the woman busied herself with the preparation of food, the child slid between his knees and looked up at him.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"Me?" Bart Carson smiled down at her. "Don't you know who I am? I'm Sandy Claus."

"You?" She sniffed. "Where's your whiskers."

"Shaved 'em off about a week ago, but they're comin' back again. Here,"—he caught her hand and raised it to his face, —"feel 'em."

"They're awful scratchy!"

"Sure they are!" Warmth and companionship were having their effect. The fatigue was fading—more and more the smile was broadening. "Sure as shootin' —but you ought to see 'em when they're all grown out."

"Carrie!" the woman called from the stove, "pull down the curtains."

The child obeyed, and Bart Carson looked up gratefully.

"Thanks."

The woman only nodded; the child was back at the stranger's knee.

"How'd you get hurt—if you're Santa Claus?"

"That's jisst it!" Bart Carson leaned forward. "My reindeers ran away on me, the whole caboodle of 'em, and I sprained my wrist tryin' to hold 'em in. It was just a fresh-broke team," he explained, "and awful skittish."

"Honest?" the child's eyes were wide with belief now. The man grinned and twisted her curls with a finger.

"What're you going to get for Christmas?"

"Nothing."

"Sure?" Bart cocked his head. "Sure now—" Then he leaned closer. "Rec-'lect, I'm Sandy Claus. What do you want?"

A finger went to childish lips. There was a fidgety moment of thought. Then:

"Something for Mamma."

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"What?"

"I don't know—something. She aint got anything."

Bart Carson's eyes became strangely thought'ul.

"What's the matter with this fine house here and this ranch and—"

"We're going away from here."

"Carrie!"

But Bart Carson raised his hand in remonstrance, and the woman was silent. He turned once more to the child.

"Why?" he whispered, and nodding toward the mother. The child's lips sought his ear.

"I don't know. She's going into town and work and—"

Bart nodded.

"Yeh. I understand. And what do you want for yourself?"

"Just a doll."

"How'd you like to have a lot of 'em? That'd go to sleep and ever'thing and—"

"What's that?" The woman stepped to the window, pulled back the shade and stood peering out.

"Where are they?" The child had crawled to his knee. Bart laughed—apparently forgetful of the woman at the window.

"Oh, I'll have to get 'em. Them blamed reindeers just took ever'thing when they cut loose. But we'll fix that all right."

"There are three men just coming down the hill on horseback," the woman was saying. "They're headed for the house."

"Reach in this pocket over here, honey. I can't on account of my hand." Bart still disregarded the warning. "Feel something in there?"

"Yes." The child brought out the handcuffs. Bart spread them, then released the safety.

"Be careful of 'em—don't snap 'em shut, 'cause they wont come open—"

"Didn't you hear me?" The woman was beside him. "There's three men—"

"I heard." Bart Carson looked up with a smile. Then:

"Listen, honey," he explained to the child. "See if you can remember this: 'I caught him. I claim the reward.'"

"I caught him," came the childish answer, "I claim the reward."

The thin hand of a woman tugged hard at his sleeve.

"It aint right—" she began, but Bart Carson's smile halted her.

He turned to the child again and placed his strong wrist close to the swollen one. "Put them there bracelets over my wrists, right there, honey. That's it. Now press on 'em until they click. Harder—there!" His face went momentarily white with the pain—but his smile did not fade. "Now listen. Ol' Sandy Claus has to do things in a kind of funny way. If you're going to get that great big present I was telling you about, you'll have to act just like I tell you. Understand?"

She bobbed her head. Bart Carson rose. Behind him the woman watched in silent tensity. The bandit shook his shoulders as though to rid them from a great load which had burdened them for a long time.

"Fine!" His voice boomed cheerily. "Now take hold of that chain—right between my wrists; that's it—only be easy, that left hand's powerful sore. Now we'll go outside and meet—some friends of mine. And don't forget what I told you to say. 'I caught him. I claim the reward.'" The rote was repeated.

"That's right," Bart Carson pulled a deep breath. "That's right, honey. Come on."

The door opened. Together they went forth, to the night and the snow—and to the three men who were opening the gate.

SNOW-BLIND

(Continued from page 58)

CHAPTER VIII

HUGH came up from his hiding-place like a man risen from the dead. They helped him to his chair before the fire; they poured coffee down him, rubbed his blue, stiff hands. He sat looking up pitifully, his eyes turning from one to the other of them like those of a beaten hound. All the masterfulness, all the bombast, had been crushed out of him; even the splendor of his flaring hazel eyes was dimmed—they were hollow, hopeless, old. For a long time he did not speak, only drank the coffee and submitted himself meekly to their ministrations; then at last he touched Sylvie with a trembling hand.

"Sylvie," he whispered brokenly.

"Hugh, dear, you're safe now; please speak; please laugh; you frighten me more than anything— Why is he so silent, Pete? Bella, tell me what's wrong?"

"He's been crouching there on the damp, cold ground for hours," said Bella, "not knowing what might happen." Her voice trembled; she passed a hand as shaking as her voice across Hugh's bent head. "You're safe now. You're safe now," she murmured.

Hugh's teeth chattered, and he bent closer to the fire.

"Ugh—it was cold down there," he said, "like a gravel! Sylvie, come here." Just an echo of his old imperious fashion it was—though the look was that of a beggar for alms. "Give me those warm little hands of yours." She knelt close to him, rubbed his hands in hers, looking up at Pete with a tremulous mouth that asked for advice.

"He'll be all right in a minute," said Pete. "You talk to him, Sylvie."

"Yes, you talk—you talk. Do you remember how I talked to you when you were afraid of the bears—ah!" He drew her head savagely against his breast, folded his arms about it, stroked the hair. "Sylvie! Is it all right? Can it be—the same?"

"Yes, yes, why not?"

"Were you frightened?"

"Not after the first. After they had described you, I knew that they were looking for the wrong man, and then I felt all right. I didn't know—poor Hugh! —how cold and cramped you were. What a shame that you took a false alarm and hid yourself! I don't believe there would have been a bit of danger if you'd stayed out. They'd never even heard of you, I suppose."

Her talk, so gay, so strangely at cross purposes with reality, was like a vivifying wine to him. The color came back into his face; a wild sort of relief lighted his eyes.

"Then it didn't occur to you, Sylvie, that that brute might have been me—that the men might, after all, have been describing me—eh?" he asked, risking all his hope on one throw.

She laughed and lifting herself a little in his arms, touched her soft mouth to his. "But Hugh, you told me your story, don't you remember? And it is gloriously, mercifully different from Rutherford's."

He put his chin on his fist and stared over her head into the fire. She felt the slackening of his embrace and searched his arms with questioning fingers. "Why are you cross, Hugh? Did I say anything to hurt you? Let's forget Ham Rutherford. I wonder where he is, poor horrible wretch!"

"Dead—dead—dead," Hugh muttered. "Dead and buried—or he ought to be. Oh, God!" he groaned, and crushed her close against him, "I can't ask you to love me, Sylvie—to marry me. Now you know what it is like to love a man who must be afraid of other men. What right have I to ask any woman to share my life?"

"But Hugh—if I love you?"

"And you do love me?" he asked.

"Yes."

He laughed out at that, stood up, drawing her to stand beside him. "Bella—Pete," he called, "do you hear—you two?" He beckoned them close, laid a hand on them, drew first one, then the other towards Sylvie. "She loves me. She sees me as I am!" Suddenly he put his grizzled head on Sylvie's shoulder and wept. She felt her way back to the chair, sat down, and drew him to kneel with his arms about her, her head bent over him, her small hands caressing him. She looked to Pete for help, for explanations, but she could not see his pale, tormented face.

After a while Hugh was calm and sat at her feet, smoking. But he was unnaturally silent, and his eyes brooded upon her haggardly.

IT was several days before Hugh regained his old vigor and buoyancy; then it came to life like an Antaeus flung down to mother earth. His hour of doubt, of self-distrust, of compunction, was whirled away like an uprooted tree on the flood of his happiness. He flung reason and caution to the four winds; he dared Bella or Pete to betray him, he played his heroic part with boisterous energy: his tongue wagged like a tipsy troubadour's. What an empty canvas, a palette piled with rainbow tints, a fistful of clean brushes would be to an artist long starved for his tools, such was Sylvie's mind to Hugh. She was darkness for him to scrawl upon with light: she was the romantic ear to his romantic

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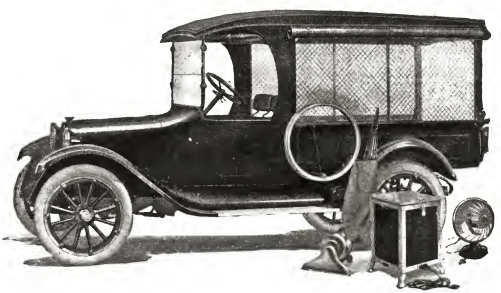

tongue; she was the poet reader for his gorgeous imagery. He had not only the happiness of the successful lover, but even more, the happiness of the successful creator. What he was creating was the Hugh that might have been.

With Sylvie clinging to his hand, he now went out singing—the three of them together, great Hugh and happy artist Hugh all but welded into one man for her and for her love. Those were splendid days, days of fantastic happiness. Hugh's joy, his sense of freedom, gave him a tenfold gift of fascination.

Yet one day—one of those dim, moist spring days more colorful to Hugh's hearth than any of his days—there cut into his consciousness like a hard thin edge, a sense of a little growing change in Sylvie. It had been there, the change, slightly, dimly there, ever since the sheriff's visit. It was not that she doubted Hugh,—such a suspicion would have struck him instantly aware and awake,—but that she had become in some way uncertain of herself—restless, depressed, afraid. And it was always his love-making that brought the reaction, a curious delicate inner recoil, at first faint and slight, so dry beneath the threshold of her consciousness, that in the blind glory of his self-intoxication he missed it altogether—might, indeed, have gone on missing it, as she would have gone on ignoring or repressing it, if it had not been for their kiss on the mountaintop.

THIS was one of Hugh's madnesses; he would take Sylvie up a mountain and show her his kingdom, show her himself as lord of the wilderness. He had been there before many times, to the top of their one mountain, always under protest from Bella and Pete. It was a bare rock exposed to half the world and all the eyes of Heaven; and for a man in hiding, a man who loved yet whose name was carved above a grave, it was a very target for untoward accident. Some trader or trapper down in the forest might look up and behold the misshapen figure black and bold, against the sky. Yet there was never so mighty a Hugh as when he stood there defiant and alone. Now he wanted Sylvie to sense that tragic magnificence.

So they went out, Hugh's arm about her, as strange a pair of lovers as ever tempted the spring—the great, scarred, uncouth gray cripple and the slim unseeing girl, groping and clinging, absolutely shut off from any contact with reality as long as this man should interpret creation for her. Sylvie turned back to wave at Pete, whom they had left standing in the doorway.

"I'll be hunting for you if you stay out late," he called—to which Hugh shouted back: "You hunting for us! Don't fancy I can't take care of this child, myself."

"Both of them blind!" Pete muttered, to himself in answer.

They were moving rather slowly across the rough sagebrush-covered flat, and presently Hugh led Sylvie into the fragrant silence of the forest trail. To her it was all scent and sound. Hugh whispered to her what this drumming meant and that chattering and that sudden rattle almost under their feet.

They had to go slowly, Sylvie touching the trees here and there, along her side of the trail. He lifted her over logs and fallen trees, and sometimes, before he set her down, he kissed her. Then Sylvie would turn her head shyly, and he would laugh. Thus they made slow, sweet progress.

"I see more in the woods with your eyes than I ever could with my own," she told him.

"I have eyes for us both," he answered. "That's why God gave me the eyes I have, because He knew the use I'd be making of them."

"Is this the trail Pete follows to the trading-station?" she asked. "I wish you could take me there, Hugh, or—would you let him take me?"

He tightened his arm. "I can't bear to have you out of my sight," he answered.

She sighed. "It seems so queer that they haven't tried to find me. Do you suppose they think that I'm dead? Did Pete mail my letter to Miss Foby, I wonder?"

"What does Miss Foby matter," he asked jealously. "What does anything matter to you but—me? Here we leave Pete's trail and I take you straight up the mountain, dear one. We'll rest now and then; and when we get to the rocky place just below the top, I'll carry you. Are you happy? I always feel as if my heart melted with the snow when spring comes—a wild free tumbling feeling of softness and escape."

She sighed. "Yes—if only I could see. I miss my eyes out of doors more than in the house. Does snow-blindness usually last so long? Perhaps it was the nervous shock and the exhaustion as much as the glare. I am sure it all will just go suddenly some day. I stare and stare sometimes, and I feel as if I might see—almost."

He frowned. "You mustn't miss anything when you have me, Sylvie. Do you suppose I miss anything, now that I have you. My career, my old friends, my old life, my liberty, the world? That for everything!" He snapped his fingers. "If only I have you."

"You love me so much," she answered, as though she were oppressed, "it frightens me sometimes."

"When you are wholly mine—" he began. "Well, until we get to the top of the mountain; there I'll tell you all my plans. They're as big and beautiful as the world. I feel, with your love, that I can move mountains. I can fashion the world close to my heart's desire. We'll leave this blank spot and go to some lovely warm, smiling land where the water is turquoise and the sky aquamarine—"

"And perhaps my sight will come back." It was almost a prayer.

He did not answer. They had come to a sharp sudden ascent. He took her in his arms, scrambled across the tumbled rocks and set her down beside him on the great granite crest that rose like the edge of a gray wave. The clean wild wind smote her and shook her and pressed back her hair and dress. She clung to him.

"Is it steep? Are we on the edge of a cliff, Hugh? I'm not afraid!"

"We're on the very top of the world," he told her breathlessly, his voice filled with a sense of awe, "our world, Sylvie. I'm master here. There's no greater mind than my own in all that dark green circle. It's pines, pines, pines to the edge of the earth, Sylvie, an ocean of purple and green—silver where the wind moves, treading down, like Christ walking on the water. And the sky is all gray, like stone."

"Can you see the flat, the cabin?"

"The flat, yes—a round green spot, way down there behind us. The cabin? No. That's in a hollow, you may be sure, well out of sight. I'm an outlaw, dearest, remember. There's a curve of the river, like a silver elbow. And Sylvie, up above us, an eagle is turning and turning in a huge circle. He thinks he's king. But Sylvie, it's our world—yours and mine. This is our marriage."

She drew back. "What do you mean?" "Haven't you a feeling for such images? We'll go before a parson—don't be afraid. Would I frighten you, Sylvie? I love you too much for that. Why, Sylvie, what's wrong?"

When his lips, clinging and compelling, had left hers she bent her face to his arm and began to cry.

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know. . . . But please don't kiss me like that, not like that!"

He released her and half turned, but her hands instantly hunted for him, found him and clung.

"Hugh, don't be angry. Be patient with me. Try to understand. Perhaps it's because I am in the dark. I do love you. I do. But you must wait. Soon it will be spring for me, too. You don't understand? You're angry? But I can't explain it any better."

"You can lay your hand on me," he said heartsely. "God knows I'm real enough." And he thought so! "My love for you is here like a granite block, Sylvie."

"I know. It is the one thing in the darkness that is real. I know you—your love, splendid and strong and brave. Wait just a little. Hugh. Try to be patient. Suddenly it will all come right. The fog will lift. Then we'll really be on top of the mountain." She laughed, but rather sadly.

"I will always hate this mountain top," he said. "I used to love it. I was so close to happiness, and now you've snatched it out of my reach." He drew in sobbing breaths.

"No—it's myself I'm keeping from happiness, not you," she answered. "I know it will come right, but you must not hurry me. Dear Hugh, be patient." She found his hand and raised it, a dead weight, to her lips. "Please be patient. Let's go down out of this wind. I can't see your world, and I'm cold."

So, in silence—a dull gray silence—Hugh lead her down into the valley.

CHAPTER IX

THEY came down the hill rapidly and carelessly. Hugh, stung by pain and anger, threw himself over the rocks, and Sylvie was too proud to show her timidity or to ask for help. She crept and climbed up and down, saving herself with groping hand, letting one foot test the distances

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before she put the other down. At last the rattle of his progress sounded so far below that she quavered: "Aren't you going to wait for me, Hugh?"

He stopped short, and for a moment watched her silently; then, smitten by the pathos of her progress,—a little child, she seemed, against the mountain toppling so close-behind her,—he came swinging up to her and gave her his hand.

"You *need* me, anyway, don't you?" he asked with a tender sort of roughness.

She couldn't answer because she didn't want him to know that he had made her cry. She kept her face turned from him and hurried along at his side.

"Why do you go so fearfully fast?" she was forced at last to protest.

"Because I want to get down from this accursed mountain. I want to get down into the woods again where I was happy."

"Hugh,"—she pulled at his arm,—"you are only a child after all."

"Perhaps."

"Well—" she stopped. "Go home alone, then. I'll be no worse off than when you found me the first time. Pete will come out and hunt for me. He has a far sweeter temper than you, Hugh, and doesn't think only of himself."

He swung away at that, resting his hand against a big rock to clear a hole; then, seeing her about to step down into it, he pivoted back, caught her up bodily in his arms, and laughing, ran with her down the hill, bounding over the rocks, leaping over the crevices, while she clung to him in fright.

"You silly child!" he cried. "This is the way I'll take you home. Now I've got you, and I'll punish you well, too." She clung to him and begged him to stop. She was frightened by their rash plunging progress, by his speech. She struggled. "Let me down. I wont be carried like this against my will. Hugh, let me down!"

"All right!" He fairly flung her from him on a grassy spot. He was about to leave her when a rushing rattle sounded above them. The boulder he had twice used to turn his own weight upon was charging down the hillside! Just in time he caught Sylvie, threw her to one side and fell prone, helpless, in the path of the slide. He cried out, flinging up his arm and, as though his cry had been of magic, the boulder faltered and stopped. A root half-buried just above his body had made a hollow and a ledge; it had rocked the rolling fragment back up on its haunches, so to speak, and balanced it to a stop.

"Hugh! Hugh!" sobbed Sylvie. "What was it? Are you hurt?"

She crept up to him.

"No," Hugh told her, breathing heavily. "It was a rolling rock."

"How did you stop it? You must be hurt, crushed, bruised."

"My arm's wrenched—not badly." He had in fact wrenched it slightly.

"Your poor arm! You were so quick, so strong. You didn't think of your own life. And I've been so cruel. Hugh, Hugh, kiss me."

Hugh took his reward, none the less sweet to his strange nature, in that it was only potentially earned. And joy, like a warm flood, crept up again to his heart. He sat on the hillside and held his small love close. One of his arms moved stiffly, and he groaned a little. She rubbed it for him.

"You'd better come home and let Bella and me fix it. It may be badly hurt. You're sure it isn't broken?" she asked.

"Quite sure."

"Lean on me! I'll help you down. You can tell me where to step."

"Nonsense," he laughed, his very blood singing warm with relief. "A strained arm wont hurt my walking apparatus. We had a lover's quarrel, didn't we? And the boulder was peace-maker. Bless the boulder!"

"Don't joke, dear. You saved my life at the risk of your own. Are you always doing insane, generous, dangerous things? Think if you had been—" she shivered.

"Do you suppose my life is worth anything to me without yours, Sylvie?" He bent his head and kissed her again, but he had learned his lesson, and there was restraint and timidity in that kiss.

"The sun's come out," cried Sylvie.

"Yes, it's splendidly bright. There's a clean slit in the sky; there at the western edge the dark gray cap is being lifted inch by inch, the way a boy lifts his cap to see the butterfly he's caught. All's gold behind it, Sylvie, burning gold. The rocks are like bright copper. And the pines, they're incandescent, phosphorescent green—"

"If I could only see it!"

DOWN near the pines a tall, still figure stood watching them. It was Pete, and his smile, usually so frank and sweet, had now a sardonic twist. As they came down out of their sun into his shadow, he spoke with a drag to his syllables.

"Hullo," he said. "That was a narrow escape you had, you two!"

The voice might have been a pistol-shot for the start it gave to Hugh.

"Why, it's Pete. We must be late, Pete," Sylvie called joyously. "Did you see how Hugh saved my life? He threw himself down before the rock and stopped it. He's hurt his poor arm. The great stone was right on top of us, and he threw me out of the way and set his own strength against it. I couldn't see the rock, Pete, but it felt like a mountain."

"It was big enough to smash you both," said Pete. He looked at Hugh, whose eyes glared in a strained, shamed face. The older man moved his head nervously; he opened his lips and closed them again. It was easy to understand the travail of his mind, unwilling to forego the imaginary bit of heroism, and yet abashed by the boy's awareness of the lie.

Pete gave one short laugh; then, springing suddenly across a fallen tree that separated them, he caught Sylvie up into his arms.

"You can't carry her with a wrenched arm," he said, half gayly, half tauntingly, "and at the best rate she can go, it will be night before we get her home. I'm strong. I'll carry her myself."

Sylvie laughed protesting that she was being treated like a doll, and resigned herself to Pete's swift, smooth stride. It was as though she were skimming through space, so quietly did his moccasined feet press the pine-needled earth, so exquisitely did his young strength save her from any jar. He whistled softly through his teeth as he ran in long swift strides. And as he did not speak to her, she lay silent, yet strangely peaceful and happy. Hugh was left far behind. The forest fragrance moved cool and resinous against her face.

"I feel as if we could go on and on forever," she said with a sigh, "forever and ever and ever."

"We will," he answered through his teeth, hardly pausing in his whistling for the odd reply. "We will."

But for all that, he set her gently and suddenly down, and she knew that she stood again at the cabin door.

"Pete, where are you?" she asked.

But he had disappeared, still in utter silence, like a genie whose task is done.

CHAPTER X

"WHAT did he say to you? What did he say to you?" asked Hugh again and again. Sylvie laughed at him.

"He didn't say anything—hardly a word, except that he pretended he was going on forever. He said: 'We will, we will.' That's absolutely all, Hugh. Don't be so silly. What *could* he say?"

"I don't know," Hugh answered. "He might have made fun of me."

"Fun of you! After saving my life! I'd have boxed his ears! No, no, Peter wouldn't do that. He's afraid of me."

She was so proud of this that Hugh, perforce, laughed. It was after supper, and they had walked a little way from the cabin. They were standing just above the river on a little hillock topped with three big pines. The dusk was thick about them; stars pricked the soft sky. Sylvie was wrapped in Hugh's coat, and they were linked by their hands hanging at their sides. Everyone but Sylvie had been very silent at supper, but she had told her story of Hugh's heroism again and again until finally even Hugh had grumbled at "the fuss."

"What makes you think anyone could be afraid of you?" He smiled down at the small dark head which did not reach his shoulder.

"He's afraid I'll kiss him. Don't grip my hand that way; it hurts. You couldn't be jealous of a boy! Besides, I *don't* kiss him any more. I never have kissed him but that once—no, twice, when I told him that I was going to be his sister."

"You told him that?" Hugh's voice had an odd anxiety. "How did he take it?"

"I don't think he was very enthusiastic. He loves you so much, Hugh; you are the very heart of his universe, and I suppose he is jealous of your love for me. Since then he's avoided me and is as dumb as a fish when I talk to him. I think his body has outgrown his mind, Hugh."

"Perhaps. I don't know," he answered.

"And Bella is so silent too. Hugh, it must have been a lonely life for you before I came. Those two people, though they love you so much, are not companionable. I think, Hugh, that they aren't able to understand you. You are so brilliant, and they are so dull; you are so articulate and they are so dumb; you are so warm, so quick to see, to feel, to sympathize, while they are so slow and so cold. Dear Hugh, I'm glad I came.

MISS CINDERELLA

By Beatrice Imboden

THE four o'clock stillness had descended on Room Number Seven. But in a far corner the little teacher still bent over her desk, though by all the laws of pedagogy it was the hour when even the most conscientious of little teachers might relax.

Occasionally the bumping of erasers by Billy Bowman, successful contestant for the high honor of erasing the board, or the swish of the janitor's broom in the hall were heard, but the little teacher worked on unheeding.

Truly an edifying sight, had principal or visiting supervisor come to the door.

Had the visitor been so impolite as to look over the little teacher's shoulder, however, he might have been surprised. For the problem was this:

Board and room rent	$40
Carfare and lunch	10
Lectures, professional magazines, etc.	5
Money sent to Mother	10
Savings for Summer expenses	15
	$80

"Leaving only $20 a month for clothes and extras! And people seem to dress so in the city!" sighed the little teacher. "Poor thing, you thought you had come into a fortune last fall when you got appointed to a city school at $100 a month. Guess you should have stayed in Millersville, even if it was poky."

At this point Billy Bowman's cheerful treble broke the stillness.

"I had a fight last night, Miss Robbins," he announced calmly.

The little teacher started. Then horrified disapproval overspread her face.

"Billy!" she began.

"Oh, it wasn't on the school grounds, so you won't have to tell the principal."

"But," the little teacher protested, "you shouldn't fight anywhere."

"Well, it was this way," explained the unruffled Billy. "Jimmy Dawson said Miss Warner was the best-looking teacher in the school, and I said no, you were. He kept on saying it so we had a fight, and I licked him."

Billy paused for breath. "And I told Uncle Bob, and he said, 'That's the boy! Always take up the gauntlet for your lady love.' An' he asked what you looked like.

"I told him you had big eyes and brown hair with little gold lights on top of the crinkles. Then he said, 'Shake, old man. I see you have the family taste.' And he said he was coming to visit the school."

Another stop for breath, Billy wondering why the little teacher's cheeks were so pink and her head so averted.

"Mother said, 'Indeed, you shan't go and annoy the young lady!' But *she's* coming some day."

Mrs. Bowman speedily made a friendly visit, beginning with "I've heard so much of you, Miss Robbins. My small son is your ardent admirer!" and ending with "Won't you come to dinner, Friday, just the family, with Billy included, of course?"

And the little teacher drew from the month's allowance ten precious dollars for a chiffon blouse. The old suit would have to do, with pressing. Billy proudly escorted her home Friday evening.

"ONLY the family" proved to include "Uncle Bob," whose merry, quizzical eyes never left the little teacher's face, and a fashionable visiting cousin, the latter gowned in something green, low-cut and expensive-looking. Mrs. Bowman wore a black gown that in Millersville would have served for state occasions.

"Why didn't I at least have sense enough to wear a one-piece dress," groaned the little teacher. "But what would I have worn—last Summer's faded pink voile?"

She felt her embarrassment was evident, though the others chattered gaily. As soon as possible she made an excuse of a lecture and left, alone on the street car, in spite of Mr. Bob's determination to whirl her to "the lecture" in his car.

Later came "at home" cards from Mrs. Bowman and invitations from other patrons. But after the chiffon blouse had attended a tea or two, and met velvets and satins galore, it was quietly folded away.

Of course, Mr. Bob called at the little teacher's quiet boarding place, and telephoned and sent flowers. He escorted her (plus the chiffon blouse) to a play, with laces and silks in the next box.

Then—the little teacher straightway adopted the cordiality of an icicle, and not even the most square-jawed of young men can pay court to such forever. Business called him East and everything seemed ended, save for a postal or two.

Billy wondered why his beloved teacher forgot to be jolly. Miss Warner dropped into Room Seven one evening and surprised a tear in the little teacher's eye.

"Forgive me, dear, if I seem officious," she slipped an arm about the younger girl. "But you look like a little sister of mine. And I've an idea your trouble is the same I had two years ago."

Then she talked, while the little teacher's expression changed from incredibility to surprise and hope! Soon after, the little teacher recovered her gay spirits. There was often a mysterious smile on her lips, and once Billy caught her humming a tune, right out loud in school!

IT was July, and Mr. Bob had run down to his sister's country place.

"Some nice people here," she greeted him. "Oh, yes, and an old friend of yours—that pretty little teacher. I think you're in for a surprise, my boy."

That evening he got it! While looking over the evening paper in the library, he was startled by a vision in misty blue, something frilly and flower-strewn, a vision which slipped quietly in and made a quaint courtesy before him.

"Good evening," remarked the vision.

"Why—ah—oh, good evening." Mr. Bob stumbled to his feet.

"Do you usually gasp at the mere sight of an old friend?" queried the vision.

"No, only at dreams come true, Miss Cinderella," returned Mr. Bob with recovered poise. "Would you like the snapshot of yourself you gave Billy last spring? Here it is, next my heart. But you can't have it."

It was the little teacher's turn to blush.

Next morning she appeared for golf in a white linen skirt, as tailored and pocketed as you please, with green satin sport coat to match the morning fields.

That afternoon for country club tea she donned a cream silk jersey frock, exquisitely simple and well cut. In the evening another marvel, something white and fluffy, flung over something pink and silky, reminding the hitherto unpoetic Mr. Bob of a cloud with sunset lining. While on Sunday a pensive Quaker maiden went to church all in cloudy gray.

No wonder Mr. Bob was bewildered.

"What's the answer, Sis?" He sought his sister one day, having just left a very domestic-looking maiden in cool white dimity, embroidering on the porch.

Mrs. Bowman shook her head. "Perhaps she's inherited some money," she said vaguely. "But I liked her last Winter, shabby clothes and all, of course."

"So did I, worse luck," groaned Mr. Bob. He determined to learn his fate that evening. But a dance was on and a wonderful low-cut frock in orchid tints embroidered in violets awed him while the other fellows danced with her.

However, fate—or the little teacher—was kind next evening, for nothing more terrifying than a white dotted swiss, with absurdly babyish blue sash, appeared.

Oh, wise little teacher, how did you know that the man does not exist who can resist white swiss and blue ribbons?

There was a stroll and a moon, and, rather late, two supremely happy beings returned.

"There is only one thing to which I object," Mr. Bob was saying. "You see, I used to dream as a boy of making a fortune and laying it at the feet of a lovely maid, changing her to a princess. I thought I'd found her last year. But, lo, the wand has already waved over her and she is a princess now. But I didn't make her one, so I'm disappointed. Tell me, Cinderella, who was the fairy godmother?"

"Why, I made these clothes myself," calmly responded the little teacher, going directly to the root of the matter.

"You—!" Mr. Bob gasped.

"Of course, so you can still make me a princess, for I have no fortune."

"But how did you make those things? Sis says they're lovely, and she has an expensive dressmaker."

"I'll tell you all," laughed Cinderella. "I was so miserable last winter. I wanted good times and I—liked you—" ("Say it!" whispered Mr. Bob, "say you loved me.") "But I felt so ill at ease in my poor clothes. Finally I was horrid to you, to keep you away, though it 'most killed me!"

The moon obligingly whisked behind a passing cloud to allow Mr. Bob to express his sympathy.

There was a stroll and a moon, and rather late, two supremely happy beings returned.

"Then one of the teachers—Miss Warner—told me a way out. I had always secretly admired her clothes—and wondered how she could dress so beautifully on a teacher's salary.

"Well, she told me that she had learned right in her own boarding place, in spare time, through the Woman's Institute, how to make stylish, becoming clothes and hats, even though she knew nothing at all about sewing or millinery when she began. She said that this wonderful school had taught her how to make the kind of dresses and hats she had always wanted for less than one-half their usual cost, and how to make money sewing for other people beside.

"You see, it makes no difference where you live, because all the instruction is carried on by mail. And it is no disadvantage if you are employed because you can devote much or little time to the course and just whenever it is convenient.

"SO I wrote and began the lessons. Almost at once I knew I had solved the problem. In a month I made a pretty school blouse, and then I tried a dress. I made the gray one I wore Sunday (you seemed to like it), and I wore it to the Teacher's Institute, where I took my reading class up on the platform.

"They said I made quite a successful appearance,' demurely. "And now—why, with ten dollars invested in material, I can make a lovely summer dress. And made-overs! This white is one and the lavender I wore last night came from an old dress of mother's, plus a little new chiffon. I can even make tailored things!

"You learn those little touches that turn a few yards of material into a work of art, you learn your special colors and styles. Why, I could go on forever! And, just think, if you should happen to lose your money, I could even earn my living making artistic clothes for others."

"Or dress your own bewitching little self so people would think I had a million dollars while I was getting on my feet again, Miss Cleverness," grinned Mr. Bob.

The little teacher's story has a practical application to your needs. More than 75,000 women and girls in city, town and country have proved that you can quickly learn at home in spare time how to make all your own and your children's clothes and hats or prepare for success in dressmaking or millinery as a profession.

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I am stupid myself, but I have enough intelligence to understand you—a little, haven't I, dear?"

"So much more than enough!" The low speech with its tremor of humility was almost lost.

"WHAT a noise the river makes!" he said presently.

"Yes. And the pines. The whole air is full of rushing and sighing and clapping and rattling. Sounds tell me so much now. They fill my whole life. It is very queer. Why, a voice means more to me now, I think, than a face ever did. . . . . Is it a deep river, Hugh?"

"Now it is—deep and dangerous. But it goes down very quickly when the snow at its source has melted. In summer it is a friendly little brook, and in the fall a mere trickle that hardly wets your shoe. I have a boat here tied to the root of one of these trees, a boat I made myself, to pole across when the stream is too deep for wading. I'll take you out in it when the flood's down; it wouldn't last fifteen minutes now. In the spring, Sylvie, a nymph comes down from the mountain, a wild white nymph. She has ice-green hair and frost-white arms; you can see her lashing the water, and if you listen, you can hear her sing and cry. Let's go in, dear; you're tired and cold —I can feel you shivering. We'll start a big fire, and I'll tell you how that nymph caught me once and nearly strangled me with her cold wet arms. I was trying to save—you'll laugh when I tell you about it—a baby bear."

Pete and Bella made room for them silently about the hearth where Pete had already built up a fire. Sylvie groped her way to the throne from which the other woman slipped half furtively and so noiselessly that Sylvie never guessed her usurpation.

"Hugh is going to tell us a story," she said, and rested her head back so that her small chin pointed out and her slim neck was drawn up, "—a wonderful story about the river and a bear. I hope it's a real bear, Hugh, for you know how I feel about bears. I honestly think that being so afraid of seeing them is what made me blind!" She gave her small shy laugh. "I thought I saw them everywhere I looked that day and night. It seems so long ago now, and yet it is not so many weeks. I can still hear Hugh's voice calling out to me across the snow. And now," she said, "the snow's all gone and none of you are strangers anymore, and—Go on with your story, Hugh."

Pete added a log to the fire so that the flames stretched up bravely and made a great fan of light against which they all seemed painted like ornamental figures, Hugh lounging along the rug to make a striking central figure. Bella was drawn up rigidly on a stiff, hard chair; she hemmed a long coarse towel with her blunt, work-roughened fingers.

Pete sat opposite Sylvie on the floor, his back against the corner of the fireplace, his knees drawn up in his hands, his head a little bent. He too—from under his long level brows—looked for the most part at Hugh, not devotedly, not wistfully, but with a somber wondering. It was only now and then, and as though he couldn't help it, that the blue smoldering northern eyes were turned to Sylvie on her throne. Then they would brighten painfully, and his lips would tighten so that the dimple, now a laughter, cut itself like a touch of pain into his cheek. The firelight heightened his picturesqueness—the dull blue of his shirt, open at the round, smooth throat, the dark gold-brown of his corduroy trousers, against which the long, tanned hands, knit strongly together, stood out in the rosy leaping light—these were beautiful against the background of old brown logs.

Yet it was Hugh, after all, who dominated the room by right of his power, his magnetism, the very distortion of his spirit. Here in this lonely square of light and warmth, surrounded by a world of savage, lawless winds heightening the voices of vast loneliness, these three people were imprisoned by him, a Merlin of the West.

HE sat up to begin his story, pressing tobacco into his pipe. "Oh, it's not so much of a story, Sylvie. It was last spring when the river was high and I'd been out with my traps. I was coming home along the river edge, pretty tired, a big load on my back. I came around a bend of the river, and not far below me a little black bear, round as a barrel, was trying to scramble over the flood on a very shaky log. The mother was on the other side, but I didn't know that then. Well, there's nothing in God's world, Sylvie, so beguiling as a baby bear. This little fellow was scared by what he was doing, but he was bound he'd get across the river. He'd make a few steps then he'd back up and half rise on his hind legs. I watched him a long time. Then he made up his mind he'd better make a dash for it. He began scrambling like a frantic kitten, and it was just in the most ticklish spot that he heard me and jumped and went rolling off into the river. I tell you, my heart came right up into my mouth."

"Oh, *was* he drowned?" wailed Sylvie.

Hugh rose and stood with his back to the fire, dominating the room even more convincingly with his vivid ugliness. Sylvie's face turned up to him like a white flower to the sun it lives by, without seeing. It was strange to watch the adoration, the worship on that small face, and at the same time to behold the grotesqueness toward which it was directed. Bella was listening with her lowered eyes and tightened lips. She was interested in spite of herself; and Pete's inscrutable face, followed the story with absorption.

"Well, in he rolled with a splash and went rattling down the current, turning over and over. Like a fool, I threw away my hides, ran down the bank and jumped in after him—that is, I meant to hold onto a branch and stand out in the water and catch him as he went by. But the nymph I told you about had her own plans. She wrapped her arms round me, and away we went, bear and all. Oh, yes, I'd caught the cub all right, and he was about half drowned by that time—no fight left in him.

"Well, for a bit it was a question whether the world wouldn't be quickly and well rid of us both, but we tumbled up against a root and scrambled out, and when I'd rested, I picked up limp and trembling Master Bear and went back for my hides. And while I was collecting them, I heard a sort of grumpy, grumbling sound, and there was mother up—and by Jove, Mother Bear was coming across that log with the longest steps you ever saw. That's when I ran to collect my gun—it was a little farther up the bank than my hides, worse luck!"

Even Bella had forgotten her bitterness in listening, and Pete's parted lips were those of an excited child. Sylvie leaned forward in her chair, her cheeks tingling, her hands locked. Hugh had thrown himself into the action of his story; his face was slightly contorted as though sighting along a gun-barrel, his arm raised, the ungainliness of his deformity strongly accentuated. He was not looking at Sylvie; true to his nature and his habit, he had forgotten everyone but that Hugh of adventure and of romance, the one companion of his soul. None of them was watching Sylvie, and when she gave a sharp little cry, a queer start and then sat utterly still, Hugh accepted it—they all accepted it—as a tribute to his story-telling powers.

But Sylvie, leaning her elbows on her knees, raised trembling hands to her eyes and hid them. She sat very still, very white, while the story went on, vividly imagined, picturesquely told. When it was over, and the mother bear, after a worthy struggle, defeated, Hugh looked about for his applause. It came, grudgingly from Bella, eagerly from Pete—and from Sylvie in a sudden extravagant clapping of hands, a ripple of high, excited laughter and a collapse in her chair. She had fainted in a limp little heap.

She came to in an instant, but seemed bewildered and unprotesting, permitted herself to be carried to bed. She declared she felt quite well again and wanted only to be alone. She repeated this mooningly. "Oh, to be alone!"

Hugh seated himself on the end of the bed and kissed her forehead and her hand, but it quivered under his lips and was drawn away.

He came back into the living-room with a pale, bewildered face.

The next installment of this remarkable novel by the author of "The Branding Iron" will appear in our forthcoming February issue.

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SAVAGERY

(Continued from page 48)

of the den and rush to meet her; at another they darted for the safety of the hole. So it happened that when she summoned them forth one night at dusk and started for the timber, they followed as readily as if this was their twentieth trip abroad instead of but the first.

The old dog and the vixen led the way, the pups following close behind. They hunted through the heavy timber, scouting through windfall jams and skirting sidehill seeps in search of prey. The pups emulated the parents in all things, aping their every act. When Wawina paused to test the wind, the pups stretched forth their muzzles and sniffed. Wawina left the timber and followed a bald ridge, dropped down another forested slope and came out in a grassy meadow. The dry grass of the previous year had been mashed flat by the winter snows, and the green grass had pushed through this matted carpet of the dead. All through this tangle the mice had made little runways and tunnels.

The dog fox paused when a few yards outside the fringe of trees, sniffing eagerly. The pups caught an odor that was suggestive of meat. Wawina took a few steps into the wind, then leaped and pressed his forepaws firmly down on the springy carpet of flattened grass, shoved his nose between his paws and snapped. He lifted his head with a tuft of dead grass in his jaws. As he dropped it and shook the stiff particles of hay from his mouth, the pups sprang forward to learn the cause of it all. A warm, dead mouse was the result of the old dog's act. Two pups tore the prey apart, and each gulped his half after a preliminary crunch to crush the bones.

They scattered eagerly over the meadow in search of more. Every pup made frequent mistakes and pounced on some spot from which the scent came warm, only to find that it was but a runway over which a mouse had recently passed. They soon learned to distinguish the trail scent from the body scent, and after three hours of unceasing effort, each pup had succeeded in catching at least one mouse.

The vixen raised her head at a distant yelp and started for the timber as it was answered from a near-by ridge. The coyote family was on the hunt, and from past experience she knew that while these yellow marauders made no special effort to seek out foxes in times of plenty, they would be only too apt to pounce upon her family if they came across them unexpectedly.

THE first hunt was ended, and Wameechin headed back for the den. As the little family passed through a black jungle of spruce and down timber, the rearmost pup raised a squall of fright and agony. Without a sound to warn him, he had felt the deadly grip of frightful talons striking through his loins, a vicious snap of a heavy beak above his ears, then a crushing blow on his skull.

The mother fox whirled and leaped at the sound. At a single spring she reached the big gray owl, and her teeth closed midway of the slender body encased in the fluffy mass of feathers. The owl reached for her face with his powerful claws but her grip was too close to the junction of legs and body; the murderous hooks clutched only the empty air but the savage beak closed on Wameechin's neck at the base of the ear and cut clear to the skull. Then the head fell back limply, and the red vixen shook the winged killer till the feathers flew.

She licked the wounds of the bleeding pup. He followed on with drooping head, giving vent to plaintive snarls as the pain twitched at his back, for the talons had nearly finished him at a single strike.

The wounded pup was very weak for several days, but his strength gradually returned. Each night the fox family heard the oft-repeated calls of the she-owl, summoning the mate who never came, the notes now soft and plaintive, now hoarse and gruff. The hen owl was left alone to forage for the three young miscreants in a hollow stump, the three fluffy bits in whose behalf the male had so unwisely sought to slay the fox pup. For the big owls, too, are devoted lovers, mating for life or until one of a pair is killed; and they are lovers of home, and returning to the same den site each year, the male hunts to provide for his young.

The ragged fur of the older foxes had been rubbed off in their travels through the brush, the new coats of short hair causing the bodies to appear much thinner than when full-furred. The guard hairs of the cubs' pelts had at last pushed through the short fur, and in such numbers as to indicate their coloring at maturity. The three lighter ones had turned reddish and gave promise of being exact duplicates of their mother. One was blue-black with silver-tipped guard hairs on rump and well along the back, a second Wawina. Another showed such profusion of these silver hairs as to appear slightly more gray than black when viewed in certain lights; the third dark member of the family was far more gray than black, even his face sprinkled with short silver hairs, a brownish patch appearing on each side behind the break of the shoulder. His pelt would rate as a high-grade cross or a rusty silver. This difference of coloration occasioned no surprise in the parents, for the many grades of cross foxes and the numerous shades of wonderful silvers are all only freak color phases of the red fox.

Wawina led his family out and taught them the ways of the world. They learned how to stalk rabbits and grouse. They were taught to read the scents and sounds until they could distinguish between the jarring walk of hoofed game and the shuffling progress of the bear or the soft, padding footfalls of the cats, the yelping barks of the cow elk from the cry of the loon on the mountain lakes; they grew accustomed to the coughing grunts of the moose that wallowed in the beaver swamps. Scents were even more readily interpreted than sounds, and they were taught to know the trail scent of animals that it was well to avoid, and those that would constitute their prey.

Wawina's taste in food was, next to the bear's, the most varied of that of any animal in his range, and the two old foxes led the pups to a surprising variety of delicacies. As the summer advanced, they fed on a dozen different berries and wild fruits, the seed-pods of the wild rose, crisp grasses and the tender buds of shrubs. Along the streams they found scraps of fish left behind by mink, or an occasional trout that had leaped out upon a rock-bar and was unable to return to his element. The cool nights chilled the grasshoppers and beetles, and the young foxes hunted these sluggish ones in the deep grass where there was warmth.

THE cool days of early fall brought a change over the face of the hills. The aspen, birch and alder patches turned under the bite of frosts to variegated splotches showing through the green of the spruce, and with it a change came over Wawina. For long months he had denied himself, eating barely enough to sustain him even when there was food in plenty, urged to conserve every scrap lest there should come a time of famine for his pups. Now one day when Wawina pounced on a grouse and killed it, and the pups raced joyfully for the spot, the black fox snarled and warned them off. The first to reach him sprang for the still fluttering bird, but Wawina wheeled away from him. The pup persisted, and the old dog dropped the bird and thrashed his insistent offspring. One after another felt his punishing teeth. The largest dog pup in the litter turned on his father and fought for the possession of the bird. Wawina bore him down and mauled him until the warring pup was battered and well-behaved.

And meantime:

A thousand miles away Flick the furrier stood with his hand on the shoulder of his son.

"I've educated you," he said. "I've taught you as much of the world as I can. It is time for you to put those teachings to a practical test on your own initiative. It's the only way."

And as the young man went forth from his father's establishment to face the world on his own, so Wawina Second, the black fox pup, left the family group and ran far off through the hills to rustle for himself.

The rest of the pups sat in a circle, sometimes rising and padding restlessly round the moonlit park as they watched their strange parent eating his grouse alone and refusing to share even a scrap with them. From that date on they were forced to rustle for themselves. Wawina feasted to repletion every night and occasionally robbed one of the pups of some bit of food. Wameechin was not so aggressive, but her attitude otherwise was much the same. And with the cool weather and the better feed, the fur of the old foxes grew long and thick and silky.

The family circle was now broken up,

the pups hunting alone, frequently meeting in their wanderings and often traveling for hours with their parents. A change had also come into relations of the old pair. They quarreled when Wameechin sought to follow her usual custom of depriving her mate of his food whenever so inclined. At times he resented this tyranny and defended his rights; there was much commotion during the resulting clashes.

THE first time this occurred after the departure of the pups, he snarled angrily when Wameechin darted in to take the young cottontail he had just killed. They reared on their hind legs, the forefeet of each contestant planted against the other's chest, ears laid flat, tails curled tightly sidewise, and mouths open with a savage display of fangs. Short, explosive snarls alternated with wild squalls of rage, but through it all there was not a single blow—a wordy, irritable dispute without physical violence. Wawina would not use his teeth against his mate as he had against the pups.

They hunted separate ridges, keeping the same general direction, traveling together at times, though more frequently apart, but always within range of easy communication, each aware of the other's actions, determined by scent or sound, and when either made a good kill, the other was summoned to the spot.

The snows fell early and deep that winter. The bears sought their dens, and the elk and deer migrated to the lower feed; beavers had piled the heavy green sections of aspen trunks on the bottoms of their ponds for winter food and were seldom abroad; squirrels and chipmunks came out only on the warmest days, subsisting meanwhile on pine-cone caches, winter stocks previously stored away; the mountain woodchucks had holed up till spring. There were only the moose wintering in the swamps of the high country, and the bighorn bands on the peaks—and the smaller killers who left their tracks on the white surface of the snow in their never-ending hunt for meat.

And there were three trap-lines thrown out through the hills, the three territories roughly divided by certain ridges or streams.

Wawina first learned of this when he caught the scent of a dead grouse on a heavily timbered flat and traced it to the source. He stopped twenty yards away and viewed a curious bark shelter built against the foot of a tree to keep the snow from the trap-set. Within the opening he could see the grouse, the floor of the tiny hut covered deep with feathers, and he knew that a trap was bedded in this downy mass. There were great prints in the snow—web-tracks of the trapper, although the man-scent had been frozen out. Wawina was aware that the season of dread was once more in full swing—the time of partial famine for the furbearers, the hills studded with tempting baits and deadly traps.

Later in the day he caught the scent of dead squirrel. He found it spiked to the trunk of a huge spruce tree six feet above the surface of the snow. A slanting chunk of log six inches through leaned against the tree, its flat top affording an easy resting place a few inches below the

squirrel; a natural lane for the climbing marten, his favorite food to be secured by simply running up the log—and stepping on the trap that was planted on the flat end under the bait.

The black fox crossed over a dividing ridge, Wameechin following his trail as soon as she discovered his absence. This carried him out of McCloud's territory and into the country trapped by Incham, the breed, only to find more traps. The beaver ponds had not yet frozen entirely over, the open water showing dark and sullen from the snow-covered shores. Here the breed had bedded his beaver-traps under six inches of water where the furred colonists were in the habit of climbing out upon the banks.

WAWINA traveled on and ranged into Campbell's territory. He found the man's cat-traps in the brushy bottoms, little pens built of logs to guide the stupid bobcats over the single lane leading to the traps. Rabbit-skins and bird-wings were suspended to near-by limbs, fluttering strangely in the wind—these to attract the attention of the beasts, whose noses were not keen enough to detect cold meat. A cat would pass within ten feet downwind from a bait that Wawina could scent for a hundred yards. But these fluttering things would catch his eye, and once bent upon investigation, he would enter the little runway and step on the uncovered trap others would not approach.

The two foxes found no great difficulty in foraging live prey for the first two months, but small game grew harder to find as winter tightened down. Wawina looked more longingly at the tempting lines spread out through the hills, but every few days he found a cat or lynx fast in some trap, or a marten dangling from a tree at the end of a chain; some animals he saw swinging high in the air, suspended from the tips of saplings that had been bent over and pegged down, fastened to the trap-chain in such fashion that the first tug of a trapped fur-bearer would release the spring-pole and swing him aloft. These things held him back from touching any of the baits.

Out on the ridges he found more cunning sets made for his own kind or for such of the coyote tribe that ranged so high in the hills. Here the meat was staked firmly down, and the traps, bedded below the surface of the ground where the snow was blown off, were so identical in appearance with the rest of the surroundings that it was impossible to determine the site of any one of the several scattered round each bait. This caution was necessary to trick the clever coyotes who sometimes followed the fox ridges. Wawina saw one cross fox and three reds in these traps, and twice he passed coyotes fighting desperately and without pause to break the thing that gripped them.

Wameechin's mating time came early, and her pups would be born some time in February, almost a month earlier than in the previous spring. The marital quarrels had ceased, and Wawina was once more the devoted lover that gave up every bit of food that his waspish mate desired to sample. It required continual hunting to rustle even a slender living. The cougars had followed the antlered game to the low country, and there were no wasted kills for the smaller meat-eaters.

The coyotes that still clung to the ridges systematically robbed the trap-lines. The little bark huts with their ill-concealed traps were simple problems for a hungry coyote to solve. The buried ridge-sets were more difficult, and occasionally one miscalculated and paid the penalty of his rashness. Wawina had not the resourcefulness of his yellow relatives. He knew only that trap-sets were dangerous in the extreme, and he avoided them, lacking the coyote's power of estimating the danger and the cold nerve to overcome it and steal the bait.

Frost still gripped the hills; there was small chance to excavate another den in earth frozen almost to bedrock, and so Wameechin returned to the one of the year before.

A mile from the den-site a lynx had an early litter in the heart of a windfall jam, and she too was in dire straits. Twice she came to the fox den and sought to squeeze into the hole that was too small for her. Finding this impossible, she reached a paw far down the tunnel, feeling about with distended claws. On her first visit she found Wawina at home, and every time she flattened on the ground to reach into the den, the dog fox dashed down upon her from behind with a savage squall, darting away as the lynx whirled to face him. For an hour she persisted in the stupid hope of fishing something forth from the hole, reaching for the pups that were six feet beyond the range of her claws.

Then she wandered back to her kits. On her next trip Watheechin was alone, and as her mate did not seem to be on duty outside, she waged war on the cat from within, driving her teeth into the paw whenever it was stretched down the hole. Again the lynx moved off, and the following day Wawina saw her far from home and traveling steadily. Her paunch was full and rounded—the result of a cannibal feast; being unable to keep her kits alive, she had philosophically devoured them to keep life in herself, and was moving down the country in search of hares and grouse.

The three trap-lines now yielded but little fur, and the season would soon be past—pelts rubbed and unprime, and the traps sprung as soon as the fur began to slip. Campbell trapped hard to make a big catch, inspired by the longing to buy finery for his intended mate. The breed worked to catch more than his rival in the hope that the beautiful and much desired Lucille would turn to him. McCloud followed the trap-line from dawn till dark, trusting that his season's fur-run would exceed the amount required for the necessities of life and permit the purchase of the extra-most luxuries his mate and children had longed to possess. One prime silver pelt would bring the catch of any one of the three to the mark desired.

Anderson the fur-buyer was always glad to see a silver pelt in any customer's catch. Each one meant a profit of more than two hundred for himself and furnished that much additional means for his wife and boys. Flick the furrier noted every skin that might prove a match for the pelt for which the mother of Arline Carlton was willing to pay such a goodly price to please her child.

And Wawina followed the meat-trail day after day, urged on by the desperate necessity of Wameechin and the pups. More and more longingly he viewed the tempting baits. Wameechin now always watched for his return from the mouth of the den and rushed anxiously to meet him. He crossed over into Campbell's territory and, successfully avoiding the uncovered trap, stole the hare that lashed a cat-pen. As he returned with it, he passed a cross fox clamped in a trap on a windswept ridge. The cold had frozen the foot and rendered it feelingless, and the trapped animal was working to amputate the member with his teeth.

An hour later Campbell took him from the trap and tossed the nearly severed foot aside.

INCHAM, the breed, had taken to spying on the trap-lines of his two rivals. They had noted the tracks of his webs in their respective territories but thus far he had stolen no fur. An hour behind Campbell the breed came to the trap on the ridge and noted the black foot. His brain was fired with rage as he decided that his rival had pinched the foot of Wawina. He paused not to reflect that the foot of a cross fox is as black as that of a silver, but swung away to a ledge that overlooked a meadow through which Campbell would pass on his return trip. As the young Scot came down the meadow, the breed's rifle covered him from above; but as the trapper drew abreast of him, Incham saw that it was only a cross fox that was slung across his back, a pale matter of little value being the only other yield of his line. Thus it was that Campbell went on his way without knowing that if it had been the black fox instead of the cross he would never have reached home.

Two days thereafter Wawina, at the risk of his life, robbed another trap and kept his family from starving. He returned to the hunt the next day, but not a single grouse or hare rewarded his persistence. Twice he went to a bald ridge and viewed a chunk of frozen elk-meat that had lain there for a month. This time he drew nearer and circled it. It meant life for

his mate and pups if he could but take it home. He moved back to the timber, then returned, irresistibly drawn by the meat scent and the thought of Wameechin's necessity and the plaintive squeaks of the helpless cubs. All through the night he kept moving back and forth, and just before dawn made a rush for it. He had not the knowledge of trap-robbing that is the portion of the coyote. He reached the meat and tugged at it. It failed to give in that direction; so he shifted to the opposite side, shifted again—and sprang into the air as two steel jaws seized upon his foot. McCloud had thus pinched the toes of the black fox in the very last week of the season. . . . .

In the early morning the half-breed trapper, looking from a distant point, saw a black speck bouncing round on the ridge as Wawina fought the trap, and he headed swiftly for the spot, mumbling curses in his eagerness. From the edge of the timber he listened for the crunch of webs that would tell of McCloud's approach, but there was no sound. He crossed into the open.

Wawina made one last despairing effort to break the trap, then turned on the man and snarled, backing to the full length of the chain. His orange eyes glared at the man as the latter raised a heavy club.

"Hah! The leetle savage—he fights!" the half-breed exclaimed as he swung the club. Wawina met the descending weapon with his open jaws and the weight of it shattered his lower teeth and stunned him. As the light faded, he had one last desperate hope that Wameechin would find meat for herself and the pups. The club fell once more.

"Lucille, she will like the money thees hide will breeng," the half-breed exulted; and as he headed swiftly for the timber he had a glowing vision of Lucille established in his cabin and of the many children she would mother for him. Suddenly, then, the fur thief dropped the black fox and threw his rifle to his shoulder, only to let it slip from his fingers as his knees sagged under him at the roar of McCloud's gun from the edge of the timber. And as McCloud breathed a sigh of thankfulness at having arrived in time to save the pelt for his wife and babes, the half-breed sprawled across the limp body of the silver fox.

THREE friends sat at a table in a restaurant. Anderson was looking at the photograph of a savage princess that Carpenter had handed him.

"You're a cynic, Carpenter," he said. "Always comparing civilized men with savages, and even with animals."

"It's interesting to note a certain similarity of basic impulses all the way down the line," the explorer remarked. "I don't contend that the resemblance goes deeper than that. Of course we're millions of years removed from animals, and ages advanced beyond savagery. Besides, you've reversed the point I was trying to make. Don't get me wrong. I don't argue that civilized men are either animals or savages, but that there is some little good in wild men and some strangely human qualities in many four-footed beasts. See what I mean?"

"You can't argue one way without the argument applying equally the other," Flick stated. "I don't agree with you."

"You insist on mistaking my point," the explorer repeated. The furrier took the picture of the savage princess from Anderson. "She certainly loved to adorn her young self with baubles," he observed. "I suppose her royal parents plundered the countryside to keep her supplied with trinkets."

The explorer nodded.

"But Alluana wasn't such a bad sort of a princess after all," he said as he recalled some of her princely virtues.

A young girl moved majestically between the tables, and the furrier unconsciously contrasted Arline Carlton with the picture of the princess Alluana. The costume of each was evidence that parental love had showered her with the choicest treasures to be obtained. Instead of the copper anklets of the dusky princess, Arline wore platinum and diamond circlets on her wrists; the nose ring of Alluana was replaced by pendants dangling from Arline's ears; the fantastic headpiece of peacock plumes was eclipsed by the feather that trailed above Arline's lovely head; a glittering bar-pin reposed over her heart in the exact spot where the picture revealed a tin dinner-plate gleaming proudly on Alluana's breast; and instead of a leopard skin about the middle—twin pelts of silver fox were loosely clasped about the shoulders of Arline.

"It is only natural," said the explorer, "that in the course of a thousand generations styles should change."

THE WOMAN WHO HATED POLITICS

(Continued from page 29)

for civility: "Tell me—who is Mr. Robinson?"

"Why, Robinson is rather a remarkable fellow." He leaned across her and included the State chairman. "Wouldn't you say Robinson was remarkable?"

The State chairman nodded portentously. It was his business to be portentous about rising members of his party.

Peregrin went on: "He comes from one of those God-forsaken little towns in the Middle West—was mayor—the usual thing—gutter politics."

"Pretty crooked, isn't he?" asked Treat, who saw all politics in these terms.

"A great man for short-cuts," replied Peregrin suavely. "But not out for himself—no. Sincerely eager to get things done, and of course a party man—a party man, I'm glad to say. A splendid record in Congress. We think he'll go far."

The Chairman nodded again, like Jove.

Laura decided to take a long chance.

"He'll go far, I suppose," she said languidly. "If he isn't married to some impossible wife."

"I don't think he is married," answered Peregrin. "No, he can't be, for he was quite attentive to little Sally Grosvenor in Washington last winter."

"Sally Grosvenor!" cried Laura, and a deep color rushed over her face.

Treat thought he interpreted her thought as he murmured, so the Chairman couldn't hear and feel too much an outsider: "Pretty rough diamond for Sally, isn't he?"

"Well, I don't know," said Peregrin. "Robinson's a good deal of a man. A woman might do worse than marry a fellow like Robinson." He turned benevolently to Laura. "Are you a good enough American to agree with me, Mrs. Stanton, that a woman might do worse than marry Jim Robinson?"

Laura's reply was: "I can't bear Sally Grosvenor."

The State chairman leaned over and said very discreetly: "As a matter of fact, Robinson's been married—and divorced. That's where he was smart—got rid of her before he got really into public life."

"Impossible, was she?" asked Peregrin sympathetically.

"Good deal of a goose, the people out there say," answered the other. "He never got anywhere until he shook her."

"Indeed!" said Laura. She was more surprised than angry. The idea was so entirely new to her—that she was a burr. She had thought of herself as a meteor that had flashed through his life, illuminating it for all too brief an instant. What did Jim himself think? He was talking now, and all the people at his end of the table were listening, or trying to interject an intelligent question which would make a favorable impression. It seemed to her that he was an utterly different man, a determined, powerful personality; emanations of that power seemed to reach her in waves and to sweep away the person she had imagined herself to be.

THE men next to her were exchanging anecdotes of political wives but she didn't listen. Her whole being was taken up with the question: Had Jim really "shaken" her? She had often wondered at the ease with which she had got free, but she had in some vague way attributed it to her own cleverness. Yet even at the time it had seemed to her strange that a man as tenacious, jealous and revengeful as Jim had made so surprisingly weak a fight for so priceless a possession as herself. Was that the explanation—that he was glad to be rid of her?

Her silence becoming somewhat heavy, Peregrin felt the need of breaking it: "Are you coming on to the meeting with us, Mrs. Stanton? Does that sort of thing bore you too much? The chairman, you know, is a great orator, and Robinson makes a capital straight talk, I'm told."

"I'd like to go," said Laura, achieving each word with a conscious effort like a drunken man. Her inner turmoil was extreme. She felt as if she should never leave Jim until she had an answer to her question. Had he shaken her? Her mind kept going back, for the first time in all these years, to their early days—his courtship of her, their marriage. Oh, he had certainly loved her, jealously, passionately enough, then.

The brilliantly lighted town-hall, he on the platform sitting well forward with his hand inverted on his knee,—how well she knew that gesture!—she below in the front row of the audience next to Mrs. Peregrin: the situation did not promise an immediate answer to her question.

There were two speakers before Jim —an incoherent gentleman who said repeatedly that he believed in the Constitution of the United States, which, it appeared, the opposite party was, as usual, attempting to destroy. Then the State chairman, whose quietness at dinner had cloaked the orator—all triple adjectives and a rising shout at the end of each period. Then Jim, just as simply himself as in the little sitting-room at Wixville, not an extra adjective, his hands not in his pocket because that would not have been absolutely natural to him—and his voice low, carrying, everyday, and speaking to each person in the audience individually.

Laura, listening with every nerve in her body, almost screamed as he made a slip in grammar. He was talking about "practical politics."

"I think politics aren't half practical enough—not practical enough to run a business concern like the United States. Why, when I first *come* to Washington—"

Nobody cared. Nobody noticed, but Laura.

He began to tell a story of legislative incompetence that somehow became in his hands a thrilling narrative.

It was while he was talking that Laura realized that he really hadn't changed—oh, he had broadened and matured, but he hadn't changed essentially. The change was in her. She had been a blind, immature, self-centered, trivial girl. She had lived with this man for three years and had deliberately preferred a polite nonentity like Justin. Poor Justin, she could hardly recall his face.

She began to fancy eagerly the words with which her interview with Jim would begin, and then suddenly she saw that there wasn't going to be any interview; there would be no further chance for them to speak. The accident of their meeting was over. The thought was like fire in her veins; she actually trembled with baffled fury and irritation. To be there, just a drop in the ocean of his audience, not able to get a word or a look from him—a man "whose wife you had been!" She couldn't sit still in her place, but began moving her shoulders with nervous twists.

Mrs Peregrin, still a little guilty at having let her lovely friend in for a party she couldn't appreciate, murmured in her ear, that they could go when this speech was over, if she would only be patient.

Laura frowned and shook her head; she could have killed her.

Then it was all over; everyone was crowding about Robinson, congratulating him, and being introduced to him, while she waited, a little apart—waited, she said to herself, like a footman. His manner, which in old times had seemed to her stolid and uncivil, now seemed dignified and self-respecting.

Then she saw him say good night to Mrs. Peregrin and move to the door, and he was gone. He was in danger, it seemed, of missing his train.

Well, she would go to Washington, to

Wixville—she *would* see him; she couldn't go on suffering like this. She had not supposed that people did suffer like this without physical pain.

When she had driven away, Mrs. Peregrin turned to Treat, who had just shut the door of the Stanton motor.

"Laura's spoilt—she's too sulky. It wasn't so bad after all."

"It was very good," said Treat.

"Well, she was furious—wouldn't say good night, and her eyes were like angry pools of ink. But mercy, I should think anything was better than an evening with old lady Stanton."

THE lady so disrespectfully referred to was sitting up in bed reading Horace Walpole's letters. Hearing the motor door slam, and then the light footsteps of her daughter-in-law in the upper corridor, she called to her. She had to call twice.

She had reached an age when the focus of her eyes changed slowly, and she had only a general impression of the younger woman's appearance as she came into the room.

"You're rather later than you expected, aren't you, my dear? What was it? Bridge?"

"No, they took me to a political meeting in the town."

"In my father's time, gentlemen went into politics," said Mrs. Stanton. "He was elected to the Assembly from this district, and I remember very well the house in Albany—"

Laura could not walk out of the room in the midst of a sentence; nor could she stand still and listen. She walked to the window and pushed aside the curtains. The full moon was flooding down on the smooth old lawn, *and Jim was standing there!*

Ears more acute than Mrs. Stanton's would have known that Laura stopped breathing for a few seconds. Then she turned and left the room like an arrow.

"Good night, my dear," Mrs. Stanton called after her. There appeared to be no answer.

Opening the long French window with some difficulty, Laura stepped out on the piazza.

The lawn was empty. Picking up the long tail of her white dress she started to run across its dewy surface when a figure rose at her elbow—rose from Aunt Arabella's sacred couch.

"That was a nice trick your friends played on me this evening," she heard Jim's voice saying. "Some men would have been so much upset they couldn't have said a word."

"It almost killed me," said Laura. "How was I to know you were in this part of the world?"

"Only that there's a poster on every fence."

"Posters. I never read them."

"I might have known you wouldn't."

"You can't suppose I should have come to dinner if I had known you were to be there?"

"Well, I don't know. I thought you might feel some curiosity. I know I did."

"You did not show it. You hardly looked in my direction. All the time you were speaking, your eye glanced over me

as if I were an utter stranger—it was as if I were not there."

"Oh, I knew you were there."

"You did not show it."

"I formed the habit young of not showing all I feel, Laura."

"So I heard this evening. I heard many things about you this evening, Jim."

"I picked up a few myself about you. I hear you were married before—to some impossible man from the West."

THERE was a faint, dry humor in his voice, but Laura was far beyond the stage of emotion where even the keenest sense of humor can function.

"They told me you had only begun to succeed since you had been intelligent enough to get rid of—'shake,' was their word—a silly wife."

"And you didn't like that?"

"Is it true, Jim?"

"True that I've been getting ahead in the last five years? Certainly."

She began to foam and churn inwardly like a torrent damned. "No, no, is it true that you deliberately shook me?"

"You ought to know the answer to that—a clever girl like you."

"I must know," she said. "It would be too contemptible if you had let me go on believing I had injured you, ruined your life, when all the time—"

"I never said anything about my life being ruined."

"When all the time you were glad to get rid of me—would have broken with me, if I hadn't broken with you!"

"Hold on," said Jim. "I did not say that. You were my wife. I would have stuck to you."

"Just as a duty?"

"Well, for heaven's sake, as what else? A pleasure? You were a great companion, weren't you, doing the exiled queen all day long about the house—"

"I don't see how you knew what I did all day long; you never saw me."

"You never had a decent word or an atom of interest in what I was doing—insulting my friends and the men I needed most with your airs—was it any wonder that when this young sprig came along, who had everything you seemed to want, that I did not exactly put up a fight for the privilege of keeping you?"

"You couldn't have done it."

"Yes, I could. I could take you now."

"If what?"

"I did not say 'if.'"

"Your tone did."

"No 'if' at all. I could take you now, and I would, if you were not so crazy about all the things you have in this new life of yours."

"Oh, Jim, I hate my life."

There was the second's pause—hardly more than a second, though it seemed interminable to Laura, who knew exactly what she meant—while Jim took in the full meaning of her words. Then she felt herself caught in his arms.

"Hell, Laura," he murmured amorously, "I never in all my life liked any woman but you."

"I never loved anyone but you, Jim—and not *you* till tonight."

Our savage ancestors, we are told, believed that each morning the sun that rose upon the world was a new one. Some hours later Laura, seeing a pale light spreading across the lawn from the other side of the house, knew that the world had changed for her, since she had watched a dull red orb sink behind the Catskills.

She rose, her hands going up to the magnificent knob of her dark hair.

"I'm afraid you've missed your train," she said, and a certain note of triumph was not wholly absent.

"There are others. Suppose you come along on the next one."

He was, as Peregrin had said, a great man for short-cuts.

He looked up at Laura in the dawn-light, and she looked down at him. It was very quiet, except for the birds, who were beginning as usual to excite themselves about the prospect of another summer morning.

"Will you wait while I change my dress and get some things?"

He nodded, and opening a little leather case, he lighted a cigarette.

WHAT IF THE GIRL WOULDN'T GO BACK

(Continued from page 67)

a picture," the man said bitterly. "Some of them were nice enough about it and some of them were nasty. But I couldn't find a dealer in New York who so much as asked me to come again. The kindest one took me to one side and told me that he saw a certain promise in my work but he knew the public wouldn't see it for ten years—maybe twenty years—maybe never."

The young man rose.

"You aren't going now?" Hattie said.

"Yes," he said. "I'm going back to paint."

"But it's dark—you can't paint at night."

The young man put on his hat.

"Nearly all my painting is done at night," he said, and his tone revealed all the bitterness of the fact to him. He stooped to pick up his things.

Hattie found herself standing very close to him; she put her hand on his arm; and with a kind of shock she realized that she was willing with all her might that he should kiss her, and willing it without the slightest effect.

"Don't go," she said softly.

His hand was on the doorknob. He looked at her, smiled quizzically, and opened the door.

"Good night!" he called over his shoulder.

Hattie Bailey shrugged her shoulders, as if to shake off his presence remaining after him in the room.

"Gee." she said, looking at herself in the mirror as she undressed, "you're a fool."

It was only half-past nine when she went to bed but she was wide-awake when her mother came home at half-past ten, and for long afterward.

HATTIE made her peace with Mabel and young Tom on Monday. She passed the painter—she knew now that his name was George Foster—in Main Street on Tuesday. She stayed home that evening for the first time in two months. Wednesday night all the stores in Belleville stay open until nine o'clock. Hattie Bailey went into Hall's hardware store on the stroke of nine. George Foster was wrapping up five pounds of shingle nails for a young farmer. There was no one else in the store.

"Well?" he said to Hattie when the farmer had gone.

"I came in to talk," Hattie said. She was suddenly afraid of him. Yet she knew his brusqueness hid a sore heart; knew, indeed, that that was why she cared.

"You did, did you?" George Foster said.

He went forward into the store, pulled the cord that put out the gas lamp, leaving only the faint glow of the pilot light, and set the lock on the front door. Without a word he walked back to where she stood. He put one hand on each of her shoulders, gripping them until she winced with pain.

He looked at her like a judge passing sentence on a peculiarly outrageous criminal.

"Don't," said Hat Bailey. Please—"

He gave her a hard little shake.

"Sunday night," he said grimly. "Sunday night you tried to make me kiss you—didn't you?"

"Yes," said Hattie Bailey. But though she tried to look defiantly into his eyes she could not. He bent his face to hers. She ducked valiantly. But he held her fast. He kissed her mouth. And Hattie Bailey—who had slapped her way out of just this situation more times than she could remember—Hattie Bailey let him. For a moment she had herself in his embrace and he in hers. . . . With a resistless gesture he pushed her from him, held her again at arm's length.

"You were playing with me," he said, "weren't you!"

"No," said Hattie faintly. "No I wasn't—playing."

"Oh," he mocked her, "you weren't!" He kissed her again, held her close.

"Good-by," he whispered, and lifting her off her feet he set her down on the counter above the bins of nails and standing by, he methodically rolled a cigarette.

"I'm not a marrying man," he said slowly. "I can't afford to marry. I'm going to paint—and no woman is going to stop me."

Hat had found her handkerchief. She dabbed her eyes with it and smiled up at him.

"I—I could earn my own living," she said. "I do now."

"I know," said George Foster. "But you'd take my time—evenings—and I haven't any evenings to spare. When I go back to New York I'm going to travel light. And I am going—I'm going where there are other men's pictures to see whenever I feel the need of seeing them and

other painters to talk to when I feel the need of talk and I'm going to paint all day —by daylight. There wont be any money or any time for pretty girls."

"Why don't you go to New York now —other men have—Jimmy Ormsby went from this town."

"Was he a painter?" George Foster asked.

"No—he worked on a newspaper."

"You don't see the point—your friend Jimmy could make a living at the thing he wanted to do. I can't. I may never be able to."

"You could do in New York what you're doing here," said Hat obstinately.

George Foster shrugged his shoulders.

"It's easier to do it here—when I've got four or five hundred dollars—enough to last me a year—I'll go. That'll mean a whole year of painting by daylight before I have to look for a job—a year of daylight."

Hattie hooked one ankle comfortably behind the other and swung her feet idly, and smiled up at him. She was herself again, something more than herself; she knew he loved her.

"And that's all that's worrying you," she said, "just a chance to paint—by daylight."

"That's all," said George Foster grimly.

Hat laughed.

"And now," he said roughly, "be on your way."

Hattie jumped down from the counter.

"Just as you like," she said crisply. "Only"—she flashed a look at him—"i thought maybe you wanted to kiss me good-by—again."

He raised his hand in his anger, but this time Hattie looked him in the eye. He took her gently in his arms and kissed her eyes until she raised her mouth to his.

Half an hour later, Mrs. Bailey looked up from the evening paper, and called to Hattie, busy throwing things about in her bedroom.

"What are you doing?"

"Packing my trunk," said Hattie.

Mrs. Bailey got up. She stood looking into Hattie's room.

"What?" she said.

Hattie was kneeling in front of her trunk, folding a skirt.

"I'm going to New York."

"What?" cried Mrs. Bailey.

"Tomorrow."

"But I thought you were going to marry Tom."

"No," said Hat.

"But—" her mother began.

Hattie folded the jacket that went with the skirt and laid it in the trunk.

"Why—," her mother began again.

Hattie methodically folded a scarf and laid it on the jacket.

"What are you going to do?"

"Get a job."

"But what's going to become of me?"

"I'll send for you later, mom," said Hattie Bailey.

HATTIE BAILEY arrived in New York at eleven o'clock in the morning, the second of September. At half-past eleven she had found a room. At noon, precisely, she began her hunt for Jimmy Ormsby—who had been a senior in the Belleville high school when she had been

a freshman and whom she hadn't seen for nine years. The hunt lasted for three days. And when she had run him down in his office—he was a press agent—she saw instantly that he did not remember her.

"I'm Hattie Bailey," she said distinctly, "and I used to know you slightly in Belleville, Indiana. I wore my hair down my back. I was fourteen. You wore long trousers—you were eighteen."

"Ah, yes," said Jimmy Ormsby. "I—I remember."

"No," said Hat, "you don't remember, but it doesn't matter—we'll pretend you do."

"Let's," said Jimmy Ormsby. He was beginning to doubt if this adventure would prove as much of a bore as he had so instantly thought. "And what can I do for you?"

Hat flashed him a smile.

"I'd like to do something," said Jimmy. "You can do a great deal"—she nodded at the clock on the wall—"it's twelve now—you can take me to lunch and answer all the questions I can ask you in an hour."

"You're on," said Jimmy Ormsby.

It was Jimmy who told her about Greenwich Village.

"But why?" he asked, "so much excitement about this Bohemian stuff? I thought you were a working girl."

"I am," said Hattie Bailey. "But I know a man who's a painter. He wants to come to New York."

"Has he got money?"

"He clerks in Hall's hardware store."

"Well," said Jimmy Ormsby, "he'd better keep on clerking in Hall's hardware store—if he wants to eat."

"Why?" asked Hattie Bailey.

"A painter without backing or reputation—an unknown—has got no chance—no chance whatever."

"But if he's a good painter?" Hattie persisted.

"Not if he's the best painter in the world," said Jimmy Ormsby. "It takes—"

"I'm not sure he isn't the best painter in the world," said Hattie calmly.

"Oh," said Jimmy Ormsby. "So that's it— He's going to marry you."

"No," said Hattie Bailey. "But I'm going to marry him."

"Going to support him, too?"

"Yes," she said, "I am."

"How?"

Hattie shrugged her shoulders.

"In that case," said Jimmy Ormsby, "I recommend Greenwich Village. It's cheap. You can rent a hall bedroom there for—why for the price of the opera house in Belleville—and that's more than I can say for any other part of this island."

Hattie spent the afternoon exploring Greenwich Village. She thought it horribly dirty and cluttered up; and she repeatedly lost her way in the maze of mean streets west of Greenwich Avenue. But she found a hall room that was clean for less money than she was paying up town, and had dinner in an Italian restaurant and saw two girls who smoked as if they enjoyed it. . . .

For a week Hattie Bailey hunted a job, getting up early to scan the want-ads, hurrying downtown in the subway. She had set her heart on twenty-five dollars a week. The first excitement of her adventure was beginning to wear off and her homesickness was beginning to wear on and the task she had set herself was beginning to seem absurd, when she got a note from George Foster:

> Come on home. There is nobody to talk to in this town. Sometimes I want to talk. Even to a pretty girl.

Hattie cried herself to sleep over that note, and the next morning wrote:

> No. I want to awfully. But I won't.

She wrote more at length to her mother, giving a complete account of what she had been doing, insisting that she liked New York, but ending with the admission, "Only I'll never get used to paying seventy-five cents for a dinner I can't eat."

Her mother wrote many pages, almost undecipherable by much crossing, urging her to come home. Hattie wrote explanations. Mrs. Bailey wrote replies. And since each wrote every day and it took two days for a letter to proceed from one to the other they were soon hopelessly involved in a heady controversy over what they had said and not said, promised and not promised.

After two weeks came a telegram from Mrs. Bailey:

> Either you come home or I go to New York.

Hattie had no choice but to break her last ten-dollar bill and wire:

> I will never go back to Belleville.

That was the day Hattie faltered in answering the question: "How much do you want?"

She opened her mouth; she willed to say "Twenty-five dollars" but the words that came instead were "Twenty dollars."

"When can you report for work?"

"Tomorrow," said Hattie Bailey.

"Make it half-past eight, sharp," said Hattie's new employer.

That night there was another telegram from her mother—and if sending telegrams implied a state of high excitement in Hat, they implied sheer desperation in her mother. Mrs. Bailey had never sent nor received telegrams except the news were sudden death.

"I will arrive," Mrs. Bailey wired, "on October 3."

Hat braced herself defiantly. She was beaten but she would not give up. Then she burst into tears. New York, hunting a job, the little hall room had been too much. She sobbed herself to sleep because her mother was coming—because she was glad her mother was coming.

THE tears were running down Hat Bailey's cheeks when she met her mother in the doorway of the narrow brick house that was technically "home." But she laughed and shook her head stubbornly and said, before she kissed her:

"I wont go back mother."

"Nobody's asking you too, now," her mother said.

Hat dabbed her eyes and snuffled and grinned.

"But what'll we do, Mother?"

"We'll talk about that later," said Mrs. Bailey masterfully.

"Who—who's that?" said Hat Bailey. She had seen the figure of a tall man looming in the dark little hall.

"It's me," said George Foster.

Hattie choked, laughed, put her arms around his neck.

"You aren't so stubborn as you thought, are you?" she asked with a flash of the old Hattie, who knew no fear.

"No," said George Foster. "But let's eat first and talk afterward."

Hattie led the way to the Italian restaurant. Her mother and George Foster seemed to know each other very well. But they did not talk much. They just looked at Hat and Hat just looked at them.

"Well," said Hat at last, "what about it?"

"What about what?" asked Mrs. Bailey.

"Why, what does this mean and what are you going to do and—"

"I," said George Foster, "am going to paint—until I'm broke. In the meantime I'm thinking of getting married."

"I've got to work tomorrow," said Hat Bailey. "I've got a job."

"I know," said George Foster, "I have read your letters to your mother. You'll have to take a day off—tomorrow."

"I don't know if I will now or not," said Hattie Bailey.

"I do," said George Foster.

Hattie turned to her mother.

"What do you think, Mom?"

Mrs. Bailey pushed aside the French pastry she had tasted and found wanting.

"I am going to start a restaurant where people can get a meal they can eat—with enjoyment—for less than seventy-five cents. I've got money. I've sold the Woman's Exchange."

That, by the way, was the origin of "Bailey's," known to all Greenwich Villagers these last years as "Old Bailey's," and to followers of American painting as the place where George Foster used to serve as a combined headwaiter and cashier, just as Luke O'Connor's bar at Christopher Street and Greenwich Avenue is known as the place where John Masefield was once a porter.

For though very few people have ever learned to like George Foster's queer, distorted, violent things, those who do like them seem to have money.

And the original question: "What if the Girl Wouldn't Go Back?" Well, in Hattie Bailey's case there is one painful consequence that needs to be recorded. Since her mother left Belleville, Indiana, the aristocracy have revived the art of baking bread since you can't buy a good loaf in that town.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

(Continued from page 77)

But the unfeeling girl only laughed and advised him to see a specialist.

His one comfort was the paternal attitude of the Judge. By him he was treated as a member of the family, and as such heard all about Mrs. Ponsonby Duke and the unappreciative J. Forsythe Brownes. The Judge sketched his home on the Quohonk River in the lyric strain of Nora Burn's advertisement, which now seemed to him to do the premises rather less than justice. A violent fit of coughing racked his auditor; and Mary, who had come into the room, gave him a look more searching than sympathetic.

"So you've throat-trouble too!" she said. "Were you gassed over there?"

He shook his head.

"Too much smoking. All I need is fresh air. What do you say to a stroll up the Drive?"

"An excellent idea for you. I've something else to do."

He strolled alone, trusting that absence would make her heart grow fonder, but he could detect no change in the morning, and on an impulse which he instantly regretted, announced that he would spend the week-end with them. This, too, she professed to think an excellent idea. They parted with cold civility, and he resolved to deprive her of his society till Monday night. But he relented. He was back Sunday evening in ample time for the sunset, which he planned to witness by her side. Hoping to surprise her into an unguarded revelation of feeling, he let himself in quietly. The surprise was his, however. There was a caller in the living-room, an uncouth person, burly in figure, harsh in voice and crude of speech.

"A switch-house," he was saying. "That's what this swell dame's been running. They kept a full gambling layout in the locked room. On her night off, the rich guys who put up for the joint came in for play. As much as forty thousand bucks have changed hands there at a sitting. All the rest of the week it looked straight as a church. I went there myself and got the glassy eye. What did I mean by butting into her private home? Even after we raided and caught 'em with the goods, she pulled the innocent stuff. Never dreamed anything was wrong. Said she told you all about it before she went. What else did she tell you? Come through now, if you don't want your name in the papers. Spill all you know."

"But I've already told you all I know," protested the Judge.

"Come through, come through! Your own record looks phony to me."

"Sir!"

"You laid low here after the Duke woman skipped. Never once opened your head to the agent."

"The rent was paid."

"What of it? It was up to you to notify the agent. What's the answer to that?"

Young Mr. Hughes supplied it.

"It was none of the agent's business." The officer wheeled toward the doorway.

"Is it any of your business?" he demanded.

"It certainly is. I'm the owner of this building, and I am sharing this apartment with Judge Ransom, for whom I am very glad to vouch."

"And who'll vouch for you?" the officer snapped. "I gotta be shown."

"You can generally trust the superintendent to know the owner of his house. You might ask mine on your way out."

"But what about the lessee of this apartment—Smith, or some such name?"

"J. Forsythe Browne is what he prefers to be called."

"It's all the same to me. Where does he get off at?"

"He happens to be my uncle. If that point seems important, you can address him at Rockhaven, Long Island."

Mary stirred in her corner.

"Want I do?" she inquired. "I'm perfect willing to swear that Mr. Hughes is Mr. Browne's nephew. He keeps few secrets from me."

The officer grinned and stood up.

"I'm satisfied," he said.

THE door closed.

"I apologize," said the nephew of J. Forsythe Browne humbly.

"My dear boy!" said the Judge. "Don't mention it. You have relieved me of a great embarrassment. If you could use your diplomacy with your uncle—"

"Don't worry about my uncle. He has a sense of humor. Besides, the work out there has done him good. I have just seen him. He's five inches smaller round the waist and talks of buying a place farther down the Quohonk where he can dock at low tide. But it's my own case that needs diplomacy. I ought to have made a clean breast of things at the start. I came to see what that advertisement meant, and I stayed"— he looked appealingly at Mary.—"I stayed because I couldn't help myself."

The Judge said he understood, and proved it by following his helpmate out of the room.

"So you guessed, Mary?" He crossed to her chair and bent over her.

"Almost at once."

"What made you?"

"Oh, mere trifles."

"Trifles?"

"You were so handy. You knew where things were kept. It was delicious to watch you."

"It was, eh?" He straightened.

"Every day you let slip something that betrayed you. It was too funny for words."

"And I suppose it was equally funny to watch me fall in love with you? I wonder you didn't take the family into the joke."

Her eyes fell.

"After a while," she said slowly, "it didn't seem such a joke."

"Mary! Do you mean that—that you began to care a little—yet couldn't trust me till I owned up? Well I've owned up."

"And I care," she said, "very much."

MISCHIEF

(Continued from page 38)

show you how something of the same sort can be incited without recourse to this bane of our days—alcohol."

MR. CRAY lifted a napkin from the top of a dozen or so of glasses which stood on a silver salver upon the sideboard. The glasses were filled with a pale amber liquid, on the top of which floated a small twist of lemon-peel. Very proudly indeed Mr. Cray handed a glass to each of the little company. They all accepted it with a smile of pleased interest.

"Now this," Mr. Cray announced, "is the subject of my first recipe. It is, I claim, pleasant to the taste, stimulating and refreshing. If you share my enthusiasm for the beverage of which you will presently partake, the recipe for it shall also be yours. Mrs. Medlicott. Miss Medlicott—gentlemen!"

They all tasted critically, tasted again, and set down their glasses empty. Then they all looked at one another. Mr. Wallin was the only unenthusiastic person.

"I'm afraid it'll never do, Joseph," he regretted, "although I must admit that it is pleasant enough so far as a soft drink could go."

"Your taste, sir," Mr. Hiram Croft said severely, "is vitiated. The beverage of which we have just partaken, Mr. Cray," he added, looking hard at the sideboard to see if there were any more, "represents, I consider, a remarkable discovery. I find it exceedingly pleasant, and, if I may say so, stimulating without the usual noxious aftertaste."

"I think it is perfectly delicious," Miss Medlicott pronounced.

"Most soothing," Mrs. Medlicott agreed.

"Mr. Wallin's criticism," Mr. Medlicott said, looking hard at him, "only proves how a taste for the really good and pure beverages of life may be destroyed by reckless indulgence in alcohol. I consider this beverage which you have offered us, Mr. Cray, a most marvelous discovery. I offer you my congratulations. I am impatient to become acquainted with your other and main discovery."

"I am most gratified," Mr. Cray declared beaming. "If you will follow me, then, we will now get along to the restaurant."

The little party made their way down the corridor to the lift and thence to the restaurant. There was not the slightest doubt that the truth of Mr. Cray's contentions was already becoming evident. The two old gentlemen, who brought up the rear arm in arm, looked a great deal less like college professors, and surveyed the gay scene in the lower with appreciative eyes. Mr. Hiram Croft talked the whole of the way. He was even genial to his rival, Mr. Wallin.

"It is my belief, sir," he said, "that your very interesting friend Mr. Cray has made a marvelous discovery. I have suffered from dyspepsia all my life. Meals have been a trouble to me instead of a pleasure. I have seldom anticipated the

partaking of food except with dread. Tonight I have quite a new feeling. I am hungry."

MR. WALLIN listened with respect to his companion's eulogy. Mrs. Medlicott, who walked at Mr. Cray's right, talked to him all the time with marked graciousness. She did not once raise her pince-nez to gaze with disapproval at the somewhat exotic evening dresses of the other guests in the foyer. Her mouth had lost its severe curve, and she too seemed full of pleasurable anticipation. Miss Medlicott, on his other side, was inclined to be a little thoughtful. She, too, however, was in the best of spirits, and a little cry of admiration escaped her when, escorted by many bowing waiters, they were ushered to a private room opening off the main restaurant in the center of which was a large table, beautifully decorated with great clusters of red roses, and with a little American flag rising from a fancy edifice in the middle. There was a general murmur of interest when, as they sat down, gold-foiled bottles, one to every two persons, were discovered around the table.

"So this is the great discovery?" Mrs. Medlicott said, smiling. "The bottle presents a most attractive appearance."

"I am glad that it meets with your approval," Mr. Cray replied. "I have instructed the waiter not to open any of it until after the soup, as the contents are slightly serated."

Mr. Hiram Croft looked a little disappointed. He ate his oysters and swallowed his soup with almost tumultuous eagerness. A little murmur of deep interest escaped from every one when, with the serving of the fish, a dark-visaged potentate dexterously opened one or two of the bottles and glasses were filled.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Mr. Cray said, "this may be an epoch-making dinner. If you approve of this beverage, as I trust you will do, there may soon come a time when it will become a familiar feature upon every sideboard and dinner-table. My best wishes to all of you!"

Glasses were clinked 'round the table. Mr. Cray drank with Mrs. Medlicott and Miss Medlicott, Mr. Wallin drank with Mr. Medlicott, the two old gentlemen drank with each other. Mr. Hiram Croft drank with everybody. When he set down his glass, it was empty. His words reflected the expression of pleasure on everyone's face.

"Mr. Cray," he pronounced, "there can be no manner of doubt about the qualities of this remarkable beverage. I hail you, sir, as one of the greatest discoverers of the age, one of the greatest friends the American stomach has ever had."

"Let us drink," Mrs. Medlicott purred, "to Mrs. Cray. What would she not give to be with us tonight!"

"To Mrs. Cray," the Senator assented, waving his refilled glass, "Vice President of the Kill-the-Drink League. Also to her worthy husband, Mr. Joseph P. Cray," he added, bowing to his host.

THE toast was duly honored, and the conversation continued along cheerful and optimistic lines. After his first glass, Mr. Cray turned to Mrs. Medlicott.

"Madam," he said, "I trust that it will

not offend your susceptibilities in any way if Mr. Wallin and I, who you know are not abstainers, take a glass of champagne?"

Mrs. Medlicott shook her head at him, but her expression as well as her tone was kind and genial.

"Why, you must please yourself, Mr. Cray," she replied. "I am thankful to say that I am not a prejudiced woman."

Mr. Cray bowed, and the waiter filled his glass and Mr. Wallin's with champagne of a well-known vintage. Mrs. Medlicott sighed.

"Every one to his taste," she said, "but it does astonish me, Mr. Cray, that when you have a beverage of such marvelous properties as the one which we are now drinking, that you should prefer to drink wine and face the consequences."

"Wine doesn't disagree with me, Madam," Mr. Cray declared mildly.

Mrs. Medlicott squeezed his arm in friendly fashion.

"Joseph Cray," she said, "I take an interest in you because I know your wife."

Mr. Cray sighed.

"I suppose Amelia has to be in it," he murmured.

Mrs. Medlicott shook her head playfully.

"Why, Mr. Cray," she exclaimed, "you are getting me all confused! Now listen to me, there's a dear man. Statistics—"

Mr. Hiram Croft's sonorous utterance suddenly descended upon them like a mill stream, sweeping away the froth of lighter conversation.

"Statistics," he interrupted, "have proved to the conviction of every thinking man, the evil and the horror of indulgence in alcoholic beverages of any sort. Mr. Joseph P. Cray here has swept away the last excuse of the wine drinker. This beverage," he continued, looking earnestly at the bubbles in his glass, "has none of the thin acidity of most temperance drinks. It has none ofsh—I beg your pardon," he said holding his hand before his mouth and correcting himself with prenatural gravity. "It has none of the thin limpidity of the aërated waters in ge-general use. If I were to search through my vocabulary for a single adjective, or rather epithet to apply to this wonderful refreshment, I should call it—inspired."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the two old gentlemen from the other end of the table.

"How eloquent you are, Mr. Croft!" Miss Medlicott murmured.

MR. CROFT dived for her hand under the table and very nearly lost his balance. The young lady drew a little farther away.

"What I should like to know," Mr. Medlicott demanded, "is what can alcohol give us that we do not find in this simple beverage?"

"What indeed?" Mr. Cray murmured, under his breath.

The Senator straightened his tie, which he was surprised to find had slipped round under his ear.

"Mr. Cray," he declared, "is the world's greatest benefactor. You agree with me, gentlemen?" he asked, leaning over and addressing the two gentlemen with strained politeness.

"Sure!" they exclaimed with one breath.

"I am glad to hear that," Mr. Croft said severely. "For a moment I fancied that you were not in sympathy with our enthusiasm."

"That's where you were dead wrong, then, Croft," one of them replied.

Mr. Croft looked round the table.

"If any one has anything to say against this beverage," he continued, with the air of one spoiling for a fight,—

"I thought it a little insipid," Mr. Wallin commented. "I was glad to get a glass of champagne afterwards."

"Insipid?" Mr. Croft repeated severely. "Mr. Wallin, you surprise me."

"Not nearly so much as you're surprising me," that gentleman replied. "I haven't seen you look so well or talk so well for ages."

Mr. Croft smiled. He looked steadily at Miss Medlicott's hand, as though meditating another dive. She promptly withdrew it, and moved her chair a little nearer to Mr. Wallin's.

"It was a pleasing custom in my younger days," Mr. Croft said presently, as the wonderful repast drew to a finish. "to—er—shing shongs. . . . . I beg your pardon, to sing songs at the conclusion of a feast of this description—college songs generally. Can any one oblige?"

EVERYONE seemed willing to oblige at once. Mr. Cray struck the table with his fist, however, and demanded silence for Mrs. Medlicott and Mrs. Medlicott interrupted with little bursts of laughter which necessitated her stopping sometimes to wipe the tears from her eyes, warbled a strange ditty in which the moonlight, a colored gentleman of acquisitive propensities, and a chicken, seemed inextricably mixed. Mr. Croft roared a buccaneering ditty, and Mr. Croft, in a reedy falsetto, essayed a well-known Dixie melody. Presently Mrs. and Miss Medlicott retired into the little withdrawing room opening out from the suite, Mr. Croft, supporting himself by the back of the chair. His eyes returned to the sideboard, and rested there with marked satisfaction.

"Two more bottles," he declared. "We'll give this beverage a thorough tesht, Mr. Cray."

Mr. Cray signed to the waiter. Then he rose to his feet. Miss Medlicott was standing on the threshold of the withdrawing room, beckoning imperatively to him.

"If you will excuse me for one moment, gentlemen," he begged.

"For one moment but never a lifetime," warbled Mr. Croft. "Come back soon, old dear."

Mr. Cray approached Miss Medlicott with some apprehension. She drew him inside the little room. Mrs. Medlicott was lying on the couch with her eyes closed.

"Dear host," Miss Medlicott began.

Mr. Cray saw that the young lady's eyes were dancing and he felt greatly relieved.

"Will you give me the recipe of your beverage, please?" she said.

"I will if you promise to marry Mr. Wallin," he replied.

She laughed softly.

"He hasn't asked me—lately," she replied.

"If he asks you tonight?" Mr. Cray persisted.

She looked back into the room. The two old gentlemen were sitting arm in arm, telling each other stories. Mr. Medlicott, with a cigar in the corner of his mouth and a beatific expression upon his face, was leaning forward in his chair, listening to Mr. Hiram Croft telling a story in an undertone. Mr. Wallin, pink and white and wholesome, was looking a little bored.

"I agree," she whispered.

Mr. Cray drew a paper from his pocket.

"You take four bottles of old champagne, one pint of brandy," he began—

"No more," she interrupted. "Take my advice and tear it up. Fetch Mr. Wallin."

"Ed," Mr. Cray called out softly, "will you step this way?"

Mr. Wallin stepped.

THE WIDENING CIRCLE

(Continued from page 53)

Again Achison indulged in anathema. freely admitting that it was of no use to delude himself. Without waiting to bring the thing to a show-down, he was beaten. But even in a rout, there is always the chance of a maneuver which may retrieve some portion of the loss; and it was to this phase of the situation that the lawyer now bent the energies of his extraordinary mind.

He had started up the car again, driving very slowly through the deepening dusk as he pondered this or that course of action; but as the lower gates of the estate and the lodge-house came in sight, he reached his decision. Switching off the lights, he deliberately turned the car off the road and into the shadow of a thick clump of trees a little distance away, where he stopped and stepped out.

A LITTLE after ten o'clock that night Achison's telephone rang in response to a call from the switchboard on the lower floor of the large apartment-house in New York where he made his home. A servant answered the ring, and was informed that Mr. Schofield was downstairs and would like to see Mr. Achison.

There was a brief pause upon the receipt of this message; then the switchboard attendant was requested to advise the visitor that Mr. Achison had retired, but that he would see Mr. Schofield, if the latter would give him five minutes to dress.

The five minutes lengthened to fifteen; and Ramsey, who had accompanied John Schofield, was showing his impatience over the delay by frequent glances at the clock, when at last the word arrived to come up.

The two men found the door of the apartment opened to them, and they were ushered by the servant into a small and very beautiful reception-room.

At almost the same moment Achison

entered from another door. He was hastily pulling on a purple silk dressing-gown, and his hair was tumbled as if he had just risen from his couch.

He stopped short as he saw that Schofield was not alone. For the barest second a shadow, evil and sinister, crossed his face; then it was gone. In its place he assumed an expression of astonishment and concern.

"You? Mr. Schofield!" he exclaimed. "I thought, of course, it was Fred who had come to town and was rousing me from my slumbers." Then as if struck by a sudden distressing thought: "Nothing has happened to him?"

He drew a sigh of relief as Schofield responded with a negative gesture.

"Ah, that is good. But my curiosity increases. It must be a matter of importance to bring you here at this time of night. Sit down, wont you?" He pointedly ignored the presence of Ramsey, addressing himself entirely to the older man. "I believe, though, I can hazard a pretty good guess at your mission. You want to sign that will before you sleep?"

Schofield sat down heavily.

"No," he said in his harsh, dry voice. "I am in no great anxiety about that. It is something of a good deal more importance that brings me to you. The missal which I showed you this afternoon has been stolen."

"Stolen?" Achison's surprise was expressed by a single deep-toned note of incredulity. "Stolen!" he repeated as if he did not yet grasp the assertion. "How? When?"

"Some time between six and seven o'clock."

ACHISON apparently made a rapid mental calculation. "That must have been shortly after I left."

"The night watchman, who was just coming on duty, saw a man stealing through the grounds in a direction away from the house, and—"

"Well, that is something to go on," interrupted the lawyer with aroused interest. "Could the watchman give a description of him?"

"No." Schofield shook his head regretfully. "It was growing dark, and he thought at first the man was Frederick or one of his friends. It was not until he heard a car starting up and leaving the grounds at high speed that his suspicions were aroused and he decided to report the matter."

"A bold undertaking!" Achison's brows were knitted reflectively. "It must have been some one who knew of the book, its value and also its hiding-place. An agent of the Italian Government perhaps, who had succeeded in running it down? Or no—he would have come directly to you. It must be the work of a group of high-class thieves, who in some way had learned of your treasure. The first thing to do is to list all the persons who had any knowledge of its being in your possession, or of its secret repository."

"No one knew anything about it except myself." Schofield spoke with obstinate finality.

Achison raised his eyebrows, a faint, cynical smile on his lips.

"That is something it wont do to be

too positive about. You must have had cataloguers from time to time. There is always the chance—"

"My only cataloguer has been my ward, Margery Drew." Schofield drew himself up stiffly. "And she had no knowledge of the missal, or where it was kept."

"In that case,"—Achison leaned his arms on the table and looked across it at his unbidden guest,—"I shall have to say something that may both anger and pain you, Mr. Schofield. There are two or three suppositions that force themselves upon me. Your ward being a woman, it is hard to say just what she knew, or if she had discovered anything, to whom she may have confided it.

"Oh,"—soothingly, for Schofield gave a gesture of violent impatience,—"I merely offer it as one of the contingencies; we must take them all into account.

"And there is another that suggests itself," he went on. "Do you remember that this afternoon Frederick entered the room, and saw not only the book but the open space in the cabinet. More than that, a guest whom he mentioned by name was hard upon his heels." He did not even glance toward Ramsey as he said this. "You will recall, Mr. Schofield—my warning."

SCHOFIELD looked at him from under the pent-house of his bushy eyebrows. He was like some worn-out old mastiff rising at the approach of an enemy, with bristling neck.

"You are intimating, Achison," he said slowly, "that we are now in the presence of the thief. On that point I agree with you. I agree with you so fully that—I am going to ask you to return the book at once."

"Me!" Achison stared at him for an astounded moment, and then rose so suddenly that he almost overturned his chair. "Me!"

His hand touched his breast; his expression was one of haughty, indignant amazement. He lifted his arm with a threatening movement, and then let it drop.

"If you were not a feeble old man, I would throw you out neck and crop, you and this fellow here." He jerked his head toward Ramsey. Then by a determined effort he controlled his wrath, and tried to speak more reasonably.

"My dear sir, this is a painful manifestation of the vagaries of extreme age. You are more in need of a physician than of a lawyer."

"Be that as it may, I want the book, and I want it now." Schofield, too, had risen, and leaning on his stick, brought his great, bony claw of a hand down on the table, the palm flat.

Achison reseated himself and glared at his accuser scornfully.

"I suppose I should neither be surprised nor annoyed under the circumstances. The incident has also its humorous side." He gave a short, contemptuous laugh. "You, the self-confessed receiver of stolen goods, holding in your possession a valuable object which you dare not admit owning, would naturally not hesitate either to suspect or accuse another man of the same lack of moral sense. My dear Mr. Schofield, you do not deserve it, but I am going to give you a few words of counsel. You will have the devil of a time in recovering that book. You dare not advertise its loss, or make any open attempt to recover it."

"I am not going to advertise its loss." Schofield twisted his mouth, his gaunt form still towering over the table between them. "I want it now."

Achison drew a breath of profound irritation, and then with an air of resigned patience lighted a cigarette.

"It seems to me," he said with a show of disgust, "that the person with you might be better employed than in fostering and abetting your crazy obsessions. I respect your age, and have nothing more to say."

"Don't bluff, Achison." The cracked old voice had a ring of power in it. "I've played these cutthroat games myself. You're a master of them, but it's of no use. When I explain a little further, you'll come down from your high horse and hand over the missal."

"Stop harping." The lawyer gave an indifferent shrug. "'My ducats and my daughter!'"

Schofield let himself down slowly into his chair.

"I'm old, my friend, but I'm not blind. I've seen ever since Frederick came back that there was something on his mind. Boys at his age don't confide in elderly uncles, but he did tell Margery of the —arrangement." His voice grew hoarse; his hands, clasped over the top of his cane, trembled. "The fine arrangement between you and himself! She went to Ramsey with it; and he, having a considerable knowledge of you and your methods, undertook to lay the matter before me."

Achison had not moved, but his face had hardened until it resembled a stone mask; and over it lay again that sinister shadow.

"Young brains," chuckled Schofield. "You must learn to respect them, Achison. You ignore the fact that you are growing old. However," he went on, "Ramsey and I considered the situation from all sides. It was an *impasse*. So, without consulting Frederick,—he is not even aware of our being here tonight,—we decided on a plan."

"Ah!" as the other lifted his head quickly. "I've caught your interest at last?"

"Not in your plans." Achison flicked the ashes from his cigarette into a tray. "Merely in the cerebrations of a senile fox and a paranoiac rabbit."

Schofield's worn frame shook with appreciative laughter.

"You're vitriolic, Achison, but my old hide is too leathery to scorch. And I mustn't lose your attention. You had the boy in a trap. The only thing left for us was to get you into another. To catch you and show you up would promptly kill your influence over him as well as his sense of obligation toward you. Ramsey, it seems, has made quite a study of what he calls your peculiar psychology. So we worked on that lead.

"A senile fox, you called me just now." he laughed croakingly. "Well, the poor old fox had the job of coaxing the big-

gest, sleekest, cleverest rat in the country into the trap prepared for him. No ordinary cheese for that wily rodent; he wouldn't even go after plum-pudding. But he did have a taste for caviare; so we baited the trap with caviare, and we caught him. We've got him hard and fast."

"Then," asked Achison with a deadly softness, "why are you here?"

"Because," replied Schofield, with equal softness, "I allowed myself just half an hour to convince you that you had better hand me over the book."

His voice strengthened and grew stern and impressive.

"I have laid my cards on the table. Because you live down to the dregs of human nature, you imagine that all other men do so. Your one vulnerable spot is your innate dishonesty. You fool! Did you really think that I would hold a museum treasure under such circumstances as I described to you—that because you are without principle or standards, I was too? I bought that book at a fair price years ago from an Italian nobleman who brought his works of art to this country before the present law went into effect. Few knew of it, because I collect solely for my own pleasure."

Achison's eyes, as he listened, were like points of ice with fire behind them.

"I refuse to argue with a madman. You and your friend will leave my apartment at once, or I shall enforce the order."

He lifted a bronze hammer, and struck sharply against a gong on the table.

But his man responded almost before the note of summons could have traveled beyond the room.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Achison, but a man is in the next room asking for Mr. Schofield."

"Tell him to wait five minutes more, and then come in." Schofield spoke before Achison could do so. Almost casually he turned toward the lawyer.

"A man with a search-warrant," he explained. "And now the missal, please, Achison. Also I may as well tell you that it will not be necessary to come out to Scarlet Maples tomorrow to attend to the signing of that will. The complete draft of my desires, signed, sealed and witnessed, has been in the hands of my attorneys for some days."

ACHISON bent his head in his hands. When he lifted it, his face was seamed with passion, but his nerve held.

"Good God! What ingratitude!" His rich voice was choked and broken. "Mr. Schofield, I have listened to you with surprise and horror, and during your whole recital of this vile and crafty scheme to discredit me, I have steadily refused to exculpate myself in the presence of a man who has pursued me with insane, unbelievable malice. But now I must do justice to myself.

"After your possibly bogus confession to me this afternoon, I left your house possessed by vague forebodings. This man Ramsey, an international crook, as I have every reason to know, had without doubt seen the missal and its hidingplace. I was convinced that he would lose no time in getting it into his hands, and I determined to outwit him.

Mae Murray and David Powell in "Idols of Clay," a Paramount Picture
(*A GEORGE FITZMAURICE PRODUCTION*)

Love Thrills the Movie Millions!

THE fascination of the photoplay has reached into every nook and corner of human life throughout the Universe! It enthralls one and all—children from seven to seventy! Men and women in all walks of life, the high and the humble, the poor, the middle class, the rich—the toiler and the man of ease, the women of fashion and the shop girl, the lady of leisure and the woman who works—the clerk, the conductor, the lawyer, the doctor, the broker, the banker—all intermingle and stride by side at the Movies! All are swayed by the same feelings as they watch the film's rapid pictorializations of the Moving Finger of Fate—as they even see things pictured that have happened in their own lives, or the lives of their friends—so the movie screen is The World's Looking Glass, wherein it sees reflected all its own emotions!

Yes, all the world goes to the Movies! All humanity wants its thrill. Thousands of Movie shows in thousands of cities daily, nightly, are packed with throngs of eager people with a keen appetite for realism, romance, tragedy, pathos, humor—they want to see and feel every human emotion it is possible to portray!

AND all this Movie madness sweeping the world has revealed startling things! Do you know one strange thing the Movies have done? THEY HAVE PRODUCED THOUSANDS OF PROMISING NEW PLAYWRIGHTS—men and women photoplay writers who get their ideas merely from seeing photoplays night after night!

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SO right here is your big, vital, gripping, romantic opportunity—in an irresistible profession that carries with it a world of surprising new possibilities, that lifts you up to new honors, new environment, fine friends, exalted purpose, and the admiration of all your family and fellowmen. YOU may learn to write photoplays and stories—yes, you! YOU who have always doubted you could—YOU who thought it was some mythical, mysterious magic that only geniuses dare attempt.

All the ideas, all the material, all the suggestions, the spur to your imagination, you can get at the Movies, by a method described in a wonderful New Easy System of Story and Play Writing published at Auburn, New York. It is called THE IRVING SYSTEM and is for the millions who go to the Movies and want to learn how to write photoplays and stories. In a word, THE IRVING SYSTEM is for you.

It teaches you! How to attend the Movies and adapt scenes, incidents, motives, titles, characters to your own purposes and plans for photoplays; it shows you how easily you may get ideas for photoplays every time you go to a picture play; how to switch around any play and make it a real story totally unlike the one from which you adapted it; how to take characters you see in any picture and reconstruct them for your own photoplay; how you can easily rebuild any plot you see; how simple it is to revise and rebuild dialogue; how to begin writing photoplays in the easiest, simplest, surest way; how to demonstrate to yourself it doesn't take genius to write them, but plain common sense and earnest effort.

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"I returned to the house, got the book without difficulty, and drove home. For over two hours I sat here tonight, debating the proper course to follow—whether to return the missal to you tomorrow and urge a new and safer hiding-place for it, or to do the only right and proper thing."

Again he struck the gong upon the table, and when the servant appeared asked him to bring a parcel which he said was upon the table in his bedroom. The man returned immediately with the package, carefully wrapped and sealed.

"Hand it to Mr. Schofield," Achison ordered with a negligent gesture.

Schofield adjusted his glasses and looked at it. It was neatly addressed to the Italian Ambassador at Washington.

"I submit that as my complete exculpation," said Achison superbly, "and as proof of my altruistic if unappreciated motives."

The room rang with Schofield's crackling laughter.

"So that was how you employed the fifteen minutes you kept us cooling our heels downstairs? Preparing for any emergency, taking no chances? Clever of you, Achison! You meant ill to me and my nephew,"—the old man spoke very seriously now,—"but nevertheless you did us a good turn. No matter what your motives, you showed him a good turn when he needed it, and you restored him to me. Therefore this incident shall go no farther."

If Achison felt relief, he did not show it. There was a mocking smile on his lips.

"That must be a great grief to Mr. Ramsey," he observed ironically.

"It is," returned Ramsey. "But it cheers me to think how the circle is ever widening. More and more people are coming to know of your devious ways and crooked tricks, and some day you will stand fully exposed before the whole world."

"Ah? The old Prussian toast." There was a sinister ring under the lightness of the response. "'The Day,' eh? Well, let us hope, Ramsey, that we both live to see it."

BEAUTY

(Continued from page 43)

He felt the ugliness of it like a venom running blazing through his veins. It poisoned all mankind. He gasped:

"Cowper! No! He confessed? What could he confess to?"

"Oh, to all the love-making, the meetings, the fact that he was in Louise's room. Then he stopped and said he refused to answer further lest he incriminate himself. That's worse than if he had actually sworn to a lie.

"I believe Louise is innocent. I know she is. She's the kind that would have boasted of deceiving Roy if she could have brought herself to it at all.

"She's almost insane. She's lost her beauty, her home and even her good name—that's a pretty tough price to pay for loving one man and trying to hold him, isn't it? When you think of the women in this town, and other towns, rich and poor, who don't care what they do, and still hold their heads up and keep their homes, it's pretty tough, I say. If it doesn't put Louise in the madhouse, it's because her blood is as pure as her heart. She's the decentest damned fool I know, and—"

The little swear-word broke her, and she began to blubber. She was one of the new women who cry so seldom that they do not weep gracefully. She hated her tears and despised herself, flung about trying to shake off the weakness.

Larrick gathered her into his arms to uphold her, but she thrust him off, scolding.

"Oh, no love-making! None of that awful rot in mine, please!"

He ached with pity for her, and for the other woman asleep somewhere in the gaudy mansion. As he pondered the matter, the figure of Cowper overshadowed all the others in its reptilian odium.

"I see what you want of me," he growled. "You want me to kill Cowper."

"I could do that myself," Nancy muttered, "but he's vanished. Louise, when she had read the affidavits, called him on the telephone at once to appeal to him. But she got word that he had left town and his address was unknown. The servants had gone too. She couldn't find them.

"Then she thought of me. We'd always been pally. She telephoned every few minutes. But I was out in the rain, spooning with you. My God, I deserve what Louise has got, and here I am asking you to help us."

"It's the proudest thing I ever had happen." Larrick sighed, "and all I want is for you to tell me what to do—who to kill and where to find him at—or anything."

Nancy seized his arm and clenched it, in acknowledgment of his proffer of knighthood. But she was as empty of inspiration as he. She had mainly wanted somebody to share the curse with.

She felt that Larrick would really have committed death upon anyone she designated. It was horrible, but it had a beauty in it. He came of a civilization where old-time chivalry survives with all its evils and all of its irresistible splendors, where duels are common upon the highways and where a woman's name has a fatal import, where "draw and defend yourself!" refers to a pistol instead of a sword, but is otherwise as frequent and as deadly as in the days of Mallory and Froissart.

In New York there was more shooting than in any other city in the world perhaps, except Chicago and one or two other American cities, but robbery was the cause of most of it, or gang-quarrel; or if love were involved, it was likely to be some wretched mockery of it, some vile passion. In the South it still held a certain dignity because it retained the tradition of the duel era.

After her crisis of tears, Nancy Fleet seemed to be restored to sanity. The fierce lust for revenge took on a morning-after chill, and she saw in Larrick a quaint and frightful survival of another period. She was afraid of him as he stood waiting only for the word to go and hunt a man down. She felt a revulsion toward Louise Coykendall as well. To her, life was as much too precious as it was too cheap with Larrick. They were both fanatics.

"After all," she said dismally, "I suppose Roy is only doing all this to force Louise to divorce him. He is determined to get free of her, if he has to drag her in the gutter. But he would probably be glad to furnish her with evidence against him if she would accept it and use it. He offered to several times before, but she wouldn't have it."

LARRICK felt a slump from the rough crags of tragedy to the dull sands of commonplace.

"Divo'ce ought to be easy enough in this State," he said, "seein' how easy it is in Texas."

"Oh, but it's almost impossible in New York," Nancy exclaimed. "There's only one ground, you know."

"Don't they allow it for desertion or cruelty or any of those things?"

Nancy shook her head. "There's only one ground."

"Why, in Texas, we allow it on six grounds, and down there we think Texas is the most moral State in the world and New York the most immoral. We think that if a couple don't hit it off, they got a right to try again. A friend of mine hitched up with a right nice girl, but they didn't gee somehow. She was something of a hell-cat and wouldn't let him off, so finally he sued her on the ground of cruelty, renderin' life unsuppo'table as the law says.

"He testified that her cookin' was awful bad, and took all the meanin' out of his vitties. The judge knew 'em both well and liked 'em both, and besides, he was very fond of his food, weighed over two hundred—the Judge, I mean. So he allowed that bad cookin' was one of the cruelest cruelties there was, and he granted the divo'ce. Everybody said he was a wise judge, and nobody thought any the worse of the girl. She married a fellow who struck oil and could affo'd a cook, so she's right happy now. And her first husband is happy too, with a lady who runs a lunch counter.

"Looks like to me that you-all up North would get along bettah if you didn't take things so se'ious. If New York loosened up in her divo'ce law, it might improve things. Lots of preachers are always howlin' about so many divo'ces, but as far as I can find out, the places where they are hardest to get is where they need 'em most.

"Some folks say that tight divo'ce laws would save the American home, but I've found that nothin' makes a cayuse buck like a cinch that's too tight. He'll naturally buck himself to death if he don't bust the strap or somebody don't onloosen him.

"Now, this fella Coykendall. I don't like him the least bit, from what you tell about him. But if he had his wife down in Texas now, and couldn't stand her

any longer, he'd just go to court and bring some of her biscuits along to prove her cookin' was no 'count. The judge would allow him free, and no disgrace to the lady. Looks like to me that this Mrs. Coykendall—"

But he stopped short. He must not say what he was thinking. He had little sympathy for anybody, man or woman, who insisted on hanging on to a woman or a man who did not want to be hung on to, and he would have approved any gentle but firm method that Coykendall might have employed to pry Mrs. Coykendall's grip loose. But to blast her good name and accuse her of being fast, to bribe servants to swear to it and scare a white-livered lover into a false confession, that was the act of a desperado. Shooting was too good for him. Larrick would have been glad to make one of a lynching-bee to string him up to any of New York's multitudinous lamp posts.

He was not religious. He had been little to church as boy or man. He had never even heard that marriage had been declared a sacrament about the time that America was discovered—and not before. He could not see what religion had to do with marriage, since there was none in heaven. As for earthly bliss, it was well known that religious disputes were the bitterest and the most incessant of all. Many couples had split because they could not agree on the church to get married in. Some of his friends had been spliced by parsons, and some by justices of the peace, and he had seen no difference in the results. Some of both sorts were failures, and some successes.

If a man could marry again as fast as his wives died, he did not see why he should not marry again if his wife divorced him. Most of the couples he had known in his humble experience were as happy as their temperaments permitted. Most of them had known so little of luxury and had asked so little of life that they had expected little of marriage and so having got it, had been content.

But up here in this realm where luxury was daily bread, and where the appetite for rapture and beauty of every kind was whetted, not appeased, by gratification, too much was being asked of marriage, perhaps. No man or woman could give as much grace and charm, novelty and everlasting refreshment as the other party to the union required to keep interested.

It was not that the poor millionaires were sinful as their critics insisted—those ruthless satirists who never dream of wasting justice or mercy or pity on people who have money; it was simply that they longed for delight. They wanted love to be an art, a music, a poem—not an eternal slicing of the same loaf of bread, the better for being stale. At least some of them did, or were so advertised by the newspapers which make nothing of the poor mobs that pour through the divorce mills, and make everything of the occasional rich who fall into it.

As a matter of fact, the well-to-do were more likely to dwell happily together than the poor—and did, with fewer quarrels and more infrequent tragedy. Nancy's father and mother had never fought more bitterly than is to be expected in a lively home. Their wedlock had been as comfortable as could humanly be. Yet Nancy forgot them and the very solidity of the home they had built, in her resentment of the Coykendall fiasco.

She had hardly listened to Larrick's chatter about liberal divorce. She knew the New York ordeal. She foresaw how greedily the scandal would be seized upon and magnified. The papers would give it the prominence of an international war. And none of the allied relatives and friends would escape. Nancy was fearless of nearly everything but the newspapers. She was governed by that phobia which has become the terror of modern life.

She threw all the blame for the past secret sorrows of Louise and for her future notorious sorrows on the institution of marriage, and it froze Larrick's blood to hear her rage!

"My cousin Louise's romance had the most ideal beginning—lifelong acquaintance, insane love, brief and happy engagement, parental approval on both sides, plenty of money on both sides, magnificent church wedding, a few beautiful early children—everything! And now it has gone to smash as if all the rules had been broken and a curse put on it by everybody.

"I suppose if the truth were known, Louise is as much to blame as Roy. It's marriage that's really to blame. I've seen so many marriages of every kind, elopements, conventional attachments, rich and poor, native and foreign, and Lord how they fail! I hope to God I'm never fool enough to take the plunge off the cliff. It will be lonely sometimes, but there's no loneliness like what so many of the wives I know are suffering—and some of the husbands too. No marriage in mine, thank you!"

LARRICK had not asked her to marry him and had no dream of daring so high, but he could not endure to hear a woman so marvelously equipped and modeled for love, so plainly intended for marriage, denouncing it wholesale and forswearing her destiny. He put out his hand toward her and murmured:

"Now, honey—"

But she knocked his hand aside and snarled!

"Agh, you men!"

When she saw the hurt look in his eyes, she patted his hand apologetically and laughed: "And for the matter of that --agh, us women!"

She went on laughing, a low, monotonous, uncanny laugh that she could not stop. It became a kind of gibbering. Larrick expected her to begin to shriek with hysterics, but she had just enough self-control to deny herself that relief. Suddenly she caught sight of the clock.

"Oh, Lord! I'll be late to my luncheon, and it's with Randel the sculptor, a demon who gets hurt and wont wait. My car must be outside. Give me two minutes, and I'll be right down, and take you with me. Where shall I drop you?"

"You're always droppin' me!"

"But I always pick you up again. Where shall I drop you this time?"

He looked at his watch.

"I'm due at my dancin'-lesson, but I don't reckon there's any use takin' any mo' lessons; I suppose there'll be no mo' dancin' now for us."

Nancy mocked his pathos:

Would You Trade Jobs With These Five Women?

This woman is an architect and engineer who built a whole section of a great American city.

Photograph by Hoek

Success has been theirs. How they have won it is told in the January issue of the most up-to-date magazine in the world today.

This woman is unique in that her job is to teach other women how to sell things to still other women.

Photograph by Kaufmann and Fabry Co., Chicago

Van Oeyen Studio, Cleveland, Ohio

IF you are a woman with any interests at all outside your home the January issue of THE GREEN BOOK MAGAZINE will prove to be just the sort of magazine you've been hoping for. If you are on the job and being paid for your work you will call it *your* magazine. If you are interested in all the problems that confront the alert American woman of today you'll call it *your* magazine. And it is.

This woman has built up a big business making and selling unusual dolls

IN each of the score of articles contained in the January number there is something especially for you. That's what makes it different. It recognizes that you, as a woman, are coming into your own at last and it reflects this "you" in your new "own" in a spirit of fellowship and camaraderie that makes it unique among magazines. Get the January issue today and make a discovery that will delight you.

The Sort of Fiction You Like Best

"Youth Triumphant," by George Gibbs
"Nobody's Man," by E. Phillips Oppenheim
"Sweet Stranger," by Berta Ruck
"The Career of Edna Sheldon," by Helen J. Ferris

Short Stories by

Lillian Lauferty, Dorothy Barstow, Alexander Hull, Du Vernet Rabell, Elizabeth Gertrude Stern.

Photograph by Howell, West Plains, Mo.

This girl, with her two sitters, runs a new paper in the Ozarks.

All in the current January issue of—

This is the woman who supplies Christmas trees to a great city.

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THE GREEN BOOK MAGAZINE

On Sale Everywhere FOR JANUARY 25 Cents a Copy

"Oh, there'll always be more dancing. I'll bet you anything you like that Louise will be dancing one of these days again. She'll put off her mask too, in time. Nothing lasts,—love or grief or shame or anything. They're always renewed, all of them, but the old grief gives way to the new, and—but I'd better stop before I get literary. Go on, take your lesson. If you don't dance with me, there's always somebody else."

"There'll be nobody else for me but you."

He said it with such sincerity that she gave him a quick searching glance. There was a hunger of yearning in her eyes, but she denied it at once.

"I remember Roy Coykendall's saying almost those very words to me once. 'There'll never be anybody else for me but Louise,' he said, and he meant it. And now look at the dumpy things!

"I wonder how long it will be before you get a new craze. I give you a week to forget me. Try to love me till I get back. I'm just going upstairs to wash my eyes and get a dry hanky."

She turned for a postscript:

"But there's one thing you needn't worry about: I'll never pursue you when you run after somebody else. So please feel perfectly free. I don't love you, and I'm not going to—you or anybody."

(How true a prophetess she was in one vatication, how false in another!)

NANCY'S two minutes were nearly half an hour. Larrick had time to wander about the great room and marvel at a few of its treasures. He was ignorant of their historical or artistic significance. He had merely a sense of stupefaction at the labor expended on the cover of a book, the tooling, the gold-work, the comfort to the touch that made it as pleasantly caressible as a woman's skin—almost. There was a piece of chiseled ivory in which the maker had evidently set himself almost impossible problems just for the pleasure of conflict, tiny modelings of almost microscopical delicacy. Hardly anyone would even see it or admire it: and yet it had pleased some long-dead carver to go blind for the sake of this infinitesimal anonymous monument.

Larrick's heart was wrung with thwarted sympathies and ignorances as he sauntered from curio cabinet to bookshelf and back. He was gazing up at a time-tarnished portrait, when Nancy's voice made him jump.

He whirled and found her a work of such superhuman art that he forgot the other wonders for this. The same instincts that led him to stroke the bookbinding with gladdened fingers, and to study the ivory-carving with delighted eyes, carried his hand out to touch this human object of *vertu* and draw her close enough to study.

But Nancy frowned with a tormented smile, dodged him and marched out into the hall, where a sentinel stood waiting with Larrick's hat and stick. The opened door revealed Fifth Avenue in a blinding glare of morning light, and opposite, the trees of Central Park in motionless glistening green.

Nancy paused in terror of the heat, then made the plunge and hurried to her limousine. Larrick climbed in after, and she gave the driver Mrs. Kadrew's street-number.

She smiled into the greedy eyes of Larrick. There was always something back of her eyes, and they always seemed to see something back of his eyes. She played with love as with cards, asking no advantages because she was only a girl. She alternated bluff with frankness, inscrutability with candor, but she never expected or would tolerate any mercy.

"Now that women have got the vote," she would say, "we've got to give up all that old stuff and nonsense about being the weaker sex, about being betrayed and abandoned and wronged. When we lose a love-fight, we've got to take our punishment like good sports."

She was feeling quite the gambler now. This plainsman who had interested her at first as an uncouth novelty was fascinating her now as a dangerous opposite with a new line of tricks, a different technique. The fact that he was unconscious of his own skill and doubly perilous because of his sincerity made him all the more exciting. As the car stopped at Mrs. Kadrew's door, she said:

"If you'll make a good lesson of it today, I'll put you through your paces tonight, and we'll have a dance together."

"I'm afraid I wont be ready."

"You'd better be. I'm leaving town tomorrow on my father's power boat. Dad has a big house there, and you wont see me for a week, and not then, unless you come up to Newport."

"Good Lord, you're not goin' to leave me all by myse'f in this man's town?"

She was touched by his dismay at the thought of losing her. She squeezed his hand and said:

"I made this date before I knew you. I'd break it, but—it wouldn't be white, on such short notice. Call for me tonight at —say, at ten, and we'll have a farewell dance somewhere."

This was so amazing that he stood gaping as her car left him. He forgot to lift his hat till it was too late for her to receive the salute. But then she had just cast formality and gallantry overboard with a splash. The extent of this jetsam terrified him. She was evidently not in the least afraid of him. That made him utterly afraid of her.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE extremes of the emotional experiences of these New Yorkers made Larrick giddy. Their life was like a scenic railway at a cheap amusement park —shoot up to the tree-tops! plunge to the depths! whirl round a curve! roar through the dark! climb and swoop, risk everything, bodies and souls and all—and pay for the privilege!

This Nancy Fleet who had wept before him for the fate of her cousin, had waved to him with the cheer of a girl ignorant that sorrow had ever been invented. She had talked to him about never loving anybody; yet she had let him kiss her and never implied that either of them had incurred a solemn obligation. She frankly told him she was on her way to lunch with another man, and yet she asked him to take her out to a dance at ten o'clock.

Of course, all this could have been duplicated in any village. There were facile and fickle girls in the cowlands too. There were general flirts, and sly sage-hens who were up to any mischief so long as it was secret, and high-chinned girls who would ride anywhere with anybody and stand no nonsense either from companions or gossips.

He had ridden alone with more than one girl, miles from the sight of man. He had gone buggy-riding to far-off dances and brought his girl home at daybreak, and her father had never thought of shooting him down or insisting on a shotgun wedding, a "military wedding," they called it nowadays. There had been plenty of sin and scandal back there in Arcadia too, but it was part of the credit and debit of life's bookkeeping.

The poor and plain were forgiven for their lack of convention, and if they fell sometimes, it was thought of gently. But the rich, the city folk—there was something damned about everything they did. A girl dressed in the latest fashion was already a bad one in the homelier eye.

Larrick would have been merely tickled at an invitation to take one of his desert beauties to a late dance. He would have looked forward to a bit of spooning and selected a tractable horse. The girl's paw and maw would probably have joked him about driving with one hand, and said: "We was young ourse'ves once."

To go buggy-riding with the gorgeous Nancy Fleet, though, and to a dance in Babylon town—that gave him a scare. But the scare was only a spur to his bronco imagination, and his heart was bucking gloriously as he went to his lesson. His mood was just the mood for the new dances, and Mrs. Kadrew found that in place of encouraging him not to be afraid, she had to caution him to moderate his hilarity.

She enjoyed the romping, but she warned him that he would be dancing in a crowded ballroom and not on the lone prairie. He had the knack of it now at least, and his feet had learned to obey his whim. His partner could be relied on to foreknow his next step and meet it with the complementary maneuver. That was one of the miracles of the modern school—the rapport of the partners who moved, spun, sidled, dipped or tiptoed in a mystic oneness of spirit and flesh.

What young Mr. Montague felt when he stole through the garden to young Miss Capulet's balcony was what Gad Larrick felt when his taxicab halted before the moon-silvered mansion of Miss Fleet, but he had no Shakespeare to dress up his vague yearnings in godlike poetry. *Juliet* was only twelve years old when her father tried to force her to marry the wrong man, and drove her to the tomb. At twelve Nancy Fleet's father thought of her as still a babe. She had her love-affairs, of course, but they still smacked of the nursery. The thought of her marrying would have been counted outrageous. Any New York *Romeo* who ran away with a girl who was under sixteen would have been guilty of abduction and punishable by imprisonment.

Nancy confessed to twenty-two, with no guaranty of the accuracy of the count. Her father would as soon have attempted to carry a wildcat to the altar as try to

force her to marry according to his orders. A parent's wish, indeed, had come to have a little less than no influence at all with the matrimonial plans of the American girl; parental approval served as a slight handicap to the suitor. And this is all for the best, since nothing imaginable could be more hideous than the results of centuries of parental power over matrimony. There are new ways enough of heartbreak, but some of the old ways are dead and done.

As Nancy came downstairs to meet Larrick, she thought she was paying a sufficient tribute to her father when she stopped in at the library (where he was mulling over a new invoice of first editions with uncut leaves) and kissed him.

He said: "Just coming in?"

She said: "Just going out again."

He shook his poll like a deposed monarch and sighed: "Try to get back before daylight."

She sighed: "You poor old-fashioned thing! We don't dance all night the way you did. The musical union wont let us."

He smiled: "You're very beautiful, and very precious."

She silenced him with a hug and ran.

She found Larrick so handsome and so smartly groomed that she had to bring him down:

"Oh, looky at the cowboy in his bran'-new store clothes."

He slumped at this, having no margin of self-confidence; and she had to rescue him.

"You really are beautiful. I'm stunned. Bear me away in your swift taxi, whither you will."

As he helped her into his cab, he had to ask her where she wanted to go.

"I had hoped you would have selected a lugger."

"I don't know any luggers."

"All right, the Biltmore. Art Hickman's there with his San Francisco band."

As soon as the cab started, Larrick did the expected, but she put his arm away, protesting.

"Please realize that I've got to appear in public in these rags, and I wont be rumpled. You'll have to hold me long enough to music. Save your strength."

She loved to play with fire, but she could keep her hands from it when it endangered appearances.

The elevator at the Biltmore took them up nineteen stories to the high hall throbbing with music and thronged with dancers. While they waited outside the rope for Nancy to be recognized and led to a table, Larrick watched and wondered (as he always wondered when he was not dancing) why couples permitted themselves to be seen dancing, why the law permitted dancing in couples. He did not wonder at all that the Puritans forbade it and most of the preachers denounced it in terms more shocking than the dance itself.

But the moment he stepped into the current and gathered Nancy Fleet to his breast and gave himself up to the weird mood of letting the music rule his heart, and his heart her feet and his own, and their di-une body, he no longer wondered why people danced. He almost wondered why they ever stopped dancing.

The tunes ranged through all the humors, all the history of flirtation in short snatches like clandestine meetings. There was music that implied dignity of approach, compliment, invitation, admiration, advance, retreat, sarcasm, raillery, flattery, audacity, devotion, elopement and passion to a honeymoon fullness.

Now and then a strangely amorous flute played by drawing a cord, added its plaintive seduction to the hankering persistence of the homely saxophone, the caveman trombone, the sirupy violin, the 'cello in its agony of desire, the hysterical piano, and the drummer's dozen cacophonies that drove off any lingering demons of self-respect. Larrick shook his head at one interval:

"Gosh, after a tune like that, and the way some of these couples take it, seems like to me the only thing to play is a weddin' march and play it quick."

Nancy was not shocked as he had hoped. It seemed almost impossible to shock these women up here. They had put off mental prudery with prudery of costume. Yet they kept a certain delicacy and subtlety about them, and it was clumsiness of audacity that gave them quickest offense.

What Nancy may have thought of Larrick's remark was lost in her real shock:

"See that girl—the one in cerise, the dizzy one just beyond the—oh, she's gone now."

The dance was resumed and she explained as they stepped into it.

"That's the girl Roy Coykendall is said to be crazy about. I wonder if he's with her. Let's look for her. She's the girl he wants to marry when he shakes off Louise."

It was an odd pursuit, winding in and out of a human jungle that moved in an indescribable eddy of eddies. They turned on their own axis, darted in and out of crevices, collided, crushed ankles and toes, and had their own crushed in return. Nancy kept twisting to descry the woman she hunted. Larrick's heart was in a sick excitement.

There was a kind of funereal majesty to his delight now. It might well be that he should find Coykendall and have to insult him—kill him, even. Then he would be dragged away to a cell, to loneliness lasting for months, years perhaps, and ending, it might be, in the electric chair. He was under the slightest of obligations to avenge a woman he had never met, upon a man he had never met, at the behest of a woman he had met but thrice. Yet of such demands the history of knight errantry was made.

The less he wanted to fight Coykendall, the more shameful it seemed not to. He danced the more eagerly now, for this might be his last dance on a solid floor with a tender woman in his arms.

CHAPTER XXIX

"What cannot be said can be sung." And what cannot be sung can be danced.

Larrick had never danced with a woman like Nancy Fleet—so beautiful, so sleek, so lightly yet so richly clad, so schooled in grace—so unafraid.

He had never danced to such music—the dance music of dancing musicians who played the fool or the satyr or the dreadful dreamer, while they suckled the saxophone, fondled the violin and breathed into an uncanny trombone that laugheel ha-ha-ha-ha!

Let those who declare the dance to be ungodly and unholy and against God's will explain why it is so indomitable, so immemorial, so universal. Back in King David's time his wife mocked him because he danced, and it is solemnly recorded that the Lord made her childless for her lack of sympathy. Dancing indeed always had a kinship with that love and those rites whose blessings and risks concern the getting of children.

As soldiers practice and perfect themselves for war in sham battles, so the dance is perhaps a kind of sham marriage.

In Shakespeare's day, old Stubbes in his "Anatomy of Abuses," said that dancing was "unpossible to be good." He traced it to its source! "S. Chrisostom saith plainly that it sprang from the teates of the Devil's brest, from whence all mischeef els dooth flow." And again he thunders: "No man saith a certain heathen Writer) if he be sober, dauncth, except hee be mad."

And in 1920, the Rev. Dr. Straton, New York's most zealous whip, declared that dancing ought to be prohibited as well as liquor. He called for the complete destruction of the abomination.

How venerable, how primeval are these old excitements and their counter-excitements! (And I am willing to bet any man alive in the glorious infamous year of 2920 A. D. six copies of this classic work against six copies of the worst work of the cheapest sensationalist of his day, that in 2020 the older dancers will be complaining of the dances of the day as "not modest and graceful like the dances of 2010 A. D."—which the older dancers of 2010 will have denounced as lacking the modesty and grace of the dances of 2000, and so on backward in crawfish progression. Also that the popular satirical preachers will be denouncing the whole craze for dancing as an abomination, and demanding that the police stop it at once. Some of the more liberal preachers of 2020 will, however, say that they would not object to dancing if it could be conducted in the stately and respectable manner of the classic jazz, and the innocent shimmie of 1920—but that the new wriggles are intolerable.

(If I lose this bet, the winner is entitled to anything he can collect.)

IN the meanwhile, in the Biltmore, young Mr. Larrick and young Miss Fleet were not thinking of ancient or of future comments on the dance. They were hardly thinking of the present moment. Their hearts were too dizzy for thinking. They were simply exploiting their emotions, in the mystic sway of rhythm.

Millions of men and women in the world were dancing at that hour. As the earth rolled round into the night, the dancers rose like fireflies flashing their cool fires in the ecstasy of blazing—like ants, taking on wings for a brief nuptial flight in clouds; ceasing to crawl or toil, and soaring in air in wild revels. The

old fireless fireflies and the ants past their wing-time doubtless were horrified, were shamed, and could not understand.

But dancing, like all other human raptures (and pains and activities), is past understanding. It is rapture that the people want, must have, will have; and they find it in innumerable, inscrutable ways. One rapture is as blind and as dangerous and, to its enemy, as ridiculous as another.

The martyr at the stake found himself among roses. The hermit in his cell found voluptuousness in his hair shirt, his lash and his famine, and turned in disgust from the devil-sent visions to the good sharp rocks of salvation. Each of these enraptured ones found preparation for the future life in the earthly crisis of emotion. Pain here meant so much bliss there that pain became bliss, disgrace glory and crucifixion election.

So the dancers, it may be, looking forward only to their earthly future, seeking hither and yon the mate of mates, try all their arts, try all arts in order to perfect themselves for earthly bliss.

The dance brings rapture only to those to whom it brings rapture. But to them it means that strength and beauty embrace and revolve about one another; one commands, one obeys; one pursues, one flees, or indulges in the sweet pretence—and so they play about the brink of entire union and mimic communion. And all this in a realm of music, heightened by the interaction of mob-multiplication.

LARRICK was too wise to analyze. He enjoyed. He drained the beaker instead of asking for its chemistry, its origin and reactions. His regret at the danger of encountering Coykendall on such a night only made his beatitude more poignant.

Clasping Nancy as straitly as bronze is embraced by the mold, he murmured into her ear:

"Don't you love me now? I can't help loving you. Don't you love me—now?"

She laughed a most enamored laugh, but she said:

"Now—yes. I'd love anybody that danced to this music without losing time."

"Me, I mean," he pleaded. "Don't you love just only me for forever?"

"No!" she answered with absolute conviction, but with a more maddening surrender. It seemed strange that such perversity could exist, and Larrick was frantic that a verbal denial should be her only denial.

The music stopped just in time to restore him to sanity and harsh reality. It was atrociously hot. The collars of the most fashionable men were a ridiculous mess of limp starch and linen.

The whitest women were scarlet and streaming. They came back to their tables, gasping, mopping, fanning themselves with handkerchiefs that they wrung out and stared at ashamed—ashamed of handkerchiefs and so little else!

Nancy, like the cat she was, alighted on her feet, but Larrick came down from the clouds in a maze. She was already swearing at so paltry a thing as the weather. She was glad she was leaving New York on the morrow.

Larrick was afraid to look at her or anybody else in that community, suddenly changed from linked angels to humid citizens. But Nancy said:

"There's the girl—Coykendall's pet—at the third table, just burying her nose in a loganberry highball. Coykendall is not with her. That's not even his kind of a crowd."

It did not matter much now. Larrick would rather have enjoyed murdering somebody. But he said for politeness:

"Maybe she's got tired of him and chucked him."

"What's more probable is that he's chucked her. Roy couldn't be true to one co-respondent long enough to get her name in the affidavits."

Larrick began to lose interest in this man. There would be mighty little comfort in going to the Chair for mashing up a humming bird.

Your noble crime demands a noble victim. To slay a dragon, kill a Goliath with a pastoral nigger-shooter, puncture a tyrant or macerate him with a bomb, to strike down what is technically known as "the despoiler of a home," or to intervene with the lightning from a pistol's muzzle in revenge for a woman's honor—yes, that would be to collect enough glory in advance to pay for any fate. But to chase this dragon-fly (a "snake feeder", was what Larrick called a dragon-fly) through the marsh, from one cat-tail to another—no, well hardly, just as much obliged, but no, o' that in mine if it's all the same to you.

Worse yet, just as the next dance started and the saxophone gurgled a particularly cynical invitation to lay all scruple aside, and just as Larrick and Nancy had come to a perfect understanding, some one stopped them and insisted on cutting in.

Larrick had not been subjected to this Sabine atrocity before, and he felt instinctively for his empty hip pocket. He hit somebody else's hip and was knocked aside by a dancing couple who glared at him for impeding the traffic. By the time he had dodged to the sidelines, Nancy was lost in the mêlée.

He waited till she came round to cut back or commit murder, but when he caught sight of her lost in an interplanetary space, and twin-starring to the music of the spheres with as apparent an abandonment as she had revealed in his arms, he cursed the dance with the horror of a Methodist parson and vowed that he would never take Nancy seriously again. He was not yet ready for the community of property, the polyandry, and polygamy and polywoggery of the dance world. He went to his table and outsulked Achilles.

Nancy drifted by him and appealed to him with silent cries of "Help! help!" for the man who had cut in was an irregular bounder, but Larrick let her drown.

When she came back at last and thanked the cavalier ever so much, and so dismissed him, she saw how deeply Larrick was hurt by her desertion, and it pleased her to the depths of her soul. He was jealous of her, jealous of one little dance. Could it be that he really loved her with the real love she had been searching for—searching like Isaac Newton picking up one shell after another and dropping it for the next? The possibility was so fairy-story-like that she could not be-

lieve it. At least she must experiment some more.

That was her mistake—one of her numberless mistakes in life. Larrick was not one of those who could be won by the hot and cold treatment, the now-you've-got-me-and-now-you've-not method. Her next trial of his emotion was particularly unfortunate. She reached out into the passing current and seized a woman by the arm, and said:

"Connie, I want to dance with your beautiful husband, and I want you to dance with Mr. Larrick."

CONNIE was willing, and so was her husband. Larrick was frightened to a panic. The music broke loose. He rose, and Mrs. Connie Whoevershewas clamped herself to him with a vim, vigor and swooning intimacy that terrified Larrick out of his wits and off his feet.

He had always said that if a vampire ever appeared in real life, every man who saw her would run. But he could not run. He could not dance. Neither could Connie. She substituted a democratic cordiality for a sense of rhythm.

Larrick was swept into one of those appalling jams that turn a corner of a dance into the imitation of a packed subway express-car scooting round a curve. In this human jelly Larrick could not tell whose legs he was dancing on. He knew only that they were not his own. Connie did not care. She loved to be suffocated and would have cooed to a boa-constrictor a discouraging encouragement. Eventually Larrick and his Portuguese lady-of-war floated out of the congested district into a little freer space, but Larrick could not come to a working agreement, either with the music's syncopation or with Connie's syncope.

As he joggled and ragged, he saw Nancy twirling by in the arms of Connie's husband. The man, instead of looking bullets at Larrick, looked away. Nancy, who had caught sight of Larrick, suppressed her laughter at his plight, and put on for his peculiar torment a look of shameless contentment, closed her eyes, set her chin on her partner's shoulder and pretended to be a lost soul.

Larrick voted her one as far as he was concerned, and whipsawed Connie to the table where she found him. He told her:

"I got no right dancin' with an artist like you are. I only had two lessons."

Connie was for teaching him, but he thought he had learned more from her already than anybody but her husband ought to know. Her husband had led Nancy as bad a dance as she deserved. He and his wife were as wicked as they could be, technically or domestically. When Nancy limped back to the table and froze out Connie and her mate, she said:

"I deserved that. That beast has the grace and efficiency of a caterpillar tractor."

Larrick did not mention his clever intuition that she was slandering the man to hide the delight in him she had plainly felt when Larrick saw her with her eyes shut. He simply put in for himself a disclaimer of similar enjoyment.

"What's that wife of his in the daytime—a massooze? I tell you, if I'd a-had any rheumatism anywheres—well, I wouldn't have it now."

Nancy rejoiced in the audacity of this. "Aren't we getting well acquainted!" she said with a smile, and rose for the next dance.

But Larrick had lost his first fine, careless rapture. The crowd had increased. He had to plan his steps in advance, and every time he planned a step, somebody stood on his foot, till he lost the beat or hooked it and carried it past the point of return. He had lost confidence in Nancy as well as himself. There was nothing very sublime about sweeping her into a delirium that he had seen her share with two other men. He was not expert enough to dance without inspiration or to dominate his companion. The bout was a total failure, and he ordered much food as an excuse for not venturing out again.

Nancy was keen enough to see that she had tried the wrong experiment with this simple soul. She saw that he was genuinely, pitiably wounded by her apparent promiscuity. She had not stimulated him to jealousy, but only alienated him by cheapening herself. That was the kind of love from the kind of man she wanted. She was satisfied that Larrick might be the very being she had despaired of finding. This enthralled her, confused her. She became a little girl again with illusions and romantic notions.

But it was one thing to be convinced and another to convince her man that she was his woman. She could hardly throw her arms about his neck and cry: "We have found each other. I am not what you think me. I am a sweet young innocent who knows nothing of the world or of passion, and wishes to know only what you wish me to know."

She could say none of that, for it was not true. She knew about all there was to know, and could not pretend to a hypocritical ignorance. She would despise a husband who would expect to get a wife with a mind like a sheet of blank paper. But she did want a decent husband who wanted a decent-intentioned wife, and she liked Larrick better than any man she knew. She loved him for his bewildered reaction to her acid test.

But how was she to explain herself? She had not found the way by the time they had poked their supper to bits. When he implied a reluctance to dance any more, she was glad, because she thought that they could dine in the taxicab. Perhaps he would propose a long excursion through Central Park's deep gardens and out along the moony grandeurs of Riverside Drive.

But he did not propose such an excursion. His arm even made no excursion about her yearning shoulder, and when they reached her house, he handed her out as if she were his grandmother—very carefully lest she break in two, but not at all reluctantly.

At the door his sad eyes found hers inexplicably sad. His hands found hers strangely strong as they clenched. He felt an impulse to seize her, but the moonlight was brilliant on the doorway, and the taxicab driver did not know enough to pretend not to watch.

"Good night?" she said with a kind of inquiring inflection.

"Good night!" he groaned, thinking of might-have-beens with all regret.

She shrugged her shoulders and made a bitter *moue* at fate, and closed the door on him as on another dream from which she had wakened at midnight with a long night still ahead of her.

He dashed down the steps and into the cab, damning these modern dances and the ruin they make of these modern women.

CHAPTER XXX

AS Larrick found a luxury in the most commonplace features of New York life, such as rain and wealth and throngs, so he found commonplace many of the things that excite the natives. One of these latter was the alleged "hot wave" that broke over the town the next morning and filled the citizens with dread.

The winter of 1919-1920 had been extraordinary for length and bitterness. Storm after storm had added ice upon ice in the streets. Labor to remove it was difficult to secure, and appallingly high priced. The flame-throwers used in the war were called into play against masses that knocked a pick aside, and dismal bonfires were built everywhere in a poor, desperate effort to melt what could not be chopped.

Rich people were forced to walk to the shops and even to the opera. New York became pedestrian for the nonce. Those who rode the mountain trails were knocked about in their limousines and taxicabs till they were black and blue. Broken springs and wheels sent motors of every sort in myriads to the overcrowded repair shops.

The protracted winter was followed by a long, wet spring and a belated summer. But the weather, by matching extremes, maintains a rough average, and the deferred hot spell came down with a vengeance when at length it came.

But the heat that won front-page attention in the newspapers and set the populace into a panic of flight to the beaches, the hills and the mountains, was so trifling to Larrick that he was amused and amazed.

He had fought broncos and roped steers in a shadeless, waterless realm where the thermometers recorded 135 degrees. It astounded him to find New Yorkers terrified at a mark of ninety. For the streets were caflons of deep shadow; the subway was a cool tunnel; and electric fans whirred in almost every interior. At every corner there was a hydrant whence the street-cleaners shot gushing floods along the pavements. At night, gangs washed down the streets with torrents of water. Certain streets this year were not only put aside for playgrounds for children, but were adorned with showerbaths, where multitudes of human sparrows splashed and squealed in a next-to-nothing of clothes.

The saloons that had marked nearly every corner in the business districts had almost completely disappeared, but the soda fountains had multiplied, and men who had been wont to dally over their beers and gin rickeys humbled themselves to crowd in with the women and girls along the marble counters and to shock their gullets with chilled sweet-stuffs of infinite variety.

Frewin asked Larrick to have luncheon with him at a club. He ordered a hot-weather meal, a "cocktail" of chilled grapefruit, a soup of chicken okra frozen to a jelly, a platter of cold sliced meats, a cold salad, iced coffee and an ice. It was a substantial meal, but it entered cold.

Frewin was not a believer in prohibition. Neither was anybody else that Larrick met. The most that he heard in its favor was that the disappearance of the saloon was a good thing. It was bitterly proclaimed that beers and light wines ought to be permitted, though nearly everybody that pleaded for beer and light wines was possessed of a stock of whisky and gin.

Yet in spite of the national grumbling, nobody in power dared advocate the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Neither of the presidential candidates could be forced into an advocacy of such a step, though it was whispered that both were in favor of it.

The clubs, like the hotels, had been forced to a change of life. Relying hitherto for their profits on the receipts from their bars, they had to look elsewhere for their funds. At first the clubs had installed lockers and the members had loaded them with provisions against the long drouth. But the lockers had been declared illegal and ousted. The desperate members were left with no recourse but the pocket flask, itself outlawed.

MANY of the clubs set apart a secret inner chamber where members might mix their own drinks. In some a servant furnished such ingredients as were non-alcoholic. But the ceremonies were as mystic and as solemn as the rites of a forbidden religion, and the man who gave another a sip from his flask was counted as Samaritan as Sir Philip Sidney offering his canteen to a wounded soldier.

Larrick's luncheon with Frewin was preceded by an invitation into such an occult sanctum. The toast was a bitter: "And they call this a free country!"

At the table Frewin was in a torment of heat, for which he never blamed his liquor.

"Pack up your things and come out of this hell-hole," said Frewin. "There wont be a soul in town by tomorrow."

Larrick was innocent enough to take this literally. What did he know of the habits of these peculiar people?

Frewin modified his phrase:

"Of course, millions of poor devils will have to stay here, but nobody will that can get away."

Larrick thought of Miss Fleet and her yachting flight. Now that she was gone, New York was an empty town to him. He might as well kill a week with Frewin, until he could make for Newport and meet her there. Thinking of the loneliness of his heart without its flame, he was reminded of Frewin's love-troubles. He was rash enough to ask about Clelia.

"How about that Miss Blakeney of yours? Have you made up with her yet?"

Frewin winced and blushed:

"No, she wont see me. She wont talk to me on the telephone. I sent the little rat a note, and she returned it unopened. She had the nerve to write on the enve-

lope: 'This was evidently meant for the other lady. I haven't dared to peek in. I'm far too young—tee-hee!' She's gone up to the country. Her father's country place isn't far from ours. I've got to show Dad a little attention, as I'm broke again. So I'm off to the farm, and you're coming along. Mother told me not to fail to bring you. Clelia will probably think I'm on her trail, but I'm not. I'm off that young lady for keeps."

Beneath the gray ashes of this scorn Larrick was perfectly sure that there was a smoldering and a burning that fed on the very pride that would have extinguished it. In the enforced idleness of his own heart, divorced for a time from Nancy Fleet, he felt a keen curiosity to see and know this peculiar Clelia, who could so insufferably torment so sophisticated, so resourceful a man as Frewin, whom Larrick thought of as a naturally-born "lady-killer," rather than as a love-lorn swain whimpering at the heels of a mocking girl.

Clelia had run into Larrick in the dark and fled past him laughing but almost undescried. He could not foresee that she would play will-o'-the-wisp to him too, and entangle him in a bog of remorse, of desire and despair.

FREWIN sent Larrick back to his hotel to pack his trunk and his suitcases under instructions to meet him at the Grand Central. He cautioned him about the hour. The railroads were run on suntime, which those who make a religion of everything that is long enough established persisted in calling God's time. But during the summer the city advanced the clocks an hour so that the offices and shops would set their flocks free for that much more of daylight recreation. Even this was a concession to custom, for it would have been as impossible to persuade townfolk to get up and go to work an hour earlier without changing the clock as it was impossible to persuade the farmers that the daylight-saving fashion was not an attack on their sacred rights.

Larrick found the Grand Central an enormous hive in full swarm, bustling, darting, clustering for the flight. Frewin met him at the circle of the information-bureau, where amazing scholars in train-mathematics answered questions of every sort with incredible calm and rapidity. In the chair-car they found a cluster of men and women friends. Next to the onslaught of the heat, the favorite topic was politics. The women had won the national vote at last and would cast their first ballot for President in the coming November. An entire sex had just come of age after a hundred and forty-four years of existence in a republic founded on universal equality, and after perhaps a million years of life on a planet where woman had held at least equal sway with man in almost every other activity.

Some of the gayest and prettiest of the women had been famous stump speakers and were entering political politics with all the zest they had shown for every other sort of politics. A few men were still afraid that women would let their emotions rule them instead of their reason! Which is one of the stupidest jokes mankind has ever unwittingly committed —as if males had ever ruled their world reasonably, as if they were not now hopelessly divided on every national and international question.

The next election would differ from the others in no respect except that the number of voters would be about doubled, and that women would add their prejudices, whims, taboos, fads and emotions to those of the equally, if differently, foolish men. Chaos would be added to chaos, without making it perceptibly more confused.

But at least one ugly atrocity, one sublime asininity, would be removed from the Republic's life, and malekind would cease to deny the privilege of the polls to the mothers, wives and daughters whose love, whose loyalty, whose beauty, charm, wisdom and welfare were vital to the dignity, prosperity and worth-whileness of the nation.

And this world-rocking revolution had been managed with no visible change in the face of things. Women were more womanly than ever, freed of the corral. Girls had more to live for, and the word *home*, losing all hint of harem or cage, became a dearer and a sweeter word to everybody.

The train made few stops till it had passed White Plains. At every station thereafter a mob of motors waited. At every station there was a scurry of sallies from the train and onsets from the platform, hilarity, kisses, hugs. It was Larrick's first glimpse of the country life of the New Yorkers.

He was dazed by its lack of affectation or pomposity. There was beauty, wealth, grace, sophistication, but there was also welcome, the glad reunion of families, the warm ingathering of guests. All the languor, boredom, indifference of the rich that he had known of was dramatically absent. He could see no difference between the greetings of these swells and the shabby poor at the Southern depots, except that the wives and children here were better dressed, and the habit of beauty had increased their comeliness.

Larrick was rapidly being contaminated by contact with wealth to the appalling belief that wealth has its good qualities, the qualities of its very defects. There are certain priceless things it cannot buy, but countless things worth having that it can. It came to Larrick as a startling discovery that this wealth-thing so much denounced would not have resulted as eternal goal of human ambition if it conferred no benefits on those who joined it. He realized that many men had won a noble wealth nobly, while many men had earned an ignoble poverty by ignobly disguising their lazinesses as honesties.

Frewin was met at his station by a family car. It ran past the village shops and a cluster of modest homes out across the hills to the large estates. The roads were fine, the walls well mended, the entrance gates grandiose but hospitable. Glimpses of houses and barns showed them to be stately beyond the usual reach of farmstead life, but everywhere the one predominant desire was plain—to keep Nature herself, at her best, indeed, without the scars and horrors of the battle-grounds of plant and tree wars, but always nature. These rich folk came into the country to get the country and to be at ease. Yet Larrick had always read the

contrary. He began to realize that even the fiction-writers lie.

He felt timid suddenly as the car turned from the highroad into a private drive between two massive gates. They warned him that he was about to confront splendor. The road was walled with a green velvet masonry of trees and shrubs, with flashes of sward in broken places, and gleams of flower patches, a tumbling stream, a great swimming-pool, a house like a mountain, a delectable mountain: then a further dash through a green and white grove of shapely and shimmering birches.

The car drew up with a sharp stop, at a woman's cry. Larrick was thrown forward. As he readjusted himself, he saw a large woman in a great hat waving from a thicket of tall roses. She brandished a pair of huge shears, and she might have been one of the Fates, but Frewin said:

"There's Mother now."

He jumped out, motioned Larrick to follow, and sent the car on to the house with the baggage.

IN spite of Frewin's statements of how eager his father and mother were to meet the savior of their prodigal son, something had always prevented their entertaining Larrick, till now. It was Larrick's fortune therefore to encounter the magnate and the *grande dame*, not in a palace, but on a farm. It was as unlike the bleak ranch in Brewster as anything could be, but he found that the Frewins, father and mother, had not lost their hearts or their simplicity in the depths of their luxury. They reminded him still of Pa and Ma Milman, and they greeted him with as warm a hospitality.

Mrs. Frewin was caught in her garden, snipping off dead roses, whisking amorous rose-bugs from the petals in coupled scores, and quarreling with an equally opinionated old gardener.

After embracing and scolding her son, she tore off her gloves and wrung Larrick's hand, stared at him, then thrust her arm about his neck, drew his head down and kissed him on both cheeks:

"You blessed boy!" she cooed. "If it hadn't been for you, what would life have been worth to me? It must have been my prayers that brought you your good luck, for we could never find you. How proud your mother must be of you. . . . . Oh!" She caught a look in Larrick's eyes, a gulp in his throat. "Forgive me, you poor child! Was it long ago?"

Larrick nodded gloomily. She wrung his arm with her soft hand and sighed.

"Then I shall adopt you for mine, and this place shall be your home, if you'll accept it—will you?"

Larrick could only grin and swallow and feel deliciously uncomfortable—all of which pleased her more than the readiest rhetoric of a courtier. She turned to her own lad:

"Your father will want to see his new son. You'll find him at the barns, looking over his latest purchases at the auction. Go get him away from there. Tell him we have an early dinner. It's the servants' night at the movies, and if we delay them, they'll leave in a body. Sixteen of them abandoned Mr. Warrenden last Thursday because he wouldn't send them two nights a week, and he had a big house-party on. Run along. And"—she patted Larrick—"you know all about cattle; show my husband how little he knows."

Frewin led Larrick through a maze of gardens to the distant stableyard. It was an estate in itself, a walled city. They found the senior Frewin gloating over the enormous bulk of a placid Ayreshire bull. A farmer held it by a long pole and a nose-ring, but it was in a mood of peace, a vast structure of creamy skin, with patches of russet, its eyes amiable and no sign of life except the grinding of its cud.

Frewin introduced Larrick to his father, and the two men wrung hands. After a confession of gratitude as fervid as his wife's, but not so flattering to the young cub of a son, Mr. Frewin asked Larrick for his opinion of the monarch of the pasture.

"I snapped him up at a bargain. I got that beauty for only fourteen thousand dollars. Is he worth it? I'll say he's worth twice as much."

Larrick tottered at the price. He had nothing at all to say. Frewin justified himself as a business man and a man by adding:

"My wife says I am a greenhorn, but I say a thing is worth as much as you can sell it for or as much as you want to keep it for. I had an offer of twenty thousand for that pale-faced gentleman before we got him out of the ring, so I call him a buy."

Larrick reckoned he was, and young Frewin told old Frewin that if he did not come to dinner soon, there would be no servants.

That fetched him.

LIFE on the Frewin farm was heaven to Larrick. He had a father, a mother and a brother now, and all of them removed from the clamor and the difficulties of city existence. He needed the repose and the friendliness, for his heart was raw and weary. Even the servants felt something of the nearness to nature. They were simple, friendly, cordial. The gardeners, the farmers, the cattlemen, the chauffeurs were all at ease. Larrick was one of a big, handsome family.

But he was unwittingly resting himself up for a new ordeal—the ordeal of suddenly meeting Clelia Blakeney. She came to him in a beauty that had something of the supernatural about it. Her entrance into his life was as unearthly as her exit from it. But between the two extremes there was earthliness enough and beyond enough.

She upset his every ideal, knotted his motives into an inextricable tangle, filled him not only with the very worship of beauty in its purest essence, but with distrust of himself and of everyone else, with enmity toward himself and all the world. She kept him in a frenzy of anxieties, and of contradictory remorses.

For the love of beauty is the root of all ugliness.

This remarkable novel by America's Balzac gains in dramatic interest with each chapter. You will find the next installment—in the forthcoming February issue—of deepest interest.

UNITED STATES SMITH

(Continued from page 34)

Griffin sat back and emitted a quiet chuckle.

"I was just thinking, Taggart—you come from Canada, I'm from the old sod; McCabe is a Scot, and the big man here is a Swede—"

"I was born under the American flag," interrupted United States Smith. "My mother and father were Danes."

"No matter; it is all the same," said Griffin, "what I mean is that we're all here planning to put the little old U. S. back where she belongs. It's a great country and a great game!"

And with that understanding they shook hands and went their several ways.

TWO weeks later Sergeant Smith, Corporal Duncan McCabe, and Private Tobias Simon and James Pink Lewis, discreetly assigned to general recruiting service, first on the Pacific Coast, arrived at Tacoma, Washington, preceding by two days a rotund Irishman who immediately dropped in for a chat with his friend of many years, Billy Conroy, sporting editor of the *Ledger* and matchmaker for the Tacoma Athletic Association.

As a result of this conference quarter-cards appeared in barber-shops and cigar-stores advertising a bout between Pete Brandon, "the Pride of Tacoma" and "Young Jeffries."

"I thought *I* was going to fight Brandon," objected United States Smith.

"You are," assured his manager. "You're Young Jeffries."

"No!"

"Easy!" warned the little Irishman. "Easy!—or I'll lick you myself. You'll probably lose the first three fights. After that, you are United States Smith."

It was as Griffin predicted. The yellow-topped sergeant was outboxed and outgeneraled in a series of four-round contests. Never at any time, however, was he in distress; never did he give an inch of ground or slacken in his efforts to reach his opponent; but the lights over the ring, the hot, awkward gloves over his taped knuckles, the unaccustomed surroundings—all combined to disconcert him.

"I can't seem to get started," he complained. "I'd get my man if they'd only give me a little more time."

"Don't worry," admonished Griffin. "You're doing better than I expected. Now we go to Reno as United States Smith, and we fight Willy Madden."

The night of his début before a San Francisco audience against the rolypoly Madden who had proved a stumbling block for many a championship aspirant, the soldier gained further insight of Pat Griffin's strategy.

While the first preliminary was on, the manager hustled his little flock into a dressing-room and locked the door. Shorty McCabe, long ago designated as the official trainer, produced two extra sets of boxing gloves and tights which he handed to the sparring partners.

"Put 'em on," snapped Griffin. "You too, Smithy! I want eight rounds before you go into the ring. Four with Toby and then four with Pink. No sparring—make it a real fight."

And there in the little room, no larger than the ring itself, and by the light of a single fly-specked incandescent, while Griffin held the watch and called the rounds, United States Smith sent his sparring partners crashing against the thin partitions and wrenched himself free as they reeled into clinches.

The manager cut the eighth round short by thirty seconds, for Pink Lewis would not have lasted it out. From his hip pocket he produced a roll of red, white and blue ribbon and knotted it around the waist of United States Smith.

McCabe threw a dressing-gown around the sergeant's shoulders. Some one pounded on the door. Griffin unlocked it.

"All right," he announced grimly. "We're ready."

With the perspiration streaming down his neck and shoulders and one eye swollen, United States Smith fell into line for the march to the ring.

In the last minute of the fourth round he knocked Willy Madden through the ropes and into the lap of the timekeeper for the official count.

After that every appearance in the ring was preceded by eight or ten rounds in his dressing-room with Simon and Lewis, and sometimes another man if his regular sparring partners found themselves in distress.

At Reno he whipped Ryan; at Deming, New Mexico, he stopped Kid McCarthy and Luke Parker; at Phoenix, Bill Talbot. Then they moved to Salt Lake and took Jim Bradley into camp. Always the knockout came in the last round.

After the Salt Lake bout Pat Griffin wired night letters to sporting editors at twenty Eastern points. To Taggart in New York he telegraphed:

> Start your press bureau. We're moving east.

Under the Irishman's skillful piloting the little group zigzagged through the Middle West and down to New Orleans, fighting as they went.

Meantime the leaven of publicity had begun to work. From brief dispatches at the bottom of the sporting pages the notices crept upward, merging into signed articles. Then came the pictures, finally headlines. Ray Olney, veteran sporting scribe, was procured from the New York *Gazette*, as traveling correspondent. After each fight long accounts were wired, prepaid, to the leading dailies of the country.

At Chicago, Grindell. "The Fighting Phantom" lost out in the eighth; at Philadelphia Terry O'Gara surrendered in the sixth. And then, one morning, every paper in the country chronicled the fact that Tournier the Wolf was coming to this country.

"Pack up," directed Griffin that night. "Here's where we go to London. Don't get excited, now!"

"But it will look as if we're running away," protested United States Smith.


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