REDBOOK
MAGAZINE

January
25c
IN U.S. AND CANADA

COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL
by the author of
"Little Cæsar"

•

Beginning
the story of
"Doctor Dogbody's Leg"
by
JAMES NORMAN HALL
co-author of the
Mutiny Trilogy

•

Novelette
by
MARGARET KENNEDY

•

DOROTHY PARKER
NANCY HALE

NET CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE MORE THAN 1,100,000

JANUARY 1938 SM REDBOOK MAGAZINE VOL 70 No 3

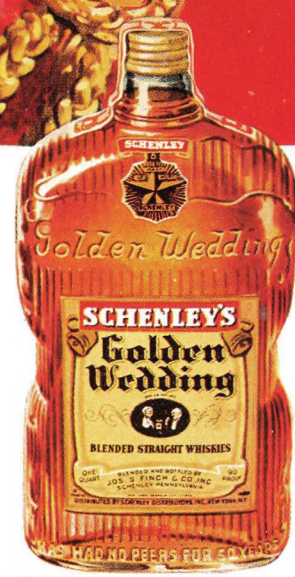
Old Fashioned Good Taste

for an "Old Fashioned" that tastes good!

Resolved: *To observe 1938's Golden Rule for good taste . . . to serve GOLDEN WEDDING. All whiskey . . . its richer goodness has had no peers for fifty years.*

You know where SCHENLEY *you're heading with*

Golden Wedding



BLENDED STRAIGHT WHISKIES—90 PROOF

AS YOU PREFER . . . IN RYE OR BOURBON

COPYRIGHT 1938, JOS. S. FINCH & CO., SCHENLEY, PA.

This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.

All set to Conquer

[UNTIL SHE SMILES]

She evades close-ups . . . Dingy teeth and tender gums destroy her charm . . . She ignored the warning of "Pink Tooth Brush"

THE lady is lovely! One quick glance and you carry away a singing memory of heart-taking loveliness. But how swiftly disillusionment takes you if you meet her—talk to her—*and see her smile.*

"Pink tooth brush" neglected—dull teeth and dingy gums—what a penalty they can exact of loveliness, beauty and charm!

That first tinge of "pink" on your tooth brush is only a warning. But when you see it—*see your dentist.* You may not be in for real trouble, but only your dentist should make that decision. Usually, however, he will tell you that yours is a case of lazy gums—gums deprived of hard, vigorous chewing by our modern soft foods. He'll probably suggest that your gums need more work and exercise—and, like so many dentists today, he may advise "the healthful stimulation of Ipana and massage."

For Ipana is especially designed not only to clean teeth but, *with massage*, to help the health of your gums as well. Massage a little extra Ipana into your gums every time you clean your teeth. Circulation within the gum tissues is aroused—lazy gums awaken—tend to become firmer, healthier—more resistant.

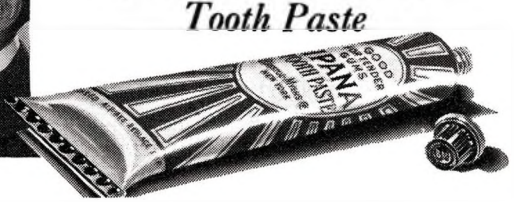
Change to Ipana Tooth Paste and massage today. Adopt this common-sense dental routine as one helpful way to healthier gums, brighter, sparkling teeth—a radiant, winning smile.

DOUBLE DUTY—For more effective massage and thorough cleansing, ask your druggist for Rubberset's *Double Duty* Tooth Brush.

BILL COMES TO THE RESCUE OF HELEN'S DINGY SMILE!

IPANA

Tooth Paste



. . . Easy to get them with
G-E MAZDA PHOTO LAMPS

Ask your druggist or camera dealer about this easy way to snap priceless night and indoor scenes, with almost any camera and G-E MAZDA Photoflood or Photo*flash* lamps. Or write for free booklet to Dept. 166, General Electric Company, Cleveland, Ohio.

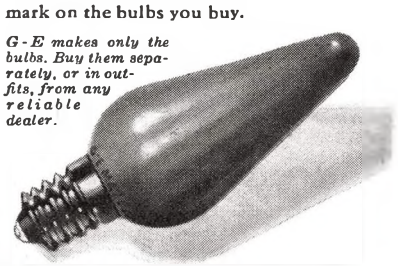
GENERAL ELECTRIC

FUN TO HAVE A

and easy to have
with G-E MAZDA
CHRISTMAS TREE LAMPS

If you want your Christmas tree to sparkle with rich color . . . and if you want to save your temper by not having to fuss with burned out bulbs . . . buy General Electric MAZDA Christmas Tree lamps. Why take chances with poor bulbs when G-E lamps Stay Brighter Longer? Look for the G-E mark on the bulbs you buy.

G-E makes only the bulbs. Buy them separately, or in outfits, from any reliable dealer.



GENERAL ELECTRIC

JANUARY
VOL. 70

REDBOOK MAGAZINE

1938
No. 3

EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
Associate Editors, DONALD KENNICOTT *and* VOLDEMAR VETLUGUIN
SYD L. HYDEMAN, *Art Editor*

REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

REDBOOK'S NOVELETTE OF THE MONTH

REDBOOK'S ENCORE OF THE MONTH

TWO SERIALS

SEVEN SHORT STORIES

FOUR ARTICLES

FOUR SPECIAL FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Cover: Natural-color photograph by Ruzzie Green
(Gown by Elizabeth Hawes)

The short stories, serials, novel and novelette herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence

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The Redbook School and Camp Directory will be found on pages 110 through 115

DRAFTS?

GARGLE LISTERINE

Like wet feet, drafts are dangerous because they chill the body unequally, weakening its resistance to germs. Avoid all drafts, and when you have been in one, gargle Listerine.

EXPOSURE?

GARGLE LISTERINE

When a person coughs or sneezes on you, the air carries bacteria and deposits them in your nose and throat. Prompt action with Listerine, which kills germs, may avert an oncoming cold.

Listerine kills germs associated with colds and sore throat

Tests During 7 Years' Research Show Cold Prevention Results That Amaze Even Medical Men

No remedy or treatment that we know of can show the brilliant clinical record in fighting colds that Listerine advances. Listerine offers you the possibility of getting off with light colds this year, or *no colds at all*. It is the new therapy that succeeds.

Tests made during 7 years of research showed this:

That those who gargled Listerine Antiseptic twice a day *had fewer colds, milder colds, and colds of shorter duration than non-users.* More important still—colds of Listerine users reached the *dreaded danger zone of the chest* less frequently than colds of non-users.

Why such results, that impress even medical men? Why is Listerine preferred to drastic purgatives that may weaken the system, vaccines that sometimes upset the patient, and those inhalants which may irritate the nasal passages?

Here is why: Listerine treats colds for what they really are—acute local infections. And the quickest way to combat local infections, as any doctor will tell you, is to kill the germs involved in them. That is exactly what the Listerine gargle does.

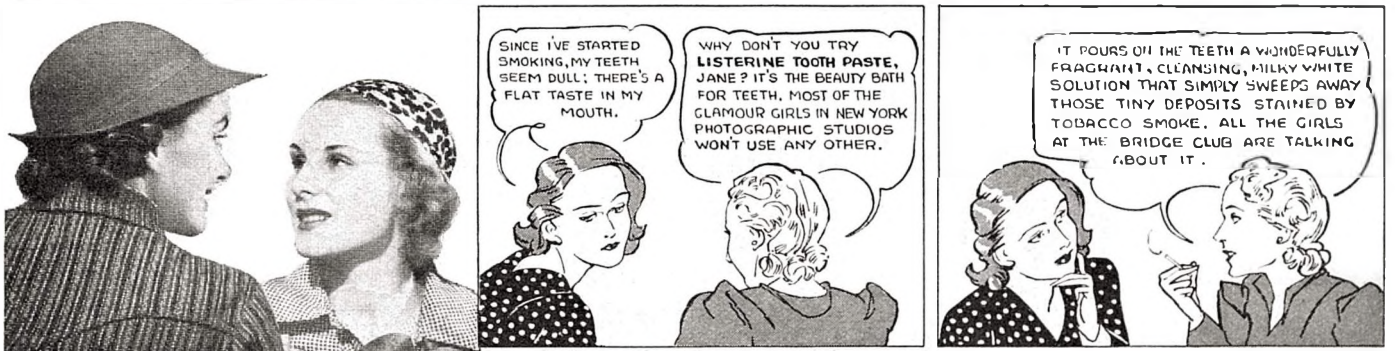
The secret of Listerine's success, we believe, must be that it reaches the virus (germ) which many authorities say causes colds. At the same time it kills by millions the threatening "secondary invaders"—germs that usually inhabit even normal mouths, waiting until resistance is low to strike. Among them are the dangerous influenza and streptococcus germs. These "secondary invaders" are the germs that complicate a cold and produce inflammation. *They must be held under control.*

Five minutes after gargling with Listerine Antiseptic, tests showed a germ reduction averaging 94.6%. Fifteen minutes after, 96.7%. Even one hour after, nearly 80% on the average. This amazing germ reduction gives Nature a helping hand, and materially reduces the risk of cold. That is a matter of laboratory record.

Use Listerine night and morning, and at the first symptom of a cold, increase the gargle to once every two hours. This pleasant precaution may spare you a long and expensive period of suffering.

LAMBERT PHARMACAL COMPANY
St. Louis, Mo.

"BEAUTY BATH SWEEPS AWAY TOBACCO-STAINED DEPOSITS"



JANE BUYS A TUBE

SHIRLEY KILDUFF SAYS:

WHY DON'T YOU TRY A TUBE?

Don't take our word or the word of famous New York beauties about Listerine Tooth Paste. Try it yourself. See how quickly it attacks tobacco-stained deposits on teeth. How its fragrant, milky-white solution bathes the teeth and gums and leaves them fresh, clean and healthy. How its high-lustre polishing agents restore natural brilliance and beauty to your teeth. Don't forget its economy either: More than a quarter of a pound of first-rate dentifrice in the 40¢ tube. The 25¢ size is proportionately economical. Get a tube from your druggist today.

IN NEXT MONTH'S REDBOOK

Hal Phyfe

ABOVE—CATHARINE WHITCOMB

LEFT—PHILIP WYLIE

BELOW—FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

ABOUT three months ago a bulky manuscript reached our desk. It was five-thirty in the afternoon then, and we were about to call it a day. We glanced at the title and the name of the author. Well, we decided, we may just as well read a page or two before leaving the office. . . .Two and a half hours later we were still reading. Dinner or no dinner, we were determined to find out what happened to the people described in "The Only Forever" by CATHARINE WHITCOMB. We envy our readers. There's a great thrill in store for them, for when they open the next (February) issue of Redbook, they will discover that its complete book-length novel is that fascinating tale which made us miss our dinner three months ago. . . . Miss Whitcomb was born in Philadelphia twenty-six years ago. At the age of

twelve she wrote a poem— "a very bad poem," according to her. Then she went to a boarding-school in Connecticut, where she had a marvelous time but failed in almost all her studies, flunking four College Boards with an average mark of 45. Then she went to work. She worked in two large department-stores, not simultaneously of course. During her lunch-hours she began writing her first novel, "I'll Mourn You Later." She wrote it on paper napkins in the Automat. "The Only Forever" is her third novel, and the first one to appear in a popular magazine.

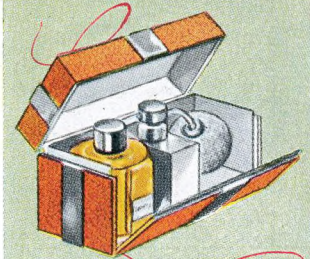
Likewise in our next issue: A new serial by PHILIP WYLIE—a rich and warm story of a famous neurologist and a woman who suffered a nervous breakdown because her husband was a philanderer; a novelette (complete in one issue) by FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG; the "encore of the month" by RICHARD SHERMAN; short stories by NANCY HALE, JAMES NORMAN HALL, GLADYS HASTY CARROLL, DUANE DECKER and others; "Personalities to Come"—a long look ahead by those canny political forecasters DREW PEARSON and ROBERT S. ALLEN; "Chastity *vs.* Chivalry," by DOROTHY DUNBAR BROMLEY and FLORENCE HAXTON BRITTEN.

TOMORROW'S EXCITING LITERARY EVENTS ARE IN TODAY'S REDBOOK.

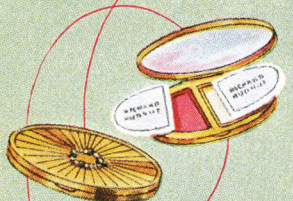
ON WISHING LISTS
THE WORLD AROUND...

that single thread of Fragrance

Gemey

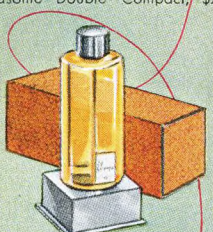


PERFUME for her dressing table... fragrance Gemey, world-loved, with luxury De Vilbiss atomizer. $5.



LUCKY THE LADY whose stocking yields this golden, stone-studded oval-shaped Double Vanity. $5.

PURSE ACCESSORIES... Smart Triple Vanity with Lipstick, $2.75. Handsome Double Compact, $2.



INTIMATE TREASURE...refreshing Toilet Water blessed with the enchantment of fragrance Gemey. $1.50.

In Monte Carlo or Mandalay, in Singapore or Salzburg...on wishing lists the world around, the loveliest women write...fragrance Gemey!

For fragrance Gemey, young and fresh and spirited, is beloved of 75 lands. And today in America Richard Hudnut presents this perfume in tiny handbag vials, in impressive dressing table flacons... presents it, too, as a single thread of fragrance spun through a galaxy of glamour-gifts.

See these Christmas treasures in fragrance Gemey at your nearest perfume counter... beguiling trifles in lipsticks and rouge pots, sleek compacts, personal enchantments, luxurious charm-chests.

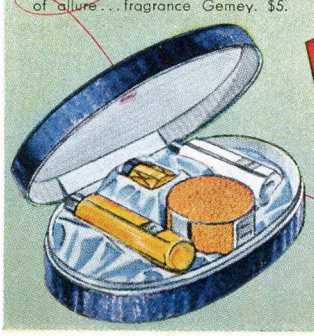
Choose from them that gift-that-matters... an intimate gift, a gift with the continental flair... in that favorite of five continents... fragrance Gemey!

by **RICHARD HUDNUT**

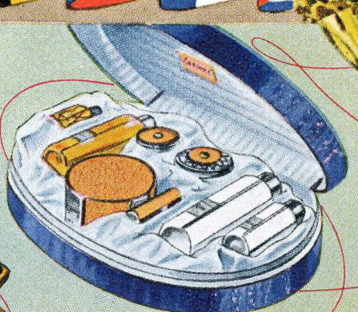
New York • Paris • London • Toronto • Buenos Aires
Havana • Berlin • Budapest • Capetown • Sydney

Fragrance Gemey. $2.50, $4.50, $15, and special gift-size, $1.

ON HER WISHING LIST...four essentials to charm in that single thread of allure... fragrance Gemey. $5.

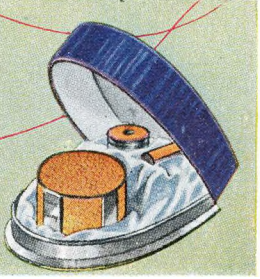


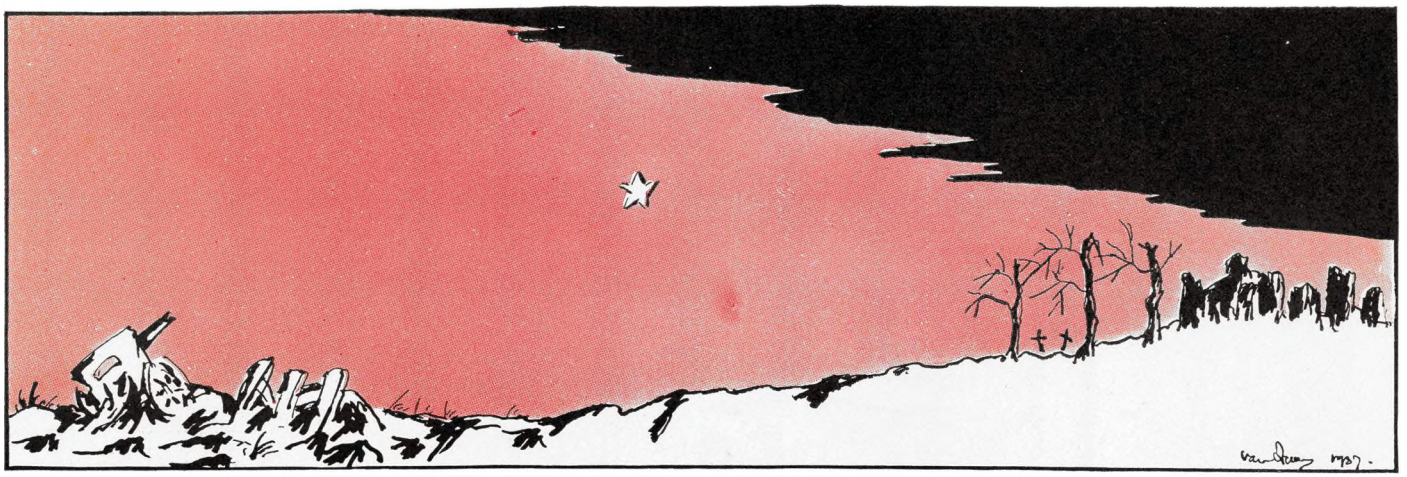
GALA GIFTS...handbag harmony of Cigarette Case, Double Vanity and Lipstick, $10. Swank Cigarette and Triple Vanity Case, only $5.50.



GLAMOUR CARGO for her Christmas ship . . . eight personal luxuries in the fragrance Gemey. $10.

BOUND for the finest Christmas trees . . . Powder, Rouge, Lipstick, in fragrance Gemey. $2.85.





Merry Christmas to All

HE was really much more than "a man of a single idea," but it so happens that the world has forgotten all about him except that one idea. His name was Luc de Clapiers Vauvenargues, and he was a French marquis who lived during the first half of the Eighteenth Century.

A curious man, but very typical of the age in which he lived. He was the son of an impoverished marquis and was born in the year 1715. At school he learned neither Latin nor Greek, but he got hold of a translation of Plutarch's "Lives." They made a profound impression upon him. During the early half of the Eighteenth Century, the word *nobility* was still held in high esteem. Not in the modern genealogical sense, indicating a man supposed to have a title, either spurious or genuine. But it was generally believed that the affairs of this world were shaped by men of outstanding ability and character, people who lived "noble lives"—lives that deserved to be "known" by their fellow-men. And small boys were encouraged to study the careers of these exceptional people, that they might feel inspired to follow their example and become new versions of Alexander the Great or Socrates or Richard the Lion-hearted.

All this led undoubtedly to a lot of sentimental nonsense. Little striplings strutting around like Julius Cæsar and spouting oratory like Demosthenes were apt to be slightly ridiculous. But by and large, it was a good thing. For children will have their heroes, no matter what we try to do about it. And when we deprive them of this perfectly normal outlet for their emotions, they will immediately invent other outlets of their own, which are apt to be far from pleasing to us. For further details, I refer you to your daily papers, wherein you may read all about these poor misguided youngsters who are now in the death-house by way of a "hold-up thrill" or a slightly bungled amateur "gangster job."

It is of course very well possible that George Washington was not quite as virtuous as our great-grandfathers made him out to be. And the benevolent bankers of the late Horatio Alger, who had invariably risen from a wooden cabin in the Ohio hinterland to the overstuffed grandeur of the leading local pawnshop, may seem rather silly to a generation which is no longer brought up in fear of those august dignitaries who guard our money-boxes; but they had their points, when we compare them to the prevailing heroes of the screen and of certain "children's hours" that come to us every afternoon by means of the loud-speaker in the nursery.

Young Vauvenargues, gloriously setting forth at the age of sixteen to become worthy of all of Plutarch's "great men," was probably a rather grotesque figure. But he took his rôle very seriously, and when we remember that he started upon his career without any particular material advantages (his noble family being so poor that the mice in their ancestral castle used to go out for their meals), we must confess that he traveled pretty far. He surely was not to be blamed for the treason of Frederick of Prussia, which forced his French allies to retreat from Prague in the dead of winter, and which caused the young French officer to go through the rest of his days with the results of a pair of frozen feet. But even this misfortune he manfully turned into a spiritual gain. For thereafter, since he could no longer fight, he devoted himself to literature; and before his death (at the age of only thirty-one) he gave us a very wise and witty collection of reflections and maxims, and it is of these I would like to speak today, for they contain that one short sentence which has given Vauvenargues his claim to fame.

HERE is that sentence: *Toutes les grandes pensées viennent du cœur*—or, "All truly great thoughts come from the heart."

One always feels a little—well, shall I call it "sheepish"—in repeating a remark like that. The world is so full of wise sayings and beautiful maxims and bright aphorisms and axioms, and from early childhood on we have been exposed to the homely wisdom of all the assembled *Poor Richards* of all times. Besides, once we have heard them or read them, they seem to be so completely self-evident that we feel compelled to say: "So what! That is nothing new. We always knew it. He just happened to say it a little better than we could do."

But that is just the point. The self-evident never becomes even evident until some one has brought it to the light of day. We may always have known that "all truly great thoughts come from the heart," just as we may always have known that it is a good thing to go through life with feelings of good-will toward our neighbors. But the world had to wait a considerable time before some one finally put that sentiment into just so many words and made it the basic law of a new philosophy of life.

It is true it sounds familiar enough, this idea of all good thoughts coming from the heart. But may I respectfully submit the question whether just now there is any evidence that the world at large is very consciously aware of this most useful and eminently sensible epigram? If you have any doubt, once more will you kindly read your newspapers? I don't believe (and it is rather my business to know about such things) that ever, during the history of the past five thousand years, we have beheld such chaos and such complete absence of even the most primitive and commonplace decencies of behavior.

No, I am no singer of the songs of praise of bygone days. When it comes to downright cruelty and callousness, the Crusades and the religious wars of the Seventeenth *(Please turn to page 101)*

by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

Just Look at This for a Big, Beautiful Car

IT'S THE BIG, NEW 1938 PLYMOUTH — A CAR YOU MUST SEE AND DRIVE! SEE HOW RICH IT IS — HOW COMFORTABLE AND ROOMY. SEE IT TODAY!

ANNIVERSARY CAR

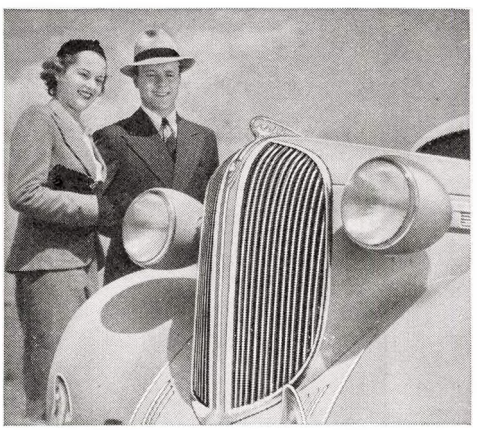
Look at the record behind this brilliant, 10th-anniversary Plymouth.

Plymouth was launched—a newcomer—only 10 years ago.

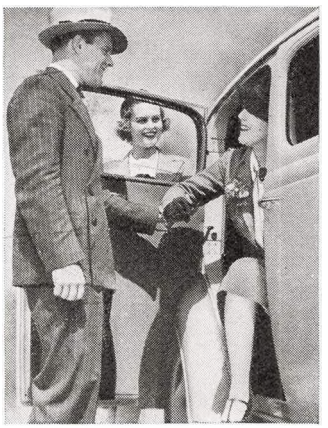
Within three years, one out of every twelve low-priced cars sold was a Plymouth. In seven years, it was one out of every *four!*

The 1938 Plymouth is the *greatest* Plymouth ever built. Go see it!

YOU'LL LIKE THE PRICE—The 1938 Plymouth is one of the lowest-priced cars. And the Commercial Credit Company offers easy terms through Dodge, De Soto and Chrysler dealers. Make it a habit—tune in Major Bowes' Amateur Hour... Columbia Network, Thursdays, 9 to 10 P. M., E.S.T.



1 Eye-Taking Personality. Look at the beautiful radiator grille. Fenders now sweep clear around it. Headlights are larger and more efficient. The whole car looks more distinctive.



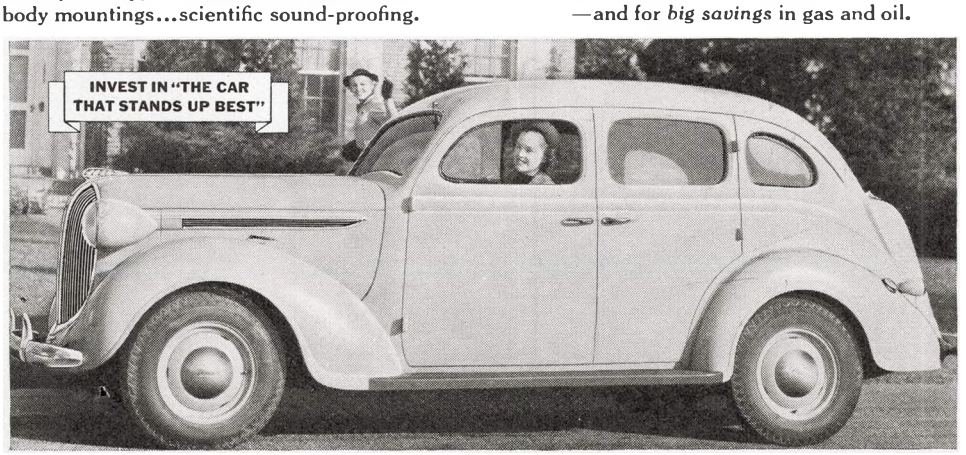
2 It's Easy to Get Out of the roomy 1938 Plymouth. The doors are wide...and seats are "chair-height."

3 Clutch Pressure Eased 15% ...and this big Plymouth's steering is *faster*. The new handbrake is out of the floor.

4 Lots of Room. Seats are wide...the cushions are soft and restful. And Plymouth's comfort is also due to airplane-type shock-absorbers..."live" rubber body mountings...scientific sound-proofing.

5 The Gentleman's Looking at Plymouth's big 82-horsepower, "L-head" engine. He can count on it for reliability—and for *big savings* in gas and oil.

6 See the Bigger Baggage Space you have. The floor is covered—so luggage is protected. And there's no sill to lift luggage over.



7 Here's the Whole Car—It's by far the handsomest car Plymouth has ever built. And the safest, the most comfortable, as well. Get the smooth, safe feeling of *double-action* hydraulic brakes...of full-powered performance...of a relaxed, "floating ride"! It's *"the car that stands up best!"* PLYMOUTH DIVISION OF CHRYSLER CORPORATION, Detroit, Michigan.

PLYMOUTH BUILDS GREAT CARS

See the 1938 Plymouth

SOMERSET IMPORTERS, LTD. • NEW YORK • CHICAGO • SAN FRANCISCO

This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.

IN TUNE WITH OUR TIMES

The Rise of Georgia

THIS is the story of Georgia Ann Carroll, that wonder girl from Dallas, Texas, who does *not* want to go to Hollywood.

Georgia is seventeen. Her eyes are very, very blue. Her hair is very, very blonde. She stands five feet nine in her stockinged feet. "Stands" is right, because being one of America's most successful models, she seldom gets a chance to sit down.

Georgia arrived in New York three months ago. She knew nobody. She wanted to see the Big City, but she did not expect to be seen by it. She was mistaken. Forty-eight hours after her arrival everybody knew her, and every art editor in town was fighting for her services. She could have been "signed up" by the movie scouts then and there, but she said no. She meant it, too. She likes New York; and she suspects that there are altogether too many people in Hollywood who are making one hundred thousand dollars a year, for a couple of weeks.

Is Georgia beautiful? She certainly is; but what is more important still, she happens to be "photogenic." A most unusual combination, according to our Mr. Ruzzie Green, who claims that the probabilities are much greater of producing a set of quintuplets than a single infant who is both beautiful and "photogenic."

The picture on the right shows Georgia getting her first glimpse of Park Avenue. For other pictures please turn to pages 10 and 11.

1. *Georgia (third from left), waiting to be received by John Powers—who happens to be a prominent agent for beautiful models. In his files are some eight hundred names of "available models."*

2. *Mr. Powers inspects Georgia. He perceives at once that his fair visitor is going places.*

3. *Georgia comes to Ruzzie Green, Redbook's suave photographer. "Let's have a talk," he says.*

IT TAKES EIGHT PEOPLE

The agent

The photographer

The art editor

The hairdresser

4. *Mr. Green introduces Georgia to the editors of Redbook. He explains to them her "fine points."*

5. *Georgia and the hairdresser: "You're in New York now, my dear. You must look your best."*

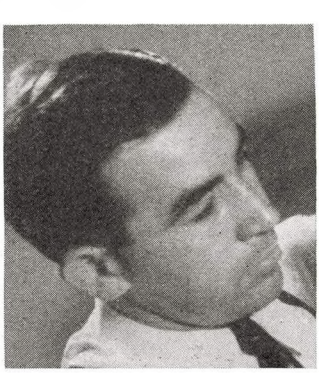
6. *Make-up applied, Georgia is about to face the camera. "I do hope I'm photogenic!" she murmurs.*

7. *Five days later: Georgia reviews her likeness on the January 1938 cover of Redbook.*

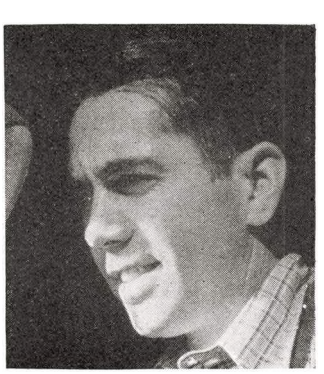
TO MAKE A REDBOOK COVER

The make-up woman

The dressmaker



The color technician



The electrician

"IN OLD CHICAGO"

(REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH)

by H. N. SWANSON

NOW that it's time for sleigh-bells and snow on cocktail shakers, I've come to add my bit of seasonal cheer. Let those bleak winds blow; let the long underwear scratch; let the sour-faced economists tell us that national destruction is just around the corner—you should worry! Just remember that at your local movie, which is also just around the corner, there is playing one of the most satisfying pictures you'll be able to see this winter. If you've got a couple of tickets to this show in your chubby little fists, you can forget next year's income-tax, and get a bounce out of realizing that somebody else besides the President can spend money.

Yep, that somebody's name is Darryl Zanuck. He threw the stockholders' money around with both hands, but the result has proved that once again he's crazy like a fox—like a Twentieth Century Fox, I almost said, and am glad now that I didn't. "In Old Chicago" is his tale of the Windy City between the years of 1854 and 1871, culminating in the Great Fire. It is loaded with excitement, suspense, romance and fun. It is written, directed and acted in a fashion such as you would expect for an outlay of a couple of million smackers. It can no more be ignored than can one of the resplendent gold-trimmed mustache-cups of its own generation!

Now, the result may not be history; but don't let that chew you up. The studio has really dignified a colorful myth, changing to its own purposes the story of Mrs. O'Leary and her famous cow which was supposed to have kicked over the lantern and started that great disaster. The film seems to be quite accurate, not only in the reproduction of streets and stores of that period, but also in the attitude of the people. It will please every Chicagoan, naturally, and also the average movie fan. For too long a time the Hollywood moguls have been glorifying New Orleans and Little Old New York and San Francisco; they simply didn't know what they've been missing.

To begin with, "In Old Chicago" definitely establishes Tyrone Power and Alice Faye as a romantic team, if they haven't already been. She plays the part of a café entertainer: she sings and dances a little, and emotes somethin' grand. Tyrone Power does more than support her as male lead: his trouping in certain scenes is far and away his best to date, and a perfect tribute to Director Henry King.

The writers of the story and screen-play, respectively, were Niven Busch, Lamar Trotti and Sonya Levien. It's concerned with *Mrs. O'Leary* (Alice Brady), a widow who raises her three sons and fights for them with a fierce Irish passion which gives much humor to the proceedings. The plot hinges on the conflict of two of the sons: one (Tyrone Power), facile and selfish and dazzling; the other (Don Ameche), honest and loyal to his city and the better virtues. Their love for the entertainer (Alice Faye) is tangled up in the struggle of the former brother to dominate this prairie kingdom, and the efforts of the latter brother to block him. Other important players are Andy Devine, who takes the part of Power's companion, and Brian Donlevy, the political boss whom he crushes. Producer Kenneth Macgowan has insured the investment further by a sterling cast of secondary players.

THERE is quite a bit of music in it, too. The title song by Gordon and Revel, and other tunes by Pollock and Mitchell, carry out the quaintness and charm of the seventies. For don't forget, the populace of that time was a pretty lusty quantity. In this lake front town were active crowds of people, drawn by the highly organized dissipation of the Big Town—buying champagne, with mud on their shoes and as many silver dollars in their pockets as were to be found in the Palmer House floor. Into Chicago just then was funneling most of America's merchandise and money and travelers with ideas who wanted room to try them out. It was an impatient bunch of people, always on the go, quick to follow their leaders into the frenzies of the time.

"Nothing can ever lick Chicago," says *Mrs. O'Leary*. That same kind of self-hyp-

(Please turn to page 115)

"Look, Steve ...it's Me!"

1. I check this party's hat every night for months, but for all the attention I get from him you'd think I'm just part of the scenery. And they say artists have an eye for beauty.

2. This particular night I see him come stomping out of the dining room with Pierre at his tails. "But, Monsieur," Pierre is pleading, "ze waiter he forget you do not drink ze coffee. Eet will nevair happen again, I promise."

3. While I'm getting the party's hat'n stick he grumbles, "I've told them I love coffee but can't drink it...I'm one of those people caffein keeps awake. Then they shove it under my nose."

4. "Gee, they must be dumb," I pipe up, "or else they'd have tipped you off to Sanka Coffee long ago. There's a dream of a coffee you can drink any time and sleep, 'cause it's 97% caffein-free."

5. Next night he drops in and flashes me a 24 carat smile. "Young lady," he says, "you've wised me up to a couple of masterpieces. First, a swell coffee that lets me sleep. And second, a swell girl who's just the type I need to pose for a magazine cover painting."

IF you love coffee, but are among those not on sleeping terms with caffein—switch to Sanka Coffee.

It's a coffee of rare goodness . . . full-bodied, fragrant, and satisfying. And Sanka Coffee...with 97% of its caffein removed...is one coffee that simply can't keep you awake, no matter how much you drink.

Make Sanka Coffee strong...the way all good coffee should be. Use a heaping tablespoonful, as much as the spoon will hold, for each cup. If you "perk" it, be sure to give it a few extra minutes "on the fire."

Your grocer sells Sanka Coffee. A General Foods Product.

SANKA COFFEE

Real Coffee—97% Caffein-Free...Drink It and Sleep!

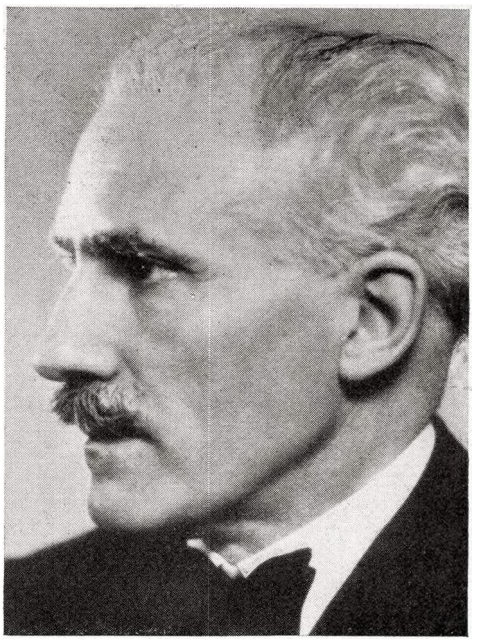
ON "WE, THE PEOPLE"

Born in the lap of luxury, Mrs. Natalie G. Christman now lives in a chicken coop —and loves it!

Her amazing story, told by Mrs. Christman, herself, is one of the thrilling high spots which have been offered to radio listeners by "We, The People." Every week this intensely human and gripping program is packed with the drama, pathos and rib-tickling humor of everyday life experiences.

LISTEN IN to "We, The People" each Thursday night over the Columbia Broadcasting System. See your paper for time and station.

GREAT MUSIC



Above: Arturo Toscanini.
Center: Kirsten Flagstad.
Below: Lauritz Melchior.

FOR a great many years now, the worshipers of the Good Old Days have been telling us that ours is an unfortunate generation indeed. "Where now are the Melbas and the Carusos?" ask those smooth-shaven Jeremiahs. "Where, oh where, is the Great Music of yesteryear?"

Well, sirs, at long last we are able to answer your queries. The divine Melba and the incomparable Caruso are dead, to be sure; but the Great Music, perhaps the Greatest Music that the world has ever heard, is very much alive. If it's a great basso you would like to hear, Chaliapin, the Czar of all bassos, is at present touring the United States. If your soul craves for a soprano, we give you Kirsten Flagstad, one of the greatest Wagnerian sopranos of the century, about to begin her third season with the Metropolitan Opera House. You prefer a tenor, a "really great" tenor? Fine and dandy. Lauritz Melchior is yours for the price of an admission to the self-same Metropolitan. You can't afford to make a trip to New York, you say, and yours is too small a town to finance a symphony orchestra? Well, don't waste your tears, but tune in on Arturo Toscanini on the night of December 25th. Beginning with that night the great maestro and his hand-picked orchestra will broadcast a weekly symphony concert over a coast-to-coast network.

The Good Old Days may have been excellent; but our days of the present are just a shade better.

GREETINGS

FROM R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY

Makers of

CAMEL

CIGARETTES &

PRINCE ALBERT

SMOKING TOBACCO

(right) *A tempting Christmas special —4 boxes of Camels in "flat fifties" —wrapped in gay holiday dress for the Yuletide season.*

(right) *The famous Camel carton — 200 cigarettes—in this extra-special Christmas art wrapper. A truly popular gift!*

MADE FROM FINER, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS

In choosing cigarettes for Christmas giving, remember Camels are the favorite of more smokers than any other brand. There's no doubt about how much people appreciate Camel's finer, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS. A gift of Camels carries a *double* greeting from you. It says: "Happy Holidays *and* Happy Smoking!"

THE NATIONAL JOY SMOKE

If you know that a man really enjoys pipe smoking, you may be sure that Prince Albert will suit him to a "T." More men buy Prince Albert for themselves than any other smoking tobacco. It's the "National Joy Smoke"—mild and rich tasting—and beautifully dressed up to say "Merry Christmas" for you! Being so mild, P. A. is a delight to the fussiest pipe-smoker.

(left) *A pound of Prince Albert, packed in a* real glass humidor *that keeps the tobacco in prime condition. The humidor becomes a cherished,* permanent *possession! Gift wrap.*

(left) *A pound of mild, mellow Prince Albert—the choice, "biteless" tobacco—in the famous red tin humidor, plus an attractive Christmas gift package wrap!*

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GLO-WYN . . . . .$1.50 lb.
Whitman's beautiful "Gold Box" of *miniature* chocolates—4 removable trays (ideal for bridge) containing nut, nougat, fruit and other best-liked centers. 1 and 2 lbs.—$1.50 lb.

SAMPLER $1.50
America's finest box of candy—the most enticing variety of palate-tickling confections ever assembled in one package—each luscious piece a tribute to its incomparable Whitman quality. 17-oz. Sampler (96 pieces) $1.50—also 2, 3 and 5 pounds.

NEW FAIRHILL . . $1.00 lb.
Outstanding dollar box of chocolates—taste-tempting nougat, nut, marshmallow, caramel, cream and other popular centers at their very finest. In 25c, 50c, $1, $2, $3 and $5 sizes.

PRESTIGE
$2.00 lb.
Beautiful and useful metal chest, with small, expensive, handmade chocolates. 1, 2, and 3 lbs.—$2 lb.

FRUITS and NUTS
$1.00 lb.
Toothsome nut and fruit centers, in 1 and 2 lbs.—$1.00 lb.

PLEASURE ISLAND—$1.50 lb.
A pirate's treasure chest filled with delightful plunder. 1 and 2 lbs.—$1.50 lb.

PENN WYNNE
$1.00 lb.
Delectable all-milk-chocolates. ½, 1 and 2 lbs. $1.00 lb.

NUTS—Chocolate Covered
$1.50 lb.
Special assortment of favorites. 1 and 2 lbs.—$1.50 lb.

NUT, CRISP and CHEWY CENTERS
$1.00 lb.
Whitman's popular "Red Box" containing nut, fudge, caramel and other centers. 1 lb. $1.00.

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Other Kinds of CHRISTMAS

The story of a woman who was longing for the lovely things of her childhood

by NANCY HALE

VERA had done every last thing she knew how to make Christmas happen at Bordermont. She ached for Christmas—for the true, merry, snow-white, benign Christmas—as a man in extreme tropics aches for a breeze out of Labrador. She had closed her eyes to all the things that were wrong—the dirty green of the wide and rolling fields that swept from the house of Bordermont out into the rich Southern country; the warm and softness of this December weather; the absence of all that she knew as Christmas spirit in the people about her. With all her will she had tried to bring Christmas as she knew it and deeply loved it, to the South; against all the obstacles and indifference, she had worked to create that still, shining, frosty, starlit, holy thing.

She knew inside her that this Christmas, her first in the South, was the one that counted most. She had been married at home, in Maine, in the month of June; and then it had appeared a wonderful and sumptuous future, to marry into the South. She had not been afraid that her love for Telford Bayes, her husband, would ever be shaken by hate or distrust of his country that he loved. All that summer had been richly hot and lush, strange to her Northern blood, but somehow deeply satisfying: the drinks under the great oak on the lawn, sitting there in wicker chairs until the violet-colored dusk sifted down, and the lightning-bugs started out of the twilight; the hot summer woods they had ridden through on sweating horses, the heavy leaves brushing flies from the horses' necks, their hoofs striking soft and deep into the mulch and rotting leaves of the hollows.

They had lived a fine summer life at Bordermont, Vera's new home with Telford. The cool, darkened high rooms were full of dim portraits of his ancestors; the great silver bowls filled with dropping roses were beaded with slow sweat. Outside on the broad verandas the shadows were purple against the scarlet and gold of the outer sunshine; and they would sit

"IT'S YOUR YANKEE PARSIMONIOUSNESS," HE SAID, THROWING THE LAST BALL, WHICH BROKE.


HE BEGAN TO KISS HER.... THIS WAS NOT A PART OF CHRISTMAS EVE. SHE WANTED IT STARRY, COLD, CALM.

Illustrated by
AUGUST BLESER, Jr.

in the mornings looking across the green lawns, across the fields, hearing the cicadas shriek in the long grasses beyond the rail fence. Beside them the great columns of the portico rotted slowly in their century-long consumption by woodworms. Everything was burning and lazy and ancient; here was no energy nor ambition nor restlessness, but only the long comforts of the days and nights, the service of the three negroes, the slow passage of the deep, throbbing summer.

Nothing ever moved fast. They would lunch in the long dim dining-room off melons and peaches and cold beer; and sometimes in the afternoons they would ride across to Greenfield homestead, where Telford's brother Langley and his wife and children lived. They would dismount on the lawn after the leisurely ride, walk to the porch, where Langley and Beaufort Bayes were forever drinking juleps, and join them in the drinking. The three children ran lazily around the lawn stripped nearly naked, playing vague games with the little colored children from behind the house. Now and then one of them would climb up the steps to the grown-up people and hang around their chairs for a little while, resting in the shadow; the children's faces were like little fresh tropical flowers, small and white. They would climb into their mother's lap and kiss her cheek; Beaufort Bayes would kiss her child and say, "Honey, don't you know it's too hot to hug Mother?" and set the child down on its little bare feet. . . .

Dimly, inevitably, Vera felt the life of Langley and Beaufort Bayes as her own and Telford's future. This was the way of life; there was no other. All through the hot days they sat and drank cold whisky and watched their children playing on the lawn. Langley was thin and tall in his white linen clothes; he talked of ancestry and the history of the county, the Civil War, the lost or stolen pictures and furniture, of Greenfield and Bordermont.

Beaufort was Vera's self as she would grow to be in this country; she always felt that. Beaufort Bayes was a pleasant woman, grown fat in her bosom and hips; her only energy resided in her voice, which was high and rapid and emphatic. Her household ran itself; she called sharp orders over her shoulder to a passing negro, as she rocked and sipped on the wide cool porch—"Geneva! Tell Proctor Mr. Telford and Miss Vera are staying for dinner, hear?" Her face was lovely and indolent: she had been a skinny young belle, but she accepted her change, her children, her empty days, happily and lazily, and there was nothing in her face to say that she wanted other. Nature, the rich fecund nature of this land, managed her like a limp puppet. This summer she was again big with child; and Vera knew that next year again, and the year after, and every year, nature would again swell her big soft body. Thus she attended to the business of a wife and of a mother with comfortable lassitude, not resisting. She had all the strength needed by a richly functioning woman in a land that was like a woman too, rich and deep-bosomed and fertile.

That was Vera's future in this land. Somehow she never for an instant rebelled against it, in that summer, and in the long, ruddy, sweet-smelling autumn that slowly followed. She felt her nature turn calm and unresisting; she was very happy. She never desired the cold ocean and the pale green land of Maine; this heat, this ease, this long happy laziness infused her. She and Telford would ride home through the dimming fields, full of singing crickets, and dine in the evening off cold ham and chickens and peach ice-cream. They would sit outside and watch the lightning-bugs until it was bedtime, and then go up to the great bedroom where they would lie together through the hot Southern night. She felt herself becoming larger, more a woman; her shoulders softening, her bosom growing deeper, her gestures, her walk, slower and more composed. That was all there was to her days, and all she wanted. In October she knew that she was with child.

IT was only with the winter that her discontent began. In November an instinct in her made her wake in the mornings hoping, with her eyes closed, that when they opened, they would see snow falling. It never fell. It seemed to her that, in her increasing physical discomfort, she actually thirsted for the sight of snow. The continuing softness of the weather began to exhaust her; she ached for frost, for sharp lifting cold, for the rise of the heart when the snow falls and the weather snaps. But here it was never cold, only faintly chilly in the early mornings. There was never snow. It was as easy to get about as if it had still been summer: but now the fields had turned to dirty green, the sky was blank and gray, and the land had lost all its lush richness.

At the beginning of December with the habit of her lifetime she began to think of Christmas. It was as real a thing stirring in her as the actual child within her. Always at this time the sharp memory awoke, the longing for the lovely things of Christmas: the snow-bound fields, the cold exalted stillness of Christmas Eve, the mittens and coats and knitted caps worn out into the snow on Christmas morning; the Christmas dinner, with turkey and cranberry sauce and creamed onions and mashed pumpkin and mashed potatoes and giblet gravy, and for dessert the four kinds of pie, mince, apple, pumpkin and Marlborough. All that, and the presents, the weeks of preparation for Christmas, were as much of a ceremony as the rites of the church on Christmas; and now the words of the Christmas gospel began to echo in her ears, as they always did in the very first days of December: *"And there were, in the same country, certain shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the angel of the Lord came before them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: 'Gloria in excelsis Deo'."*

Of all the year, of all the seasons, of all the world's festivals, Christmas was the loveliest, the rarest, the most eternally living. It was an ancient love, a devotion, rising in Vera's blood.

FOR the first time since she had been married, there arose this conflict within her, suddenly, terribly. Christmas was to her something pure and crystal fresh, delicate and holy and calm, smelling of spruce and candle-wax and snow, full of the faint sounds of carols sung, the glimmer of candles on a tree, the high stars shining glorious and white in the sky. "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie—" And the South was not like that at all. Suddenly she had a revulsion against all the lushness, the plenty, the warmth and fecundity, and longed bitterly for the exquisite severity of the North, the true land of Christmas, where the delicate crystals of snow fell all night in the deep woods, where the lights shone out from the white, austere little churches.

She was homesick in her heart. Like a child, she wanted to be at home, in the country she knew, getting ready for Christmas. She cried once, lying across the great wide soft bed, for the narrow bed she had slept in at home, for the winter coming on there, for the heavenly ecstasy of Christmas. . . . It was in the afternoon. A bird was cheeping outside the window. It was not like winter at all. Vera felt heavy and imprisoned and sick at heart, sick with longing and crying. She rolled over on her back and stared out at the sky, blue in patches, as blue as a summer sky. She was still for a moment, and then she sat up.

She was resolved to make Christmas here, to bring the lovely thing that was her inheritance, to this foreign country. That Christmas she knew was, she was sure, too eternal and tangible a thing to depend on any particular land; she would make it shine in the candles, in the firelight, here.

Suddenly she was happy. Her conflict was resolved. This was her marriage portion, that she could bring her husband and her future child. This was something beautiful that she knew, and could endow her family with, as a special gift from far away. Anybody would love it. There could be no doubt about that. Christmas as she knew it, the Christmas of the still and snowy North, was the loveliest thing in the world, and her children would inherit, its loveliness, the ceremony of its practice, from their mother. She felt full of desire to give this to her family.

She worked hard, in the next weeks. She found Southern evergreens to hang above the fireplace, to make into big wreaths to hang upon the doors. She went into town and bought quantities of silly cheap toys for Telford's stocking. She sent away for presents for him that he would like. She made her cook, a vast lazy negress, practice the necessary recipes for pies, for cranberry sauce, over and over to make sure they were made right. She forgot nothing.

It was not easy. She found it impossible to buy candles and candle-holders for the tree. Here the storekeepers said, they used colored electric lights, a modernism that sickened Vera. In the end she sent away for the kind she wanted. She wrote down for reference the exact order of the Christmas ceremonies as they had always been followed by her family in Maine. The reading of the Gospel according to St. Luke, on Christmas Eve; the hanging of the stockings; the reading of "The Night Before Christmas" to the children—but that could begin another year. The little traditions—that in the middle of the night between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day all the fairies, the pagan things, came out and danced until the birth of Christ again banished them. There could be no walk in the snow on Christmas morning, no coasting, be-

cause there was no snow; but they would take a walk. And they would have Langley and Beaufort for dinner at three on Christmas. in the old-fashioned way, and the tree would be lighted with candles in a room that had been shut away from view, and there would be presents for everybody. All the tiny details she wrote down, and prepared to follow, in the making of the ancient tradition again in this new land. She felt like a pioneer woman, bringing the old customs of her way of life into a strange and outer country.

When she asked Beaufort to come to dinner on Christmas with Langley, and bring the children, Beaufort hesitated.

"Langley's the older brother," she said. "We thought we'd ask you-all to dinner with us Christmas night. I shouldn't think you'd want all that work, you expectin' and all."

Vera shook her head vehemently.

"No, you must come to us," she said. "I'm going to have Christmas as I was brought up to have it, and I want my family to be there. Dinner will be at three—that's the old-fashioned way."

"Unh-hunh?" Beaufort nodded vaguely. "I reckon it's real cold up where you come from. Can't hardly enjoy Christmas, freezin' to death. Wish you-all'd come to dinner at Greenfield and let us show you a real Christmas, fireworks and everything."

"*Fireworks?*"

"Unh-hunh, honey. Don't reckon you could put 'em off up North, with so much snow to put them right out. I'd like right much to have you see a real honest-to-goodness Christmas like we have it down here."

"YOU'VE SPOILED MY CHRISTMAS.... NOW YOU'LL NEVER SEE WHAT CHRISTMAS IS REALLY LIKE, ONLY ME, I'VE GOT IT LOCKED IN MY HEART."

Vera stared at her politely. It was strange and incredible to realize that these people actually thought they knew how to have Christmas. She would show them something so much lovelier.

It was disappointing to have Christmas Eve especially warm, warm enough so that they sat out on the veranda with coats around them after dinner. Vera felt a little subdued. She had suggested going to church for the candlelight service, and had been told by Telford that there was no such service, that she could go in the morning if she wanted to. They sat in the mild air looking out through the evening. Vera was quivering with tension. She cared so much about tomorrow. It had to come out right. It had to be at least a little colder than this. All evening she tried to make up her mind to suggest Telford's reading St. Luke. But it was so warm—it would seem so queer to read those lovely frosty lines in this warm evening. She swallowed back tears in the darkness, and prayed for the success of tomorrow. When they went into the house, she firmly insisted that Telford hang up his stocking.

"Honey, I haven't done that since I was so-high. Reckon all the children do it, but I never heard of old people like you and me."

"Telford, please! I care so much about having everything nice. I want to have a lovely Christmas. Please."

"Suits me, darlin'."

He wandered around vaguely in his pajamas with a sock. She took it from him and hung it over the fireplace in their room.

"Funny darlin'," he said, coming behind her and putting his arms around her waist. "Love to fuss, don't you? Next Christmas you'll be hanging up the baby's stocking, won't you? My sweet big old mother, darlin'! Come here to me, you big luscious thing—"

He pulled her violently to him and began to kiss her neck; his hands ran down her back, feeling her flesh. She felt a sharp stab of revulsion. This was all wrong. This was not a part of Christmas Eve. She wanted it so, still and starry, cold and calm. . . . He was kissing her upper arm deeply. . . .

When he had gone to sleep, she got up and filled the sock. Soft air filled the room from the open windows. There were no stars, when she went to the window and leaned out. Tears came to her eyes from disappointment. The old homesickness began again in her heart. Oh, if tomorrow would only be right!

Telford's sleepy voice called to her, from the huge bed.

"Come back here to your husband, honey. What you doing at the window? You come here to me." His hands reached out as she came to the bed and pulled her deep, deep into the vast softness, into his arms and against his moving lips. . . . It was a long Christmas Eve, with no stars outside, only the soft air and the darkness in the room.

In the morning she got him his sock from the mantel. He lay in bed, playing with the things, but it was not like Christmas; one could not pretend that reindeer had brought these toys, when the day had broken warm and blue, like a May day, almost. He made her stay with him, and tickled her, and fed her the orange from the tip of the toe, until it was late in the morning.

"There's just time to finish trimming the tree," she said.

"Can I help?"

"I want you to."

But in the library, where the tree stood, he sat in a chair and watched her hang tinsel, making jokes. It was not a proper tree. It had been impossible to get a spruce, and this was pine, skinny and sparse. She brought him a box full of red and silver balls to hang on the branches.

He began to throw them at the tree from where he sat. Most of them broke on the floor.

"Oh, Telford! Don't! You're breaking all the lovely balls. Darling, please don't."

"It's a game. See how many I can make stick on the tree."

"You've broken almost all of them—" She began to cry. It all seemed so useless. He didn't understand, that these things were precious and lovely, to be saved in a box from one Christmas to the next, and brought out to hang with joy and reverence and Christmas spirit on the tree.

"It's your Yankee parsimoniousness," he said, throwing the last ball, which broke. "Can't bear to see money wasted. They couldn't have cost more than a few cents."

"It's not that." She was crying now as if she could not stop. It was all so hopeless. Nobody here understood Christmas. Here it was warm and indolent and casual, and nobody knew what Christmas meant. She had been silly to try.

"You're just overwrought," he said. "Poor little Vera!" She knew what he was thinking of, and felt the more hopeless. Here, in this land, she felt no sentiment about abstract things, about the spirit of things. There was only the flesh, and childbearing, and physical things. . . .

For the rest of that day she grew more and more wretched. The Langley Bayes were an hour late to dinner. Then another hour and a half was consumed drinking cocktails. She had forgotten about that. Liquor had played no part in the Christmas she knew, and it seemed almost irreverent now. *(Please turn to page 68)*

Doctor Dogbody's Leg

Meet a brand new James Norman Hall character that bids fair to become one of the year's most popular figures . . . Dr. Dogbody of his Britannic Majesty's Navy, a liar extraordinary who makes Baron Munchausen look like George Washington.

ON a dreary autumn evening when the clouds hung low in the heavens, and the masts and yards of the tall men-of-war in the harbor were obscured by a chill drizzle of rain, there was no more inviting spot in Portsmouth than the taproom of Will Tunn's "Cheerful Tortoise." But times were dull, now that Napoleon had been safely exiled to St. Helena; half the fleet had been paid off, ships laid up; and the Royal Dockyards, which had hummed with activity two years before, were reduced to the peacetime establishment.

The Cheerful Tortoise had suffered with the rest of the community from the return of peace, although the creature which gave the inn its name smiled down upon passers-by with its oldtime air of wistful geniality. The inn sign, as Mr. Tunn himself was willing to admit, was a veritable work of art. Carved from a huge slab of oak by an old seaman many years before, it was impervious to wind and weather; and only the strongest gale would cause it to swing slightly on its heavy gilded chain. Many a thirsty seaman, just ashore, would stop short to gaze in admiration at Will Tunn's tortoise, touch his hat to it with a grin, and seek no farther for refreshment. The carapace was a bright sea-green, the calipee pale blue, the flippers yellow; and the head, with its eager smiling face, was richly ornamented and picked out in gold leaf. But the cheerful tortoise was greater than the sum of its parts, thanks to a happy stroke of simple seaman's genius. Its attitude of absorbed interest as it craned its neck to one side, as though to gaze past the lintel of the doorway into the taproom, combined with its smile, in which sadness at thought of its own deprivations seemed to be mingled with unselfish delight at thought of the good cheer and good company within, had made it a famous tavern animal, amongst innumerable swans, blue boars, cocks, dogs and ducks, red lions, green dragons, white harts and horses that adorned the highroad between Portsmouth and London.

Mr. Tunn's house, although not one of the great posting-inns of the time, was a place of call for some of the principal London coaches, and was especially frequented by men who followed the sea. It was a brick building of three stories, which had been raised in the substantial manner of the period, to last for centuries. A huge door studded with brass nails gave directly upon the taproom, with its dark paneled wainscoting, its floor of red bricks, well worn and scrubbed, its casks on trestles with a line of bright spigots behind the high old-fashioned bar, and its comfortable recesses with oaken tables, and settees upholstered in breeches-polished leather. One such recess, alongside a mighty fireplace at the far end of the room, was reserved for the props of the house, old friends of the landlord, who well deserved the name.

Behind the taproom and connected with it by a wide passageway was the kitchen, an apartment equally spacious, whose dusky rafters were festooned with sides of bacon, hams, sausages, strings of onions and parcels of dried herbs. Pots and pans polished to a degree of brightness something past perfection hung on pegs about the fireplace, where an entire bullock might almost have turned on the spit. At one end of the kitchen stood a long deal table, scrubbed white, where guests of the humbler sort were furnished with food and drink. On the first floor, above, reached by a stair-

The first of a series of stories

by **JAMES NORMAN HALL**

co-author of the Mutiny Trilogy

Illustrated by MAURICE BOWER


THE YANKEES SWARMED INTO US, FIVE TO ONE. THE MOMENT THEY GRAPPLED, TWO STOUT FELLOWS WERE UPON ME AT ONCE—TO THEIR COST. THE THIRD I DID NOT SEE UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE, ELSE I MIGHT HAVE LOST BOTH LEGS IN PLACE OF ONE.

case from the taproom, was the handsome apartment in which Tunn's famous dinners were served, and where four tall windows looked to the westward toward the Royal Dockyards and the shipping in the harbor. Along a carpeted passageway on either side of the dining-room were bedchambers for travelers. On the third floor, where mullioned windows projected from the steep slope of the roof, were the quarters of the landlord and his staff.

Mr. Tunn was a stoutly built, muscular man of sixty, with a clear ruddy complexion, a solid paunch, and a fringe of iron-gray hair framing a bald head. His had been a blameless, useful life, and he deserved well of the world if any man did; but on a certain evening in November his thoughts were as cheerless as the autumn sky. He stood in the kitchen, superintending with little of his wonted relish the preparations for supper. Bilges the kitchen-boy was seated on a stool, opening a cask of oysters fresh from Colchester. Another boy stood at the spit, where a stubble goose and a noble saddle of mutton were turning under the landlord's direction. So pleasant a prospect would have caused Tunn's mouth to water at another time.

HIS worries were unselfish ones, for he was not the man to permit his own troubles to weigh heavily upon him. Mr. Tunn was a widower who revered the memory of his wife. A distant cousin of hers had done well with a lodging-house during the long years of war, and although times grew hard after the defeat of the French, she had clung to her lease, waiting and hoping for lodgers who rarely came. Tunn had few pounds to spare in these days, and it pained him to see a connection of his beloved Sarah reduced to such straitened circumstances. He sighed, wiped his hands on his apron, and walked through the passageway to the taproom, just in time to see the drawer hastily rinse a pint-pot and return it to its shelf. Tunn stopped short.

"Tom!"

The drawer, a long, cadaverous man with a colorless face and a surprising round belly, turned his head with a grin, half guilty, half impudent.

"Tuppence in the till, ye rogue! Tom Tapleke! Curse me if ever a man was better named! Tapleke! Swigbeer! Maltworm —aye, there's a good score of names I can think of to suit such a sandy-gulleted scamp as yourself! And custom fallen away to naught in these days! It's so ye help your master, is it, ye gotch-gutted splinter! Tuppence in the till, I say!"

Tapleke, who knew to a shade his master's moods, sighed with the doleful air of a deeply wronged man, produced the coin with reluctant ostentation, and dropped it with a clink among its fellows in the till. Tunn was opening his mouth to say more, when Tapleke nodded toward the window. Dimly discernible through the frosted panes, a hackney coach was drawing up at the door. The landlord hastened to open it, admitting a smallish active man who stumped in on a wooden leg. He wore a cocked hat of a style somewhat past the fashion, a handsomely embroidered waistcoat, and a coat which, though plain, was well-cut and of the best materials. The buckle of the single shoe below the white silk stocking was of silver.

"Mr. Tunn?" he asked briskly.

"Will Tunn, sir, at your service."

"Doctor Dogbody, at yours, sir. I was directed to you— But damme, I'm parched! You've good rum here?"

"The best old Port Royal, sir."

"Then I'll thank you to take a glass with me before I tell my errand."

The visitor seated himself on a bench and removed his hat, disclosing a head of thick white hair, brushed neatly back and gathered in a queue. Dr. Dogbody's eyes, of the clearest blue, twinkled with shrewdness and good humor, in a face as red as the wattles of a turkey-cock. His short throat, the back of his neck, even the small, well-shaped, muscular hands, were of the same fiery scarlet.

He took his glass from Tapleke, nodded to the landlord, and drained the spirit at a gulp.

"Hah! That's better!" he exclaimed. "Ahoy, you at the tap! What's your name?"

"Tom, sir."

"Another of the same, Tom." He glanced at the landlord's glass, still three-quarters full. "And draw a pint of ale for yourself."

"Thankee, sir, thankee," said the delighted Tapleke with a malicious grin for the landlord's benefit. The Doctor turned to his host with a chuckle.

"Of all the drawers, Mr. Tunn," he said, "in all the inns between London and Portsmouth, five in six are named Tom. On the Dover Road the ratio is seven Dicks to four Toms; whilst on the Exeter Road, there's naught but Joes as far as the King's Arms, Salisbury—whence, curiously enough, the Toms begin again and continue without break to the Elephant, in Exeter itself."

"You're a great traveler, sir?" Mr. Tunn asked politely.

"By sea, yes. By land, no. But when I do travel, ashore, there's little I miss by the way, sir." The Doctor lifted his glass again, holding it toward the light as he examined it critically; then, taking a generous sip or two, he set it down.

"A prime old spirit, landlord. My compliments. It has made a new man of me, I declare. Now, sir, to my errand. But before I proceed, just send out a tankard of your best to the coachman. The fellow's waiting for me and looks as dry as ashes. . . .

"For some fifty years, Mr. Tunn, I've been a surgeon in His Majesty's Navy. I was retired, temporarily, a short while since, but London doesn't suit me. Damme, no! Portsmouth's the place for an old seaman, where he can cross tacks with a friend now and again. At the Angel, in town, the landlord told me that Will Tunn, of the Cheerful Tortoise, was the man for me. It's lodgings I'm after, with a well-found inn, like yours, sir, close at hand. Now then, do you know of a snug berth near by? My compliments once more!"

TUNN raised his glass with a smile, and pretended to reflect for a moment before he spoke. "I know the very place, sir. A quiet house, and kept by a decent woman, a Mrs. Quigg."

"I'm no ordinary lodger, Tunn. It's not every woman would put up with me. I might make a bit of noise, above-stairs, getting about on my larboard leg. Then, it's not easy to cook for me, and there's times I'll want to dine in. Not that I demand any fiddle-faddle fare. I'm an old seaman; I've been nourished, and well nourished, on peas, good salt beef and such hearty food; but I'll have it dressed as I want it, in the best old Navy fashion. Would this Mrs.—what's her name again? Quigg?—would she be the woman for my money?"

"The very one, Dr. Dogbody! Her husband was a warrant officer, and as choice a man about his victuals as ever I see. You could ransack Portsmouth from the waterside up, without finding a woman with her knack for making a man comfortable."

"There's another thing: I'll have no bed. I must have my hammock-battens made fast to the wall."

"No trouble about that, sir. Mrs. Quigg's lodged naught but seamen since her house was opened."

"Then, Tunn, if you're ready, we'll board the coach." The Doctor fumbled in his waistcoat pocket and tossed a sovereign on the table. "Credit me with the balance of that," he said. "You've not seen the last of me, here."

"I trust not, sir, indeed!" Tunn murmured in a pleased voice; then, taking his hat from a wall peg, he glanced from Tapleke to the line of spigots with a look conveying a warning and a menace, and followed the Doctor out. *(Please turn to page 86)*

"ONE OF THE GUNNERS, SEEING MY LEG RESTING BY THE BULWARKS, SEIZED IT AND RAMMED IT DOWN THE MUZZLE OF HIS PIECE."

Wide World

HIROSHI SAITO OF JAPAN, A FIRM BELIEVER THAT JAPAN'S DESTINY LIES IN THE MILITARISTIC PATH.

FRIENDLY

ONE day while Chinese and Japanese armies were making a shambles of Shanghai, Ambassador Saito of Japan came down to the State Department to explain the position of his government. While he was closeted with Secretary Hull, Ambassador Wang of China unexpectedly arrived on a similar mission. Among the more timid souls in the State Department there was immediate consternation.

However, Charley Reeder, negro usher, who sits outside the door of the Diplomatic Anteroom as austerely as he once sat on the box of Theodore Roosevelt's carriage, was equal to the occasion. Quickly he removed Ambassador Saito's hat and gloves from the Diplomatic Anteroom where sat Dr. Wang, and placed them in the Secretary of State's waiting-room, whence the Ambassador of Japan was ushered immediately to the elevator without bumping into, or even catching a glimpse of, the Ambassador of China.

Diplomatic niceties of this kind are what put the ushers of the State Department among the *ne plus ultra* of Washington's exclusive colored society; but in this particular case, Charley Reeder's thoughtful sleight-of-hand was not necessary. For the Oriental mind is serene and practical during wartime. It sees no reason to snub, insult or hand passports to a foreign envoy merely because his country is at war with the country to which he is accredited. On the contrary, wartime, according to the Oriental, is when a diplomat really can earn his salary.

Almost anyone can go through the dinner-party routine of diplomacy when the doves of peace coo blithesomely in the offing, but it takes tact, courage and control to be an ambassador when the gods of war are rampant.

That, no doubt, is why Japan and China have sent as envoys to the power most interested in the Far Eastern crisis two men who although diametrically different in character, both rank at the top of their government's diplomatic service, and are wise enough to be good friends.

Dr. Chengting T. Wang of China is a gentleman of solemn and dignified mien, a sincere believer in democracy, a leader of the Christian converts among his countrymen, and a devout pacifist. Hiroshi Saito of Japan is a wise-cracking gentleman who shows a greater appreciation of slang than the average American, believes in the system of Japanese peerage of which he is a son, is an atheist, and a firm believer that Japan's destiny lies in the militaristic path which she has chosen.

But both men, differing as they do in viewpoint and character, were picked for their prestige and force in putting across two things, also diametrically opposite: in the case of Japan, to keep the United States out of the Far Eastern imbroglio; in the case of China, to bring her in.

To this end both are equally well equipped in their knowledge of the United States. Ambassador Wang went to school at the University of Michigan and Yale, is a Rotarian, enjoys jazz dancing, sent one son to the University of Pennsylvania, and is the father-in-law of an American girl.

Ambassador Saito has lived seventeen years in the United States —longer than he has lived in any other country, including his own. He began his Americanization as consul in Seattle, became consul general in New York, then Counselor of the Embassy in Washington, and now its ambassador. From this he picked up a vocabulary suited to any and all occasions. He can be colloquial or erudite. He can use phrases dear to an academic audience, and a few minutes later, answering an inquiry about his two daughters, he can say: "The kids are O.K., thanks."

C. T. Wang was one of the first Chinese students to come to the United States under the Boxer Indemnity educational fund, the initial results of which were not what was planned. The average Chinese student, thoroughly Americanized, returned to a land with few bathrooms, motorbuses or cinemas, completely disillusioned regarding his one-time ideals for the regeneration of China, anxious only to return to the U.S.A. Wang, returning with an A.B. from Yale, a Phi Beta Kappa key, and the honor of having been class orator, all weighing heavily upon his shoulders, might easily have slipped into the same disgruntled category.

But he did not. He became, instead, one of the leaders of young China. In 1911, the year he returned from Yale, Sun Yat-sen staged his historic revolt against the Manchu dynasty, and young Wang played an important part in helping him to set up the first Chinese Republic. Wang was a member of the first Parliament, and Vice-minister of Industry and Commerce in the First Republican cabinet.

From that day until now, C. T. Wang has spent most of his life in the service of the four hundred million people which comprise that heterogeneous country called China. Four times he served as minister of foreign affairs, once as prime minister, and a score of times in other capacities, such as representing China at the Versailles Peace Conference, and serving as President of the National University at Peiping.

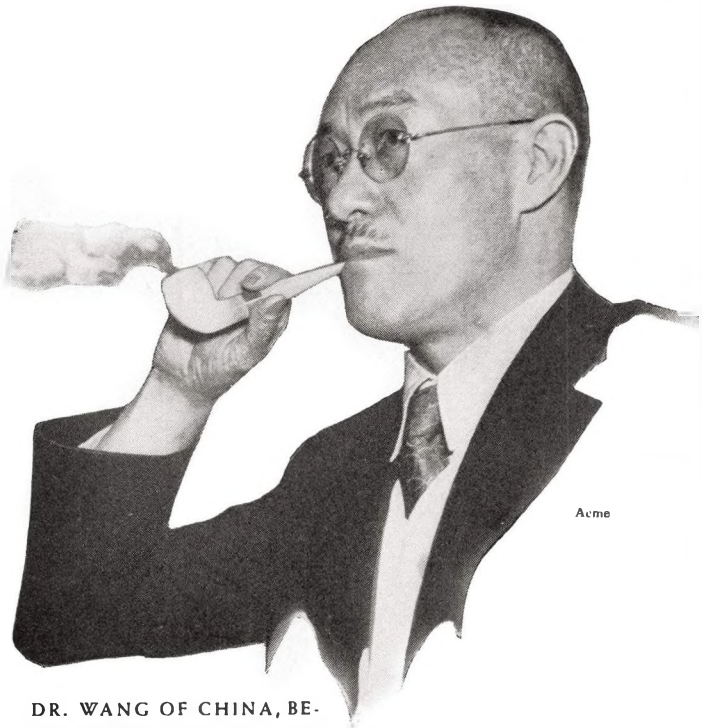
Looking back on his public service, however, Dr. Wang would rather be remembered not for what he did as foreign minister or premier, but for his work in building up the

Wide World

by DREW PEARSON

VIEWING WASHINGTON'S JAPANESE CHERRY BLOSSOMS. AMBASSADOR SAITO, MME. SAITO, THEIR DAUGHTERS AND (AT LEFT) THE GOVERNESS.

ENEMIES



Acme

DR. WANG OF CHINA, BELIEVER IN DEMOCRACY, LEADER OF CHRISTIAN CONVERTS, AND PACIFIST.

youth of China. For he, probably more than any other individual, is responsible for the fact that modern Chinese youth would rather pay two dollars to see a football game than on opium or fan-tan.

When Wang came back from Yale and began to play tennis at Wuchang, one of his Chinese friends, watching disdainfully from the side-lines, remarked:

"Why don't you get one of your servants to push that ball back and forth for you?"

This, says Wang, was typical of the attitude of young Chinese gentlemen toward physical exertion. It was beneath them; it was work for servants only.

From that day Wang became interested in sports not for the sake of physical exercise, but for the sake of the Chinese nation. He determined that what China needed in order to overcome its national lethargy was a physical vitality that would overcome individual lethargy. So as a Y.M.C.A. secretary, and later as head of the entire Y.M.C.A. movement in China, he preached the importance of physical culture. Wang even practiced what he preached—a trait rare in the realm of Chinese officialdom—and for years played football, baseball, golf, and served as President of the National Athletic Association.

Wang is older and more sedate today. The three riding horses he worked out daily while minister of foreign affairs in Nanking have given way to indoor calisthenics and the gentler game of croquet. Wang plays on the expansive grounds of the Chinese Embassy, sometimes with Secretary Hull, whose favorite game it is, but more often with his three daughters, Yeoh, who is twenty-five, An-fu, who is twenty-one, and An-su, who is nineteen.

The Ambassador has eight children, and according to Chinese standards can consider himself especially blessed in that he has five boys. Their mother remains in China, where her mother-in-law, always the revered dictator of the Chinese home, and now eighty-seven years old, has been ill. In her absence, the three daughters share the rôle of chatelaine of the Embassy.

Few ambassadors, especially from an Oriental country, have so many American friends as Wang. Many of them are old Y.M.C.A. workers from China. Many he knew through his Rotary Club connections, having headed the Rotary International in China. As a result, few ambassadors can pull out the organ-stops on American public opinion with more effectiveness and more appeal than C. T. Wang.

Besides bringing the United States into active support of China, there is just one other thing Dr. Wang would like to accomplish during his stay in this country—teach Americans how to pronounce his name. The *a* in *Wang* is pronounced as in *want*, not as in *sang*. And if, in addition to swelling the surge of friendly American sentiment in favor of China, the Ambassador also could make Americans disbelieve that a Wang by any other name would sound as sweet, he would depart his post a happy man.

AMBASSADOR HIROSHI SAITO of Japan is on the hottest spot, for the moment, of any diplomat in Washington. To cope with his great responsibilities, Saito is equipped with a gorgeous sense of humor, an unquestioning belief in the might and destiny of his country, an unusual knowledge of the United States, and the ability to keep his head in any storm. With the roar of anti-Japanese sentiment mounting in this country, Ambassador Saito enjoys nothing better than to sit placidly in the seclusion of his private office, composing Chinese poetry.

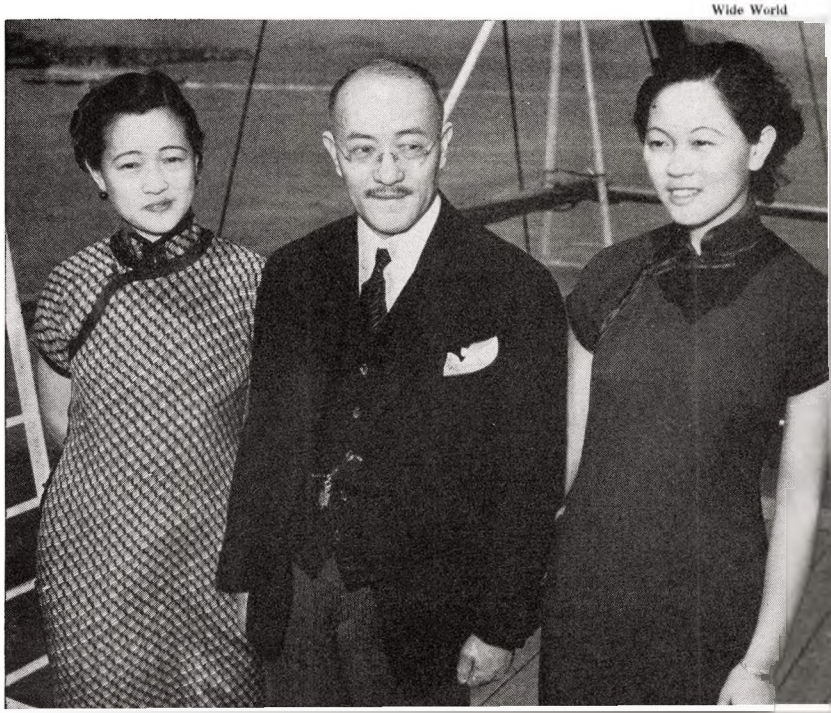
With mildly critical eye he has watched the ebb and flow of American public opinion since he first came to this country twenty-five years ago. And knowing the United States far better than the average American, he is never perturbed by any turn which public opinion may take. He is not surprised at an ugly cartoon of Nipponese war lords, any more than he was surprised when a great surge of sympathy for Japan in 1923 donated $16,700,000 of American money for earthquake relief.

From the day Japanese troops marched into Shanghai, Saito knew what Americans would say about his countrymen. But he was not disturbed. And on the day after President Roosevelt delivered his Chicago speech aimed at Japan and advocating a "quarantine" against aggressor nations, Ambassador Saito went his nonchalant way down to the State Department, where he announced to the press that Japan and the United States understood each other as never before. It was the Ambassador's confidential cable to Tokyo which subsequently eased the sting of the Japanese rejoinder. A red-hot, chip-on-the-shoulder challenge had been prepared by the Japanese Cabinet; but on receipt of Saito's laugh-it-off advice, this was torn up and a more mollified statement issued.

Save for his complexion, Hiroshi Saito does not look particularly Oriental—a fact of which he is secretly proud. His nose is longer and his eyes rounder than the typical Oriental, and although he is only fifty years old, and the youngest ambassador Japan ever has sent to the United States, he looks even younger than he is. Asked by a dinner companion for the secret of his boyish appearance, Saito made a joke of it:

"I dissipate, have done so all my life. *(Please turn to page 109)*

Wide World



DR. CHENGTING T. WANG, CHINESE AMBASSADOR, ABOARD THE *PRESIDENT HOOVER*, WITH HIS DAUGHTERS YEOH (AT LEFT) AND AN-FU.

and ROBERT S. ALLEN

MOTHER'S HELP

by MARGARET KENNEDY

who wrote "The Constant Nymph"

Illustrated by TOM LOVELL

PORTH KERMANT is not such an interesting place as it looks. Summer visitors are fascinated by the queer crooked little streets and the flights of steps going down to the old harbor, the fishing-fleet, the curio-shops, and the derelict warehouses turned into studios. They speak reverently of the famous artists' colony and of old customs: of the *Brakon* which is danced at midsummer, through the streets, up and down the steps, in and out of the houses, and which is far older than Christianity. Summer visitors think that Porth Kermant would be a nice place to live in.

But residents know that it is a dead-alive sort of hole. The curio-shops go bankrupt every September. Nobody dances the *Brakon* now except the local Folk Dance Society, who have learned how to do it out of a book, and whose conscientious caperings give the natives a good laugh. The look-out on West Cliff has been deserted these twenty years. For the bottom fell out of the fishing industry, and half the moldering little boats in the harbor never put out to sea more than once a week. And the bottom fell out of the artists' colony at about the same time. There were once some famous painters in Porth Kermant, but they all went away long ago, and their studios are now occupied by elderly spinsters, who have nothing better to do, and middle-aged, unsuccessful men with large families who make a sort of living by selling water-colors and teaching sketching classes of summer visitors.

The only beings who really enjoy life at Porth Kermant are the gulls and the golfers. The gulls live down in the harbor, and the golfers live on East Cliff and West Cliff, above the old part of the town, where all the new bungalows have been built. They are, for the most part, retired professional men who have settled in Porth Kermant because it is cheap, and because the links at St. Bard, six miles round the coast, are the finest in the county. There are no young men, either up on the Cliffs or down in the town. Young men do not stay in a place like Porth Kermant. The sons of the golfers are doing very well in Birmingham and Kenya and Shanghai. The sons of the artists are making good in Hollywood and Mandalay. So the district has an immense surplus of daughters, a derelict horde of young women who have nobody to marry or dance with, and nothing in particular to do except play golf with their fathers.

When Colonel Fortescue settled in Atlantic View, on East Cliff, there were only three bachelors under forty in the whole of Porth Kermant. There was the new young doctor, who was charming, but said to be engaged to a legendary girl in Kidderminster. Cynics asserted that he had invented her in self-defense. And there was the curate, less charming, an albino with a stammer, said to have taken vows of celibacy. And there was Colin Curnow, son of dear old Mr. Curnow who made everybody's wills and settled disputes over rights of way. Colin's stock in Porth Kermant was high indeed, for he was a very nice, simple, good-natured boy, not at all bad-looking, and with his father's business all ready to step into. The competition for him was severe enough to have turned the heads of most young men. But Colin never did have much head to turn. He had but one idea in it, and that was to marry Christina Fortescue, popularly called Kirstie—the prettiest girl in Porth Kermant, and the only one who had not seriously competed for him.

REDBOOK'S *Novelette* OF THE MONTH

Kirstie was young, beautiful and romantic. She longed for adventure; and what adventure could there be in marrying a local solicitor who had no sort of claim to distinction save the lowest handicap in the St. Bard's club? She liked Colin. Nobody could have helped liking him. She went about with him a good deal, because there was nobody else to go about with. She sometimes wondered if she would not end by marrying him simply because there was nobody else to marry. But how awful to settle down forever in Porth Kermant! She could not believe that she was really destined to do that. Something would surely happen; Fate would intervene in some way and save her.

If she had known what Porth Kermant would be like, she would never have allowed her parents to buy Atlantic View. But she had spent a week there in August, and had taken the summer visitors' view of it. She had expected great things of life in such picturesque surroundings, and had been particularly attracted by the idea of all these artists. The hero of her secret dreams was always an artist; or a musician, or a poet, very poor and very famous, and she was an Inspiration to him. They lived on two-pence halfpenny in a garret, and entertained delightful parties of famous bohemian people who thought him very lucky to have such a wife, and painted her portrait and dedicated books to her, and wrote letters to her which would be published after they were dead. Afterward, when they were middle-aged, they would have rather more money, because middle-aged people do not look so good in a garret; but she never bothered to make many plans for that part of it, any more than she worried about her own tombstone, which seemed to be quite as remote.

One look at the contents of the Arts Club had disillusioned her. People like that had, she thought, no business to call themselves artists, and she was quite right.

HAD it not been for her mother, she would have fled, after the first winter, and taken a job in London—any sort of job, rather than stay in Porth Kermant another week. But Mrs. Fortescue had a bad leg and could not get on without a daughter at home. And jobs in London, even any sort of job, are not so easy to come by, unless one has had training. The only thing Kirstie could have done was to go and be a Mother's Help, and that was just the one thing which she felt she couldn't do. So she stayed, and waited for something to happen. A variety of occupations were open to her, while she thus waited. She could go for walks and picnics with the other girls. She could go swimming and play golf and tennis with the other girls. She could join the Dramatic Society, and the Folk Dance Society and the Choral Society and the Literary Society (all run by the other girls). She could help Leila Gray to organize a Girl Guide troop, or Mary Carter to start a shop for selling hand-woven tweeds and raffia hats.

But she would do none of these things. She was different, she knew, from the other girls. Something was some day going to happen to her, but nothing would ever happen to them, poor creatures, so that they were well advised to be so busy all the time. She shut herself up and wrote a novel about a rare lonely girl in a Cornish fishing village who wrote a novel which was a work of genius. So

WHEN HE OVERTOOK KIRSTIE AND HER COMPANION, THE LOOK HE GAVE HER CAST A CLOUD ON HER SPIRITS.

then she (the girl in the novel) went to London and met a famous poet and was an Inspiration to him. He had a disagreeable wife who would not divorce him, but this girl was so noble, she did not care—no, she gave up everything for him and went away with him to Italy, where he presently was drowned in a boating accident. So then she came back to Cornwall, because she had had such a full life that she did not mind, by then, where she lived; and a rocky headland was a good place to leave her on, in the last chapter. It was a well-written novel, for Kirstie was a great reader; and it was published, and some of the old ladies in Porth Kermant were gratifyingly shocked at it. She meant to write another as soon as she had thought of something to say in it, but she seemed really to have said everything in the first one. Colin Curnow thought it was a simply marvelous book. It was his favorite book. He read it all through twice, and gave ten copies to people for Christmas presents. He could not get over his astonishment at Kirstie for writing all that down and putting it so well, too.

So this was all that had happened to Kirstie during the first two years at Porth Kermant. She was neither a vamp, nor a minx nor a home-breaker. She was a very nice girl. But she was desperately, hopelessly bored. Which is probably why she behaved as she did, during that third autumn, when all the summer visitors had departed, and the little town was settling down to its long hibernation. People blamed her, but they should not have done so, for she gave them more to talk about than they generally had at that season of the year.

IT was a Saturday afternoon. She had been playing a round of golf with Colin, and they were sitting on the platform of St. Bard station, waiting for the train which would take them back to Porth Kermant. Colin felt that lately he had been making quite a lot of headway. His sincere admiration of her novel had raised him in Kirstie's opinion: she thought better of his intelligence than she had formerly. He was wondering whether this would be a good moment to propose again, and Kirstie was wondering how to stop him, because she was half minded to accept him, next time he did it, and she did not want to become engaged in a railway station. They had been talking about the sad state of the green at the seventeenth hole, and Kirstie kept on about it, ignoring his efforts to lead her away to a more promising subject.

"The scenery was looking rather pretty today," he suggested at last.

"Scenery?" said the unkind Kirstie. "What scenery?"

"Oh, well—the sea—and the sand-hills—and all that. I thought they were looking sort of nice. I kept wanting to stop and have a look at it."

Kirstie ought to have applauded this. She had often declaimed against the insensibility of those who can look at nothing but a golf ball amid the finest beauties of nature. But she was determined to keep Colin quenched.

"I hate Cornwall," she said. "It's too picturesque."

This stumped the poor fellow, who felt that after all, he had better wait. He sat in silence, his round face unusually glum, until the little train came puffing through the sand-hills. It had become a small train at the junction ten miles away, where half of it split off and went south. Before that, it had been a very long, important train, coming all the way from London.

There was a passenger from London in the carriage selected by Colin and Kirstie. Colin merely saw that the carriage was not empty, which definitely put the lid on the idea of a proposal in the train. Kirstie saw that the far corner seat was occupied by a most interesting man, who glanced casually at them both as they got in, ceased to be casual when his eyes came to rest on herself, left off looking at her just before the glance had become a stare, and turned away to scan the scenery until good manners should allow him to take another look. He was a stranger. She had never seen him before. And he must be going to stay at Porth Kermant, for the rack above his head was full of suitcases and things. Among them was an object which she identified as a folding easel. An artist! And not the Porth Kermant brand of artist, either: not elderly, shabby and insignificant and disappointed, but gloriously young and bursting with vitality. At least, perhaps not so very young, she decided, noticing that the crisp reddish hair was getting the least little bit thin on top: about thirty-five, perhaps, which is a most interesting age. Blue eyes, he had, and an open manly face, to which a slightly crooked nose lent especial character. It must have been broken some time or other. Altogether he was the handsomest man she had ever seen, and he must be very tall when he stood up. How she managed to see so much is a mystery, for she never looked at him once, she was so busy talking, very animatedly, to the astonished Colin. It was as if she had a sort of third eye which told her all this, and told her too that she had been looked at with great approval exactly seventeen

"I DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY WAS HERE," KIRSTIE STAMMERED. PLE'S STUDIOS, "JACKIE SAID. "I WANTED TO SPEAK TO HIM,"

times between St. Bard and Porth Kermant. Colin, who had no third eye, merely continued to be sorry that they were not alone.

When they got to Porth Kermant, the stranger was met by Bob Myers, the least undistinguished of the local painters, with whom he was evidently going to stay. "And it is Saturday," thought Kirstie, as she climbed the hill to East Cliff. "And there is a party at the Club tonight. Mr. Myers always comes. He will bring that man with him, I dare say." She had meant to cut the Club party and go with Colin to one of the two Porth Kermant cinemas. But by the time she reached Atlantic View she had changed her mind. She rang Colin up and told him that she could not go.

Her net frock needed a pressing. She had snubbed her mother

for saying so, only that morning; but about this too she changed her mind. She went into the kitchen and got the ironing-board. A good many young women in Porth Kermant were getting ironing-boards at that moment, for the stranger had walked through the town with Bob Myers, to his studio by the Fish Market, and had been much stared at. Kirstie was not alone in hoping that he would be brought to the Club party that night.

"How nice you look! Darling—how pretty you look!" said Mrs.

"THAT'S NO REASON FOR COMING BARGING INTO OTHER PEO- SAID KIRSTIE. "I LEFT A—A SCARF LAST TIME I WAS HERE."

Fortescue, when Kirstie said good-by to her before running down the hill to the Club. "Now, wasn't I right? Didn't that dress need pressing? You look like another person in it."

"Do I?" asked Kirstie, beaming. "Do I?"

Those seventeen glances in the railway carriage had been as good as a twenty-guinea beauty treatment to Kirstie. Her eyes sparkled. There was a bloom on her. The airy frock floated round her like a cloud. For something had happened. She had had just a very little tiny adventure; and there was no reason, no reason at all, why it should not turn into a wonderful magnificent romance. She knew herself to be irresistible. She did not run down the hill, treading on solid earth; she flew down.

Pressing the frock had made her late, and they had already begun to dance at the Club. The same old faces were going round and round. Girls, with bright determined smiles, were dancing with each other. The younger married men sauntered along with one another's wives. Old Mr. Hernibrook, who painted nothing but seagulls, and who could not dance a bit, charged up and down the room, using his unfortunate partner as a sort of battering-ram, in a way that anyone would have thought amusing who had not seen it every Saturday night. And there, in the midst of the mêlée, a head taller than anyone else, more godlike than ever in the light of the hanging kerosene lamps, there was He, dancing with lively little Mrs. Hepburn, and saying something to her which evidently diverted her enormously. Oh, these married women! How unfair it all is!

Kirstie joined the crowd of unpartnered girls who sat on the steps of the little stage where they sometimes acted charades. The same spell was on all of them. Some stared openly, some furtively, some not at all—but they were linked in a common preoccupation.

"Ye gods!" said a voice behind Kirstie. "Who is that?"

It was Mary Carter, who had just arrived. A brusque girl, priding herself on her candor, she made no attempt to conceal what she thought of the newcomer.

"I can't believe it," she declared. "I just can't believe it. Nobody looking like that ever comes to Porth Kermant."

The others hastened to give her what information they had collected.

"His name is Bartley Anderson; he's a portrait painter . . . . He's had pictures in the Salon. . . . He's staying with Mr. Myers. . . . He's going to live here. . . . He's going to take a house. . . . Mr. Myers is putting him up for the Club."

"To live here?" shouted Mary Carter. "I don't believe it. These things don't happen."

"Sssh! Mary! He'll hear you. . . . Mary—you are awful."

"Well," said Mary in a slightly lower voice, "he'd better know what he's in for. He's been thrown into a cage of tigresses. I vote we draw lots for him now. Otherwise he'll be torn in pieces bodily."

Mary was a disgusting girl. He had heard and looked round laughing over Mrs. Hepburn's shoulder, and caught sight of Kirstie, sitting on the steps in her white frock. His eyes flashed recognition. So now there was nothing to do but wait. If he got Mrs. Myers to introduce him, and asked Kirstie for the next dance, then she would know. If he did not—

But of course he did, as soon as ever he could politely get rid of Mrs. Hepburn. It was not just all Kirstie's imagination. These things could happen. People could, and did, fall in love at first sight. He said at once:

"I was wondering if I should see you here tonight."

HE said other things too, she never could quite remember what—nothing much really, perhaps, but it left her with the impression that if she had not been there, the evening would have been dust and ashes for him. Yes, he was coming to live in Porth Kermant. And how glorious that Kirstie lived in it too! And tomorrow she was going to take him over the cove to look for seals. They settled that during their fifth dance, much later in the evening. It all went on as smoothly and miraculously as a dream. But it was not a dream. It was real. Sometimes, as she danced along, she knew that people were looking at her. She met the eyes of other girls, sitting on the steps of the stage. She caught a worried, questioning glance from Mrs. Myers. They knew it was real, all right, so it must be real.

"I must go after this dance," she said to him at last. "My mother doesn't like me to be late."

"Are you walking home?"

"Yes. We're only ten minutes away. Up East Cliff."

He said that he would see her home. She murmured some protest about Mrs. Myers, but he insisted that he would be back again before anyone could notice that he had gone. So they slipped out of the glare and clamor of the Club into the moonlit autumn night. As they climbed the hill, the harbor below them, and the lights of the fishing-boats reflected in the water, and the pale glimmering sea, became more and more unbearably beautiful. Kirstie felt quite weak, as if she could hardly put one foot in front of the other.

"I wish this hill could have been twice as long," he said as they reached the gate of Atlantic View.

Kirstie wished it too, but all she said was:

"You wouldn't if you had to climb it every day."

"Ah, but this isn't every day, is it?"

There come to most of us these moments when we quit the earth and go floating off in a little world of our own, an airy bubble which drifts along unharnessed to time or space. In an hour, in three hours, in twenty-four, the bubble collides with an obstacle, breaks, and deposits us on earth again with a thud. Very seldom does it remain intact long enough to carry us into danger. And for this we should be thankful.

WHEN Kirstie woke up next morning, the dream was still unshattered. He was coming at half-past ten to go with her to the cove. They were in love with one another, and today was quite different from yesterday. Tomorrow, all the days in front of her, all time, would be different, because he would be in them. The sun had risen upon the world.

"Oh, what is going to happen today?" she wondered. Perhaps nothing would, after the marvelous things that had happened already. They might linger in this stage for a week or more, and she must not be impatient, for it would be an enchanted week. She never thought to wonder if he might have changed his mind during the night. She knew that he had not. She was quite safe in her bubble world.

Only one thing troubled her: She had promised Colin to drive over to Penzance with him. She rang him up and told him that she could not come. She was very sorry. She had made a muddle. She had forgotten it was this Sunday, and last night she had promised somebody at the Club to go walking with them, and she was afraid she could not put them off.

Colin protested vigorously.

"Can't this female go for a walk with you some other Sunday?"

"N-no. I'm afraid not. But you can get somebody else, Colin. There are lots of people."

"Don't want anybody else."

He was disappointed but unsuspicious. He had been the only young man in Porth Kermant too long to guess at the truth. He could hardly believe his eyes when, cruising gloomily along toward Penzance in his little sports-car, he overtook Kirstie and her companion, who had just set out on their walk. The look of incredulous amazement which he gave her cast a faint cloud on her spirits.

But not for long. She forgot about it before she and Bart had got to the Cove. They were Bart and Kirstie now. They had settled that right at the beginning of the walk. And there was no room for anybody in the world except Bart and Kirstie. The golden hours slipped by. . . .

They stayed out on the cliffs all day and saw a lot of seals, and got tea at a farmhouse, and turned homeward to Porth Kermant just as the stars were coming out. The bubble rose and rose, up and up, to unimagined heights. Climbing over a steep stile, Bart kissed Kirstie, lightly, questioningly, at first, and later with considerable warmth. It was clear that he did not mean to wait for a week. But Kirstie did not want to wait for a week, either. This one day had been long enough. She sighed, and leaned against him and waited. But he did not say anything; and after awhile they strolled on, hand in hand, in the twilight.

"Tomorrow," he said, "I must find a house."

"If you want a house," said Kirstie, "there's a very nice bungalow next door to ours."

She described it, and he said that it would be too small.

"What sized house do you want?"

"Well—my wife says we must have three—"

"Bart!" She dropped his hand and stood still. "Your wife! Are you married?"

"Why—yes."

There was silence for quite a while, and then he said:

"You knew I was married, didn't you?"

"No." Her voice was shaking. "I didn't. I didn't know."

"Good God! I thought—I thought everybody knew."

He really had thought so. He was not much given to talking about his wife, but he thought that he had mentioned, sometime the evening before, that she was coming to join him in Porth Kermant in three weeks' time.

It took them a little while to realize what had happened to them, she to believe that this could be true, and he to understand its effect on her.

"I'm—very sorry," was all that he could say. "I thought you knew."

"You thought I knew! If I'd known, do you think I'd have—"

She turned from him, and began to walk away quickly along the path.

"I never want to see you again," she threw over her shoulder.

He walked a little way behind her, but overtook her when they came to the next stile. He waited while she got over it, jumped across it and came to walk beside her.

"I know I have behaved very badly," he said. "But I ought to tell you—that there is very little sympathy, now, between me and Dora. We've been married for ten years, and—it's quite obvious that it was a mistake. It's been entirely my fault. I wasn't the right sort of husband for her. She is a first-rate person. But she doesn't care for me any more. We get along all right. We both have pretty good tempers. But—when I met you—I suppose I realized all I had missed. And I lost my head. I thought you knew. And I thought you felt about me as I feel about you."

Kirstie felt like a benighted traveler who sees a light, very, very far away. If his was an unhappy marriage, then there was some hope for her devastated pride. She slackened her pace a little as if permitting him to walk beside her.

"Have you any children?" She asked thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Bart.

And he went on, in rather a hurry, to say that he could never regret this day that they had had together, and to describe all that it had meant to him.

"How many children have you?"

After a slight pause he said five. It was obvious that he felt, as she did, that five was too many. She began to walk very quickly and repeated:

"I never want to see you again."

The town and its twinkling lights lay spread out below them. It looked very small amid the great bare humps of the cliffs. And it came into her mind that, in Porth Kermant, it is impossible never to see anyone again. You see everyone every day. It must be all over the place, by now, that he was married. And her departure with him, on this walk, had not been unobserved. She was sure of that. They must be wondering if she knew, and if not, how soon she would know, and if she would be terribly disappointed. Well—they could just go on wondering. But if, after this walk, she avoided him, they would all think that they knew why.

She slackened her pace a little and said:

"Of course we shall have to see one another again. In a town like this you can't help it. So we'd better just try and forget everything that has happened."

"Of course," agreed Bart, in a warm, relieved tone.

He began to talk of other things. They returned to Porth Kermant as they had left it, walking side by side.

"YOU know," said Leila Gray to Mary Carter, "I believe we were mistaken about Kirstie. I believe she knew, all along, that he was married."

"I'm positive she didn't," said Mary. "Not on that first night at the Club, anyway. An affair with a married man isn't in Kirstie's line at all."

(Please turn to page 92)

George Horace Lorimer

JUST as we were about to send this issue to press we received the sad news of Mr. Lorimer's passing. We feel his loss keenly. To us as to everybody else connected with or interested in the magazine business he was more than a mere editor. He was a veritable tower of strength. He was a man whose fairness and honesty established new and higher standards in the profession. For a writer to be "accepted by Lorimer" meant to arrive. For an editor to know Lorimer meant an inspiration. A gentleman of the old school, an indefatigable worker and clear headed thinker, he will be long remembered as one of the few truly great personalities produced within our lifetime. Hail and farewell, George Horace Lorimer!

—The Editors

HE LEFT HER WITH A GLOW, AND CAME BACK TO HER EAGERLY. SHE HAD HER OWN LIFE, BUT CONSTANTLY THOUGHT OF HIM.

Illustrated by C. C. BEALL

Morning Smile

A short short story

by ZONA GALE

WHEN he was two and a half, and wearing a blue sun-suit, they let him run across the lawn to take a big bouquet of blue and rose phlox to a neighbor. He advanced, very shy, but with a certain brave upward look, and with his smile. This smile curved and parted his lips, softened and dilated his blue eyes, lighted his whole face. Looking, you caught for one flash of time something of the secret magic of being a human creature.

Watching his approach, the neighbor said, and later repeated: "That wide, wise and advertised smile of Mona Lisa—what is it beside this morning smile of little Peter Mann!"

When he was four, and host at his first birthday party, they took his picture, before the candled cake, flanked by small excited guests. The photograph stabbed the beholder—the expectation, the trust, of Peter's smile. He knew what life was going to be like! Already had it not begun to be so? While you were looking at his pictured smile, you felt that it was so.

His major calamity was suffered two years later—some affair of a high swing and too much daring. When he lay pillowed and bandaged in bed, and the pain was "better," he would look up gravely at his mother and the doctor and the nurse, and then Peter's face would kindle in that luminous lingering smile. Quenched quickly by his gravity, it yet lingered with those who saw him, like remembered light. All the trust was there, and the reassurance. Something, he seemed to say, had gone wrong, surprisingly, for a moment; but he was still wrapped in his golden haze, in his morning smile. And if, in his illnesses as they followed, there was some physical fret and even tears, yet he would recover, would come to himself, with that poised and lovely recognition of a smile. The infinite anxiety to others, the cost, the vigils, the terror of his physical crises, were all met and paid for by Peter in this way.

"Peter smiles like an angel, and *still* he's a good kid," his older brother grudgingly admitted.

With the trials and tests of his little manhood, he held it—the smile. He would go up to a platform, frowning, terribly in earnest. He would deliver his set task with the drawn brows of a burdened adult. Then, when it became evident to himself that he had taken the last hurdle, he would finish easily, and smile about him. And he would be so gentle and deprecating and intimate, that they would applaud his stiff little performance less than his smiling finish. When his masters or his father called him to time, he stood up to it, sometimes even defiantly; but somewhere in the argument he would produce his smile; and then there they were, understanding Peter, and he understanding them. As for his mother, she was never separate from him. She always *was* Peter. And when he smiled, it was as if she felt him stirring again, beneath her heart. . . .

College was harder. There they suspected smiles, being most scornful of the one who tried to be ingratiating. If ever Peter had smiled on purpose, it would have been all up with him. They could have detected that in a flash. But Peter seemed never to know that he smiled at all. So when he did, they detected his smile as something which they alone had discovered about him.

"Old Peter, he's Public Charmer No. 1," they said of him. But they liked him—he seemed, they saw, to have no notion that he was a peach.

He took defeat like that,—football, track, finals, he went down or was top, as might be,—with a smile a bit different now, not quite so bright sometimes, sometimes rather more casual, but always with a quality of enormous acquiescence in the way things went, of his old secret knowledge that things were somehow good, or good enough.

BY the time his profession had claimed him for a few years, there had come into his look something permanently different. Perhaps it was surprise that everything was not as he had thought it would be. "It's all so different," he said once, with a look puzzled, sidewise. Then, as if he remembered that differences too, were in it, he smiled—the Peter Mann smile.

In any case, the girl whom Peter loved was nearly—well, nearly—as he had thought she would be. That is to say, she was tender. There it was. She was gentle; she was reasonable; she was tender. He left her with a glow and came back to her eagerly. She had her own life too, but constantly she thought *(Please turn to page 85)*

A One-Woman Man

A novel of a girl who gave up luxury for love—and of two men who loved her.

Illustrated by
ANDREW LOOMIS

The Story Thus Far:

JANE HOWARTH had been lunching all summer at those places where productive New York takes its food on the run—chain restaurants, reconditioned speak-easies and, when she was very busy, at soda fountains. When Harry could get away from the hospital, she had met him at unpretentious hodge-podges of oily waterfront, rumbling trucks and greasy food.

Phyllis Penner, back from Europe that morning, was talking of forgotten places they had visited together as schoolgirl vacationists. The smell of cool salt air was still about her.

Jane's eyes almost closed as she thought of the beach. She wanted to lie there and do nothing, for hours and days, until she got so full of the sun that she would stretch her tawny body and purr. She wanted a man to stroke her bright hair; and that man would be Clay Anford, she supposed, for he was as much of this scene, of this free life, as Harry McCroy was of the summer in town.

Curiously enough, these two men had been rivals before ever Jane Howarth came into the picture. They'd met first on the football field, when McCroy had come with his Midwest team to play Anford's famous Eastern university. "Which one of you is it who speaks English?" Anford had taunted in a hot midfield argument. McCroy had promptly swung on him—and had been put out of the game in consequence.

They'd met again in the inter-collegiate golf finals; and Anford was winning their match when Jane Howarth, somehow drawn by the lonely Midwesterner and his game losing fight, stepped out, from among the spectators and by her encouragement gave him the spirit to win.

All that had been four years back. Since then the depression had come; Anford had proved himself a bright young genius of Wall Street and made a brilliant career. McCroy had fought his difficult way through medical school and interneship. Now he was going back to the familiar coal-mining town of his boyhood, to practice among his own people—to do what he could to assist them. . . . As for Jane Howarth—her father had lost his money, and though Clay urged her to marry him, she had insisted on trying her own wings first, and had been working as a restaurant hostess. She supposed she would marry Clay eventually, though she had not engaged herself to him. But she went with McCroy to the train to see him off and say good-by. . . .

People were hurrying to the train; there were not many minutes left. They looked at each other. Jane Howarth suddenly began to cry softly. Harry McCroy spoke her name, took her in his arms. Amid a tumult which had never before lived within her, Jane Howarth knew that, for better or worse, another era had ended. . . .

Harry did not take the train. The next morning, before their minds could again restrain their hearts, they were married. *(The story continues in detail:)*

SHE awoke from frozen terror. In her dream she had been buried alive. She was conscious now of the rumble of wheels, the rolling motion of a train, sulphurous smoke, of the stirring of a male body in the upper berth of the drawing-room.

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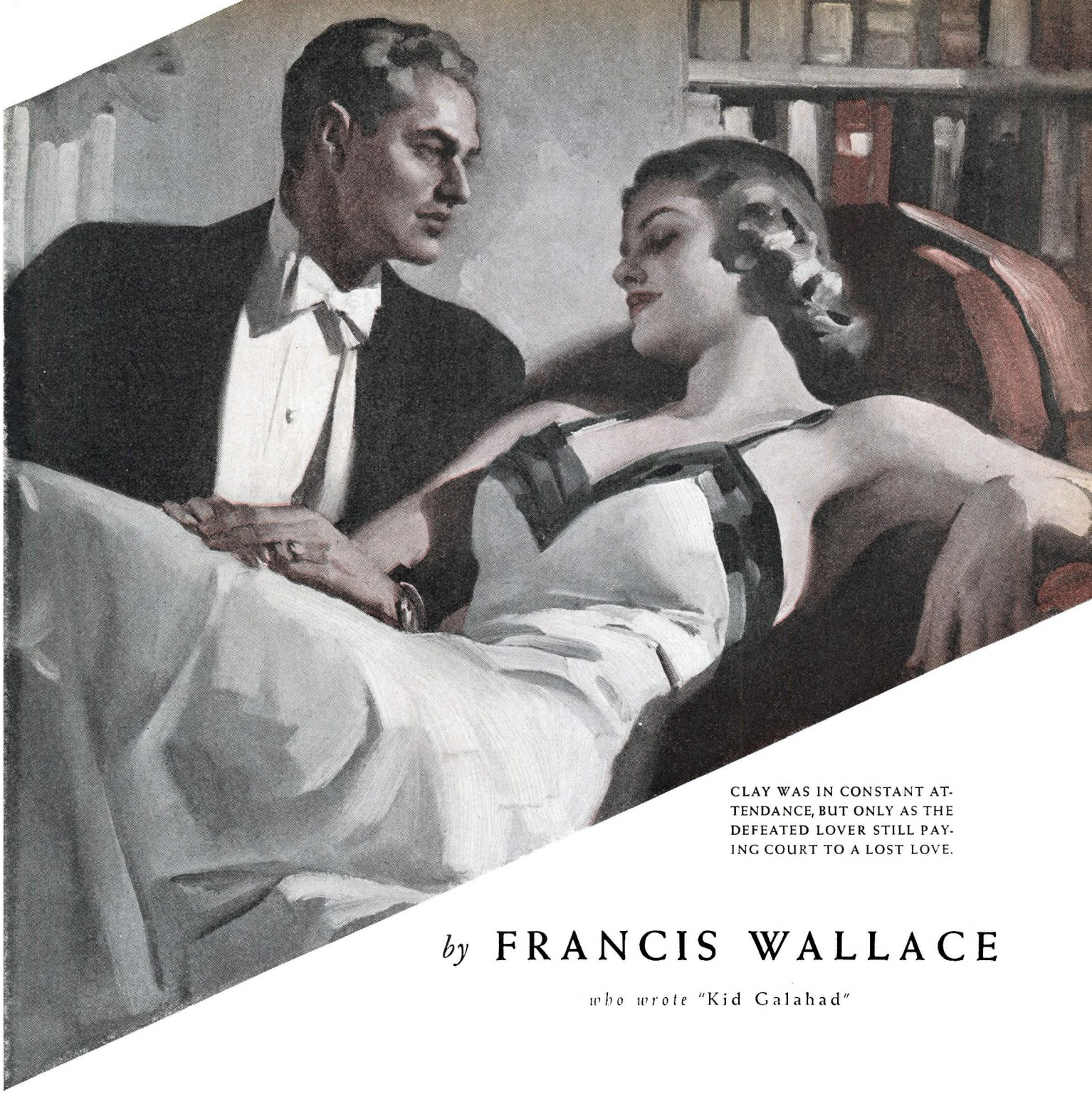

CLAY WAS IN CONSTANT ATTENDANCE, BUT ONLY AS THE DEFEATED LOVER STILL PAYING COURT TO A LOST LOVE.

by **FRANCIS WALLACE**

who wrote "Kid Galahad"

She was alive and awake, but the terror remained.

Carefully she lifted the shade, caught the first fragile moment of day, the palest of dawns. It was five o'clock. They were due to arrive at eight. Jane pulled her shoulders together like a little old woman shaken by a chill.

The light was creeping over the dark as the thinnest smear of oil steals over water. The train whipped through a deserted town, whistle shrieking—a screaming banshee fleeing from dead ghosts. The train escaped into open country, but the shadows remained to dance in the light that flooded her mind—the light of reality.

This was Jane Howarth, aristocrat, who was married to the man overhead, a man who had, a few months before, been a stranger. He was taking her to his coal town to bury her alive. This was Jane Howarth, who had scorned money and position, who had sold herself into living death; who had been betrayed by the first surge of passion in a calm life.

She had thought it a great love, worthy of the price. Now, in this cold, gray light, she knew it for what it was.

A soft cry parted her lips, a swift intake of air. They were passing through a coal town, a town of miserable houses, row after row, with frame porches and narrow steps. The slate pile was smoking—a gray pile of discarded material, not able to live, not able to die, just a thing which smoldered through the years, burned upon itself, deep down within itself—

That would be her life here.

DRAWING the shade, she cried with pity for Jane Howarth, the foolish virgin, burning in her own lamp of foolish love.

The light came on above. Harry's voice called: "Jane."

She did not answer. But she could not hate him. She had been willing enough. He had asked her, at the last minute, if she were sure. She had been sure. . . .

Well, there was divorce.

Phyllis had predicted that Jane would walk out on Harry McCroy. Phyllis would laugh when Jane came back so soon. And she would come back soon; she would come back this day. She saw, how clearly she saw, in this early dawn, how ghastly was the mistake!

She thought of dressing quietly, stealing from the train before he awoke. Immediately she knew she couldn't do that. She would face him, tell him honestly. Harry was fair. He would understand.

Clay would arrange the quiet divorce. She would have to tell Clay, of course. If he didn't want her, that wouldn't be tragic. She didn't want Clay so badly, either. She could go back to her job. Harry could get off the train, say nothing of the marriage, and nobody would ever know. He would get over it.

She lifted the shade. The world outside seemed to agree, to be more cheerful about it. The sun was over the dew of the hills; the pink-and-blue blanket of the sky was thrown back; the earth was bright and fresh as an awakened child.

Harry came down, the husk of sleep in his black eyes, the crust of it in his voice. He hesitated before her eyes. Then her slim bare arms took his head to her breast, and she knew herself for a perfect fool.

She could not tell him so bluntly. They could have this last hour. She would give him this last hour.

AT breakfast, her first breakfast with a man, she decided to wait. She would make it quick and merciful as the thrust of a surgeon's knife. She would not get off the train with him. It would be over before he knew it had begun.

In the drawing-room she grew tense and quiet.

Harry grinned. "Nervous? So am I." He touched her hair, then glanced outside. "Well, it won't be long, now—"

"Harry—"

"Look, Jane."

They were crossing a bridge over a wide river wandering through hills that were green and pleasant. She could see a town nestled in a valley ahead.

"Coming home—after all these years. And look what I'm bringing with me."

"Harry. I—"

The buzzer sounded. Harry opened the door. Jane Howarth felt her pulse leap as the porter took the bags, as the train began to slow. Soon she was standing on the platform, a slim smart figure of a woman. Nobody else was on the platform. She would tell him there.

A workman, taking mail and express from the baggage-car, recognized Harry, waved to him, called out: "Hi, Harry! Welcome home, kid."

The train left her standing there. Harry brought the baggage-master. "Dick," he said huskily, "you have the great honor of being the first to meet my wife."

Jane smiled her prettiest. Dick said: "You always were a lucky bum, Harry. . . . You have my sympathy, Mrs. McCroy."

Jane flushed at the name. Harry chuckled. "Okay, Dick. Build a guy up. We've got some trunks coming—hold them. See you later."

Dick looked after them. Not many women like that dropped off the train at Etruria.

Harry was saying: "I played high-school football with Dick. He'd have made a good lawyer—but he'll probably be on this platform handling baggage the rest of his life. It's funny, the way the breaks go. He had a chance to go to college, but he had to get married. Has three kids already. Nice wife, too. You'll like her."

Jane swallowed, felt a little ill. Harry put his arm about her for a moment, squeezed her hand. "It'll work out all right, you'll see."

She felt his arm tremble, thought that Harry was frightened too.

Chapter Five

ETRURIA was a pleasant surprise. It was not a coal town, but a little metropolis which served the mines, farms and factories of the district. It was built in the valley cut by the river and on the sides of rising hills. It was dirty from the smudge of industry, noisy with the beat of commerce, but the housewives did not complain. The smokestacks had been clean too long, the whistles and bells too quiet. There was life and love and happiness in this dirt.

And, Jane thought, a sort of beauty, the beauty of a healthy body. About the town itself her fresh eyes saw things which the natives had long forgotten.

Doctor McCroy and his bride were to live in a spacious two-story house located on a high bluff which faced the river. It was distinguished as one of the six houses in the town with two bathrooms.

It was an old house, remodeled ten years before, taken over during the depression by one of the banks. Jane's room, large and pleasant, had a spreading maple tree just outside the window. Through the leaves she could look at the river, winding and calm, sometimes green, mostly gray, muddy brown after a rain. There was an island in the river. It had once been big enough for a small farm, but the floods had cut at it until it was a long green strip with a pebbled beach.

Jane could lie in her bed by the window, look out upon trees and river and sky, changing with each day. It was beauty and peace and quiet; compared to what she had steeled herself to expect, it was heavenly. Here she spent a rapturous honeymoon. A woman came in to clean and cook, a pleasant woman of middle-age who brought the town to the house through her gossip, who looked upon Jane as a foreigner — curious but humanly amusing.

And from Mrs. Plunkett, Jane learned far more of Harry's past than she had known before. He was almost without relatives. His mother had died while he was in college. He had a brother who was off roaming somewhere—not a bad sort, but he had none of Harry's steadiness. Harry had been a high-school and college hero. The town knew that he could have done better outside; they knew that Harry liked his own people and had come back to them; the town was flattered and appreciative. Jane saw it in their faces, in their attitudes, as she came into brief contact with them.

Harry had a new car, the first he had ever owned. The mines were six miles away; he drove there at first, and kept the car with him. After a while, when Jane began to get curious about the places outside her home, he left the car at home and rode to work with Harley Grove, the superintendent. The Groves, middle-aged, their only social contacts at first, were pleasant. Dolly Grove had gone to school in Boston, had traveled abroad, kept up on the books, read the smart magazines.

Jane rambled over the hillsides in the

CLAY'S MOCKING EYES INFORMED HARRY THAT NOTHING HAD CHANGED BETWEEN THEM.

car, inspected the country club, played a few rounds of golf with Dolly, until the weather grew too cold and raw. She went up and down the river highway. Here she found contentment, secluded as true beauty but never lonely. Here she began to think again.

There were some things she missed—her job, her friends, the theater, principally; but there were so many things here to compensate. It was a different world, and she a different person. She had never lived so deeply, so completely, so overflowingly as in these months. One day, moved by a surge of feeling, she traveled a new road, inquiring as she went; and when Harry left his office that afternoon, his wife was waiting to bring him home. His pleasure, his pride before the other men, made her see what this meant to him. The coal had always been something of a black shadow between them. Now he asked her if she would like to make a trip inside. Her eyes, still full of the joy of that day and evening, said that she really wanted to.

It was bright adventure, getting ready for the trip, something of a ceremony, tingling with the presence of danger. Men did go into the mines every day, and miners were as commonplace as men who went to sea; but some men were lost at sea, and some men did not return from the mines. They laughed as they tried to find overalls to fit. The safety-toed shoes found for Jane were sizes too large, and so heavy that her smart stride became a ludicrous shuffle. It was easier, because of her hair, to find a safety helmet, with its electric torch fed from the battery that hung from a belt at her waist. Heavy goggles completed the transformation. Nobody would have ever taken this person for Jane Howarth.

They were going in on the man trip at three o'clock when the men were changing shifts. The word passed that she was Dr. Harry's wife. They stared less, Jane thought, than any group of men might be expected to stare at a lone woman. They were respectful; she told Harry that they were younger and more intelligent-looking than she had expected.

He was pleased: "Tell me any other things which strike you as interesting. A fresh viewpoint might see things I would miss."

"Your viewpoint should be fresh enough."

"Once I go in, it seems that I have never done anything else. The power of early habit, I suppose. Well, here we go. Don't pop your head up too far."

The little motor began to pull, and the string of low steel cars headed for the black opening into the mine. The cars went inside, started down-grade. The speed increased, and the cars roared until talking was difficult. Jane searched for Harry's fingers, smiled, looked quietly toward the other men in the car. If they saw, they made no sign.

Jane was not afraid. This was not her idea of a mine. The roof was smoothly treated with what Harry had told her was gunnite. It kept the place clean and helped to prevent falls. There were lights at intervals, and occasional openings where she saw men standing. It was exactly like riding in a subway, the same roof, the same speed, the same roar, but not quite so dusty. She shouted this at Harry, and he smiled. She knew he was enjoying having her with him, showing her the thing that was the other half of his life.

A sign told them they were one mile in. The pace eased; the cars stopped. Some of the men got out, disappeared silently into the various lighted passages; others went on with the cars. Harry talked for a few minutes with the dispatcher stationed at this point.

It was all quiet now, calm and pleasant, commonplace as the basement of a department-store, except that the air seemed much better. The light was adequate but not bright. They might have been on a narrow deserted street on an early spring evening. Harry told her that the temperature was around sixty degrees, that it never varied more than five degrees, winter or summer, that this was one reason miners liked their work.

He opened a wide wooden door, like the door of a barn, closed it after her, explained that these doors, in strategic positions, governed the flow of air in the mine, kept it fresh and healthful. The roof here was lower. Harry stooped quite a bit; and she knew, now, where that inclination in his posture came from. Jane had to bend her head a little. The light was dimmer here, and for the first time she found use for her electric torch.

"This wire is charged," he told her, pointing to a cable overhead. "Don't touch it. That's where the power comes from."

THEY walked along for about a hundred yards. A motor was in their path, and they backed against the wall, while cars were switched back and forth. The noise was raucous. The brakeman made his signals with sharp whistles. They did not talk. These were the first humans Jane had seen since the men had all disappeared. It began to seem eerie and less common.

The motor was stopped, and they squeezed past it, and went through another big door. There was noise ahead, growing louder as they approached.

They entered a room about fifteen yards wide and five yards deep. Men were putting up posts to support the roof. The noise came from a machine which was cutting into the face of the coal, cutting a wide arc near the ground, an arc which would encircle the place. The one operator with his two assistants wore short-sleeved heavy undershirts, and were sweating. They looked at Jane, but they did not speak. They made no waste motions.

This, Harry said against the noise, was the "face." Jane thought it was well-named. It was the face of the primitive. Here were men and machines, a mile underground, hacking at virgin coal, rock and slate which had lain there undisturbed. It was no wonder that the earth sometimes struck back.

"They cut above and below the vein of coal," Harry said, "then bore holes and charge them with powder. When the charge goes off, these ridges will permit the coal to expand." *(Please turn to page 81)*

Her hair was red; her eyes were bright; and she was alone in London.

Zermatt, Switzerland
July 14th.

MARY, my Own:

But I am *quite as impatient as you for our meeting in London! I can forgive your complaining at my week's delay in reaching England (and you, my darling). I must also beg you to try to understand.*

My instructorship at the university next fall (as you should know) depends on the results of my field work here with Dr. Belknap. The doctor, besides being one of the great paleontologists of the world, is also a martinet: I scarcely dare offend him by asking leave at this time.

Why? Because my field class must bring down results from snow line. How could I foresee that the quartz vein I discovered in June —the vein which threw Dr. Belknap into such ecstasies—would vanish under a morain? When I wrote that wild horses could not hold me back from joining you, when I persuaded you to take your vacation these July weeks, I had counted on winning my freedom by tracing that quartz vein to its source.

Would that work and romance might more often jibe in this practical world! Now I must gain that freedom—and Dr. Belknap's approval—with some other discovery.

I know we had planned to meet at the Thackeray Hotel on the eighth of July; I can sense your disappointment at arriving in Southampton, to find only a cable awaiting you, not an ardent fiancé. It is unfortunate that finances do not permit your coming on to Zermatt. Our field work is being done at two thousand meters, but I might be able to steal a few hours for you on Sundays. . . . .

There were pages more, in neat typescript: these Mary could not bring herself to re-read. Owen must have had quite a tussle with that letter, she reflected: she could almost see his Adam's apple bob, as he slipped in that parenthetical "darling." She had loved Owen since the age of six, when she had bitten his hand for stealing pears from the tree in her Brooklyn back-yard. Now she was nearer thirty than she cared to admit, although she still looked a bright-eyed twenty-five; Owen had grown into an owlish young man who took the final steps toward a doctorate in geology on the flanks of the Matterhorn. His devotion to her, and his work, was unquestioned; they were to be married this fall, when he received his university assignment. They could just manage the money end, if she kept her job in high school.

He had been slaving in Switzerland since spring; they were to have had their first pre-nuptial holiday together in July England. Their first really free moment beyond the prying eyes of relatives. No more escapes to the corner movie, the cold benches of the Museum; she had seen herself feeding the swans in St. James Park, while Owen read Byron on the bank beside her. But Dr. Belknap had quite firmly quashed that. . . .

She leaned hard against the tour counter at the American Express, just managing to down the lump in her throat. Outside, dank clouds, that seemed one with the roof-tops, wept for her copiously. The raindrops danced on the pavements of the haymarket; she had made the mistake of walking up from the Underground, so her new tweed suit steamed; her feet, Baedeker-weary in new suède pumps, felt like two discouraged sponges.

Mary had passed six grim days alone in London. She had seen three changings of the guard; being, like many Americans, a loyal subject of the king, she had been awed by the Tower Jewels. She had had tea alone at the Savoy, a slice from the round in the ladies' dining-room at Simpson's, a kidney pie in Dickens' seat at the Cheshire Cheese. She had taken busses to Shakespeare and Windsor, Limehouse and Hampstead Heath. In the evenings, she had written almost two hundred postcards; and as she knew no one in all the London phone-book, had gone to bed at ten.

And now she leaned against the tour counter in the American Express, wishing she were weak enough to burst into tears. Perhaps one of the motherly Iowan souls who buzzed over the mail near-by would notice and comfort her.

A voice at her elbow brought her back to reality; the clerk, passing her a neat book of tickets. Mary took it with a wan smile. After all, she had ordered this tour reservation before going downstairs for her mail; it was hardly fair to explain that she planned to spend tomorrow in bed with a headache. Mechanically she paid one pound ten; mechanically she stepped out to the rain-pelted sidewalk just in time to board a bus.

"DON'T LEAVE ME, MARY, HE BEGGED. "LONDON AT NIGHT IS NO FIT PLACE FOR AN UNPROTECTED GIRL TO BE."

The Duchess of Brooklyn

by

WILLIAM DuBOIS

Illustrated by JOHN POLGREEN

On the upper deck, she defiantly lit a cigarette, slapped powder on her damp nose. Let him chip rocks till he died under an avalanche, see if she cared! Were her eyes really streaming now, or was it only the rain on the bus window? The curve of Regent Street flowed by, an expensive blur of gray proud shops. On her first day in London—when Owen's letters still held out hope of reunion—she had bought him a malacca stick in Regent Street; she must have loved him then, to do so foolishly tender a thing with her meager funds. Oxford Circus, now—why did much of London, with its neon lights and cheap-jack stores, look so like a back street in Brooklyn?

But such thoughts were sacrilege. . . . And she was really crying now, her jumpy mind melting in a well of self-pity. It could have been so lovely. It could have been all her literature come true—if only she had had some one to share it with.

Her hand, groping in her handbag for a match, closed over the book of tickets. Another tour; another day of aching calves, and postcards; a day with the king-makers. Paddington Station, 9:05; Trevistane Spa, 10:41; the ruins of Wycliffe Abbey. Leicester Common, the Old Mill, lunch at the Shepherd's Rest. Mary shuddered faintly. And yet, with Owen beside her to burnish her history, Owen with his sarcasm for all things British that so infuriated her—yes, even that acerb pedantry would be manna from heaven now.

Trevistane Castle, at noon; a personally conducted tour of manse and gardens. Perhaps by then she would be too tired to mind anything. If not, she could always bite her Baedeker to keep down a scream.

SHE got down from the bus as the rain stopped. There was even a wan sheen of sun over the British Museum, as she turned into Great Russell Street. An accordion skirled from a pub; the nice young man who ran the wine-dive next to her hotel gave her the cheery British smile he always saved for her when she came in wearily for her five o'clock scone.

Today she was too desperate to turn in at his doorway. Twenty aching steps more, and the lobby of her hotel, respectable as an antimacassar, received her gravely. She found herself, without conscious transition, flat on her bed, her shoes off. She felt she must do something definite, or die.

MARY LEANED AGAINST THE COUNTER AT THE AMERICAN EXPRESS, JUST MANAGING TO DOWN THE LUMP IN HER THROAT.

What she eventually did was spend the best part of another pound on a cable to Zermatt.

COME AT ONCE TAKING NEXT BOAT HOME IF YOU REFUSE TELL DR. B. TO GO JUMP IN GLACIER I NEED YOU I LOVE YOU

Not that the last three words were strictly true at the moment, but—

The rubberneck had just turned into an avenue of elms blond with sunlight. Wedged firmly in the back seat between Dr. Alpheus Sanford, Seattle dentist, and Dr. Sanford's pneumatic wife, Mary ripped the cable to bits—the cable that read:

YOUR CABLE AMAZES AND PERTURBS ME HOPED LAST LETTER MADE MY POSITION CLEAR STOP LEAVING THIS WORK MEANS LOSING MY CAREER IF YOU CANNOT SEE THAT YOU CAN SEE NOTHING STOP ALL MY LOVE DARLING MARY ONLY TRY TO BE STRONG AND AWAIT YOUR OWEN

Chin up, she cast the shreds of her love to the flawless morning. It did seem incredible, that a thing so sacred could die so painlessly. Again she felt she should cry a little; yet here she was, in her best gray traveling-suit with the beige silk blouse—leaning forward, almost eager for a glimpse of Trevistane Castle. In fact, she could not recall when she had felt so reckless, so emancipated—or so frightened at her own contradictory emotions.

"We are now approaching one of the oldest estates in Middlesex," said the megaphone up front. "The north wing dates from the reign of Henry the First, in the Twelfth Century; the yews are said to have been planted by William Rufus, son of the Conqueror. We are at this moment crossing the deer-park; it is used by the present Earl of Trevistane as a running-ground for rabbits."

"What became of the deer?" asked the lady with the notebook.

The guide cleared his throat, as guides will all over the world when their flow of rhetoric is interrupted. "Is that a fair question, madame? Perhaps they died from want of grass; or perhaps the present Earl sold them to the zoo. You will see the ancient trysting-well on your right—"

On the left, the crack of a gunshot caused everyone to stop listening. A man in grass-stained tweeds, a claret-faced man with the head and shoulders of a St. Bernard, his white hair untidy as a nightmare, rose up from a hawthorne copse at the roadside, blazed up at them with blue English rage in his eyes. Four dead hares hung by a boon-doggle round his neck; a smoking shotgun still lay on his shoulder. "As the Lord is my witness," shouted this apparition at the rubberneck, "Some day I'll start on you!" Three ladies screamed faintly. The bus rocked round the curve. "The present Earl," said the megaphone.

"Probably shooting his dinner," sneered Mrs. Sanford. "They do say he's too broke to pay his taxes. If we didn't come here in droves to gape at his armor and delphiniums, he'd be on the town—instead of painting it red."

"Looked too old to do much hell-bending," said the Doctor.

"With his complexion? That kind live down a dozen strokes, and come back for more."

But Mary scarcely heard. Gray in their ivy, proud in the morning, the towers of Trevistane had just risen above the screen of yews. She caught her breath sharply; it was her England at last, unspoiled by labels: perfect as a trumpet call at Hastings, wicked as a Tudor, debonair as a Stuart. The bus stopped at a stairway flanked by deep box hedges; even Dr. Sanford was silent as they climbed toward the postern gate. A white peacock ran screaming before the barbarian invasion.

"The castle guide will take over here," announced the megaphone. "Postcards may be purchased only at the entrance, where you left your cameras. The bus leaves this spot in forty minutes."

"Forty minutes are all too short to review the pageant that has passed through these doors," said the young man who now appeared on the stair-head. "But I shall do my poor best to make that pageant live and breathe again for you."

He had said this with the insouciance of a clever parrot; now he stood smiling down on Mary, whose enthusiasm had outdistanced the herd by several paces. He seemed very blond, very tall, with the sort of smile that takes young men far in this wicked world—such an infectious smile, she could not be sure if he was handsome or not. Certainly, in his old brown coat and cigarette-pitted slacks, he was one of the shabbiest young men she had ever seen. "If the lady who hurries panting to meet history will lead the way," he said gravely, "we shall proceed to the haunted gallery."

THEY entered a corridor wine-colored from a light diffused through tall Norman windows. The sun faded into mulled gloom at the far end; here the human sheep paused, open-mouthed. "At this precise spot, if we are very quiet," said the shepherd, "we may sometimes hear the ghost of Henry walking."

No one spoke, and only Dr. Sanford snickered. Mary strained her ears, waiting for a whisper from the Twelfth Century. It came, faint as the wind among the cobwebs in the groined ceiling—the young man's voice, close to her ear. "Please say you hear

SHE HAD PASSED SIX GRIM DAYS ALONE IN LONDON.

something," he begged. "Even though *I* never have. It helps the tour so much."

"But I did," Mary whispered. "I heard him pass between us. He sounded like the friendliest ghost in the world." She spoke aloud. "Some one's walking down there, where it's dark. I heard slippers on the flagstones."

"So did I," cried the lady with the notebook.

"And I," said the lady milliner from Boston.

"Me too," agreed the section-boss from Detroit, nervously shifting his cigar.

"Let's get the hell out of here," said Dr. Sanford.

"We now climb to the council hall," said their guide, opening another door—and giving Mary a hand over the sill.

They ascended a stair, still leading the flock by a good half-dozen paces. His stride was long and agile; she stayed with it, really panting a little now. "How did I do?"

"Splendidly. Forgive my impudence?"

"I loved it," she said, not at all rationally.

"Shouldn't have dared ask, except for your manner as you came in. So completely alive. Rather felt you wouldn't fail me."

It was quite dark on the stair, but now she knew he was handsome. She also knew that for the first time in more than twenty-eight years her course was unpredictable. "How long have you worked here?" she asked.

"Practically forever."

"Then you're a local boy?"

"Rather. Farm, when I'm not conducting parties. We have the most magnificent truck-garden in the lower moat. Supply every hotel at the Spa. That's why old John was shooting rabbits as you drove up. They eat the cabbage."

"Old John? You mean the Earl?"

"None other. Did he frighten you too badly?"

"Aren't you rather disrespectful to your employer?"

"Very. Do you mind?"

"It doesn't seem quite English."

"Sorry—but I'd much prefer to be an American like yourself. I adore you all. Subscribe to your tabloids; never miss one of your flicks. You're so brave—so positive where you're going."

"Only in the movies."

"Don't disillusion this wide-eyed farmer-boy. He refuses to listen." He gave her that smile—and they stood aside to let the sheep flow into a great hall bristling with knights. More windows opened on the purr of a water-wheel, the sheen of a little river sleepy in the summer heat-haze. Mary found herself in an embrasure beside her guide; already that seemed astoundingly natural. Natural, too, that the sheep should group below in a respectful semicircle.

"We are standing in the council-hall and dining-room," he said, giving them his professional voice. "Edward the Second supped here on his way to Kenilworth. Elizabeth and Leicester have danced beneath these rafters. From the windows you have a magnificent view of the hunting preserves created after the Peasants' War. In fact, were it a bit less hazy, you could see as far as the Spa, and I might point out the Shepherd's Rest, where you are all lunching." He stepped right into the window-frame, drawing Mary closer with a look, giving her his own voice, another whisper. "All but you, my confederate. You are lunching with me."

AND she did—on a stone terrace down the river, far removed from rubbernecks. Shamelessly she had dodged her party, waiting for him just beyond the drawbridge, mildly shocked when he had trundled across it in a mustard-colored Morris roadster. And now her mind, still swimming in the wine of a Norman dream, refused to awaken to the fact that she had been picked up in perfect but penniless English—though he had paid for the lunch; the fact that she had not the remotest idea how to find the railroad station that waited like sanctuary—or adventure's end—beyond the murmur of these willows. The more pertinent fact that his hand—a brown lean hand that had undoubtedly cupped many a tourist florin—had just closed over hers, and she had yet to escape.

"Aren't you having a rather long luncheon-hour?" she asked, astonished that this voice could still be her own.

"Hardly. It's only four."

"But you'll surely be fired."

"Don't remind me: just let me go on wondering how you could ever happen to be sitting across this table—from me."

She escaped firmly—so far as the hand was concerned. "I suppose you select one ewe from each flock. We were quite a large flock: I'm flattered."

"Do believe me: you are my first offense."

"Only I'm not offended."

"Then tell me what made you come."

"If you hadn't asked me," said Mary, surprising herself anew, "I'd have asked you myself. Because you talk about something besides Terre Haute and how bad English food is, and how much it costs second class from London to Oxford. Heaven help you, you're the first person I've really talked to since I left Brooklyn."

"Brooklyn. Isn't it a place where your Underground goes to bed?"

"I happen to live there. It's part of New York, even though they won't admit it."

"Granted. I still can't imagine you being lonesome."

"Another reason I'm lunching with you. Because you think I'm so different from what I really am."

"Mary Bardall," he said thoughtfully. "Nice. I was afraid you'd be called Peg or Marge. Most American girls seem to be."

"Who are you?"

"Gibbons. Alan Gibbons. Depressing, what?"

"I wonder why you say that."

"Because I'm nothing. A squatter in a ruin, living on tips and turnips."

"You must tell me what you really do."

"I have. Grow into a turnip for thirty years."

"You look nearer twenty."

"Because only life shows in the face." He smiled candidly around his attitude. "You too are older than your face."

"Ages."

"Only your life has been beautiful—sheltered, singing with youth. American girls never really grow old, do they?"

"Mr. Gibbons, just who and what d'you think I am?"

"You might call me Alan."

"Well, Alan, I'm not a movie actress or a banker's daughter. My hair is naturally red, and I'm alone in England. Now tell me what you imagined."

"That an unwise but indulgent family has permitted you to go abroad to forget an unhappy love-affair."

"That's real clairvoyance."

"You're still rich—though not enormously. You were graduated from a young ladies' academy with moderate honors, dance brilliantly, flirt dangerously. Until you met me in King Henry's gate, you were most utterly bored with England and yourself."

Mary rose firmly. "I must make my train."

"Exactly." He rose with her. "That's what the boat-house down there is for. I am punting you downstream to Trevistane Spa. With luck, you'll have a whole *(Please turn to page 102)*

BIG BLONDE

REDBOOK'S *Encore* OF THE MONTH

HAZEL MORSE was a large, fair woman of the type that incites some men when they use the word *blonde* to click their tongues and wag their heads roguishly. She prided herself upon her small feet and suffered for her vanity, boxing them in snub-toed, high-heeled slippers of the shortest bearable size. The curious things about her were her hands, strange terminations to the flabby white arms splattered with pale tan spots—long, quivering hands with deep and convex nails. She should not have disfigured them with little jewels.

She was not a woman given to recollections. At her middle thirties, her old days were a blurred and flickering sequence, an imperfect film, dealing with the actions of strangers.

In her twenties, after the deferred death of a hazy widowed mother, she had been employed as a model in a wholesale dress establishment—it was still the day of the big woman, and she was then prettily colored and erect and high-breasted. Her job was not onerous, and she met numbers of men and spent numbers of evenings with them, laughing at their jokes and telling them she loved their neckties. Men liked her, and she took it for granted that the liking of many men was a desirable thing. Popularity seemed to her to be worth all the work that had to be put into its achievement. Men liked you because you were fun, and when they liked you they took you out, and there you were. So, and successfully, she was fun. She was a good sport. Men like a good sport.

No other form of diversion, simpler or more complicated, drew her attention. She never pondered if she might not be better occupied doing something else. Her ideas, or, better, her acceptances, ran right along with those of the other substantially built blondes in whom she found her friends.

When she had been working in the dress establishment some years, she met Herbie Morse. He was thin, quick, attractive,

"OH, WHAT A PEACH YOU HAD," SHE USED TO SAY. "I THOUGHT I'D DIE, THE WAY YOU KEPT ASKING THE WAITER TO DANCE WITH YOU."

with shifting lines about his shiny brown eyes, and a habit of fiercely biting at the skin around his finger nails. He drank largely; she found that entertaining. Her habitual greeting to him was an allusion to his state of the previous night.

"Oh, what a peach you had," she used to say, through her easy laughter. "I thought I'd die, the way you kept asking the waiter to dance with you."

She liked him immediately upon their meeting. She was enormously amused at his fast, slurred sentences, his interpolations of apt phrases from vaudeville acts and comic strips; she thrilled at the feel of his lean arm tucked firm beneath the sleeve of her coat; she wanted to touch the wet, flat surface of his hair. He was as promptly drawn to her. They were married six weeks after they had met.

She was delighted at the idea of being a bride; coquetted with it, played upon it. Other offers of marriage she had had, and not a few of them; but it happened that they were all from stout, serious men who had visited the dress establishment as buyers: men from Des Moines and Houston and Chicago and, in her phrase, even funnier places. There was always something immensely comic to her in the thought of living elsewhere than New York. She could not regard as serious, proposals that she share a Western residence.

She wanted to be married. She was nearing thirty now, and she did not take the years well. She spread and softened, and her darkening hair turned her to inexpert dabblings with peroxide. There were times when she had little flashes of fear about her job. And she had had a couple of thousand evenings of being a good sport among her male acquaintances. She had come to be more conscientious than spontaneous about it.

Herbie earned enough, and they took a little apartment far uptown. There was a Mission-furnished dining-room with a hanging central light globed in liver-colored glass; in the living-room were an "over-stuffed suite," a Boston fern and a reproduction of the Henner "Magdalene" with the red hair and the blue draperies; the bedroom was in gray enamel and old rose, with Herbie's photograph on Hazel's dressing-table, and Hazel's likeness on Herbie's chest of drawers.

SHE cooked—and she was a good cook—and marketed and chatted with the delivery boys and the colored laundress. She loved the flat; she loved her life; she loved Herbie. In the first months of their marriage, she gave him all the passion she was ever to know.

She had not realized how tired she was. It was a delight, a new game, a holiday, to give up being a good sport. If her head ached or her arches throbbed, she complained piteously, babyishly. If her mood was quiet, she did not talk. If tears came to her eyes, she let them fall.

She fell readily into the habit of tears during the first year of her marriage. Even in her good-sport days, she had been known to weep lavishly and disinterestedly on occasion. Her behavior at the theater was a standing joke. She could weep at anything in a play—tiny garments, love both unrequited and mutual, seduction, purity, faithful servitors, wedlock, the triangle.

"There goes Haze," her friends would say. "She's off again."

A veritable American classic is this unforgetable story

by DOROTHY PARKER

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Illustrated by DAVID ROBINSON

Wedded and relaxed, she poured her tears freely. To her who had laughed so much, crying was delicious. All sorrows became her sorrows; she was Tenderness. She would cry long and softly over newspaper accounts of kidnaped babies, deserted wives, unemployed men, strayed cats, heroic dogs. Even when the paper was no longer before her, her mind revolved upon these things, and the drops slipped rhythmically over her plump cheeks.

"Honestly," she would say to Herbie, "all the sadness there is in the world, when you stop to think about it!"

"Yeah," Herbie would say.

She missed nobody. The old crowd, the people who had brought her and Herbie together, dropped from their lives, lingeringly at first. When she thought of this at all, it was only to consider it fitting. This was marriage. This was peace.

But the thing was that Herbie was not amused.

FOR a time he had enjoyed being alone with her. He found the voluntary isolation novel and sweet. Then it palled with a ferocious suddenness. It was as if one night, sitting with her in the steam-heated living-room, he would ask no more; and the next night he was through and done with the whole thing.

He became annoyed by her misty melancholies. At first, when he came home to find her softly tired and moody, he kissed her neck and patted her shoulder and begged her to tell her Herbie what was wrong. She loved that. But time slid by, and he found that there was never anything really, personally, the matter.

"Ah, for God's sake," he would say, "crabbing again! All right, sit here and crab your head off. I'm going out."

And he would slam out of the flat and come back late and drunk.

She was completely bewildered by what happened to their marriage. First they were lovers, and then, it seemed without transition, they were enemies. She never understood it.

There were longer and longer intervals between his leaving his office and his arrival at the apartment. She went through agonies of picturing him run over and bleeding, dead and covered with a sheet. Then she lost her fears for his safety and grew sullen and wounded. When a person wanted to be with a person, he came as soon as possible. She desperately wanted him to want to be with her; her own hours only marked the time till he would come. It was often nearly nine o'clock before he came home to dinner. Always he had had many drinks, and their effect would die in him, leaving him loud and querulous and bristling for affronts.

He was too nervous, he said, to sit and do nothing for an evening. He boasted, probably not in all truth, that he had never read a book in his life.

"What am I expected to do—sit around this dump on my tail all night?" he would ask, rhetorically. And again he would slam out.

She did not know what to do. She could not manage him. She could not meet him.

She fought him furiously. A terrific domesticity had come upon her, and she would bite and scratch to guard it. She wanted what she called "a nice home." She wanted a sober, tender husband, prompt at dinner, punctual at work. She wanted sweet, comforting evenings. The idea of intimacy with other men was terrible to her; the thought that Herbie might be seeking entertainment in other women set her frantic.

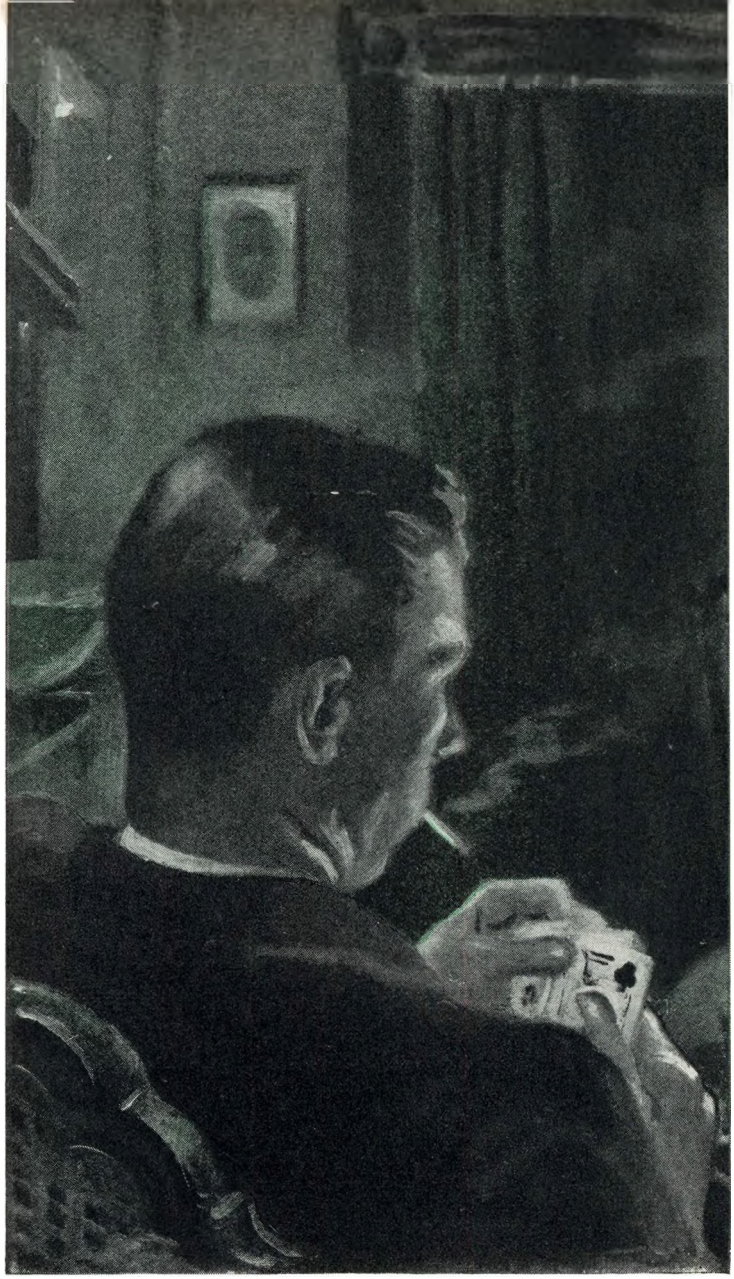
It seemed to her that almost everything she read—novels from the drug-store lending library, magazine stories, women's pages in the papers—dealt with wives who lost their husbands' love. She could bear those, at that, better than accounts of neat, companionable marriage and living happily ever after.

She was frightened. Several times when Herbie came home in the evening, he found her determinedly dressed—she had had to alter those of her clothes that were not new, to make them fasten—and rouged.

"Let's go wild tonight, what do you say?" she would hail him. "A person's got lots of time to hang around and do nothing when they're dead."

So they would go out, to chop-houses and the less expensive cabarets. But it turned out badly. She could no longer find amusement in watching Herbie drink. She could not laugh at his whimsicalities, she was so tensely counting his indulgences. And she was unable to keep back her remonstrances—"Ah, come on, Herb, you've had enough, haven't you? You'll feel something terrible in the morning."

He would be immediately enraged. All right, crab; crab, crab, crab, crab, that was all she ever did. What a lousy sport she was! There would be scenes, and one or the other of them would rise and stalk out in fury. . . .



ED WAS HER PARTICULAR FRIEND. HE STAKED HER WHEN

She could not recall the definite day that she started drinking, herself. There was nothing separate about her days. Like drops upon a window-pane, they ran together and trickled away. She had been married six months, then a year, then three years.

She had never needed to drink, formerly. She could sit for most of a night at a table where the others were imbibing earnestly and never droop in looks or spirits, nor be bored by the doings of those about her. If she took a cocktail, it was so unusual as to cause twenty minutes or so of jocular comment. But now anguish was in her. Frequently, after a quarrel, Herbie would stay out for the night, and she could not learn from him where the time had been spent. Her heart felt tight and sore in her breast, and her mind turned like an electric fan.

She hated the taste of liquor. Gin, plain or in mixtures, made her promptly sick. After experiment, she found that Scotch whisky was best for her. She took it without water, because that was the quickest way to its effect.

Herbie pressed it on her. He was glad to see her drink. They both felt it might restore her high spirits, and their good times together might again be possible.

"Atta girl!" he would approve her. "Let's see you get boiled, baby."

But it brought them no nearer. When she drank with him, there would be a little while of gayety, and then, strangely without beginning, they would be in a wild quarrel. They would wake in the morning not sure what it had all been about, foggy as to what had been said and done, but each deeply injured and bitterly resentful. There would be days of vengeful silence.

THEY ALL PLAYED POKER; SAT NEXT HER AND OCCASIONALLY RUBBED HIS KNEE AGAINST HERS DURING THE GAME.

There had been a time when they had made up their quarrels, usually in bed. There would be kisses and little names and assurances of fresh starts. . . . "Oh, it's going to be great now, Herb. We'll have swell times. I was a crab. I guess I must have been tired. But everything's going to be swell. You'll see."

Now there were no gentle reconciliations. They resumed friendly relations only in the brief magnanimity caused by liquor, before more liquor drew them into new battles. The scenes became more violent. There were shouted invectives and pushes, and sometimes sharp slaps. Once she had a black eye. Herbie was horrified next day at sight of it. He did not go to work; he followed her about, suggesting remedies and heaping dark blame on himself. But after they had had a few drinks—"to pull themselves together"—she made so many wistful references to her bruise that he shouted at her and rushed out and was gone for two days.

Each time he left the place in a rage, he threatened never to come back. She did not believe him; nor did she consider separation. Somewhere in her head or her heart was the lazy, nebulous hope that things would change and she and Herbie settle suddenly into soothing married life. Here were her home, her furniture, her husband, her station. She summoned no alternatives.

She could no longer bustle and potter. She had no more vicarious tears; the hot drops she shed were for herself. She walked ceaselessly about the rooms, her thoughts running mechanically round and round Herbie. In those days began the hatred of being alone that she was never to overcome. You could be by yourself when things were all right; but when you were blue, you got the howling horrors.

She commenced drinking alone, little short drinks all through the day. It was only with Herbie that alcohol made her nervous and quick in offense. Alone, it blurred sharp things for her. She lived in a haze of it. Her life took on a dreamlike quality. Nothing was astonishing.

A Mrs. Martin moved into the flat across the hall. She was a great blonde woman of forty, a promise in looks of what Mrs. Morse was to be. They made acquaintance, quickly became inseparable. Mrs. Morse spent her days in the opposite apartment. They drank together, to brace themselves after the drinks of the nights before.

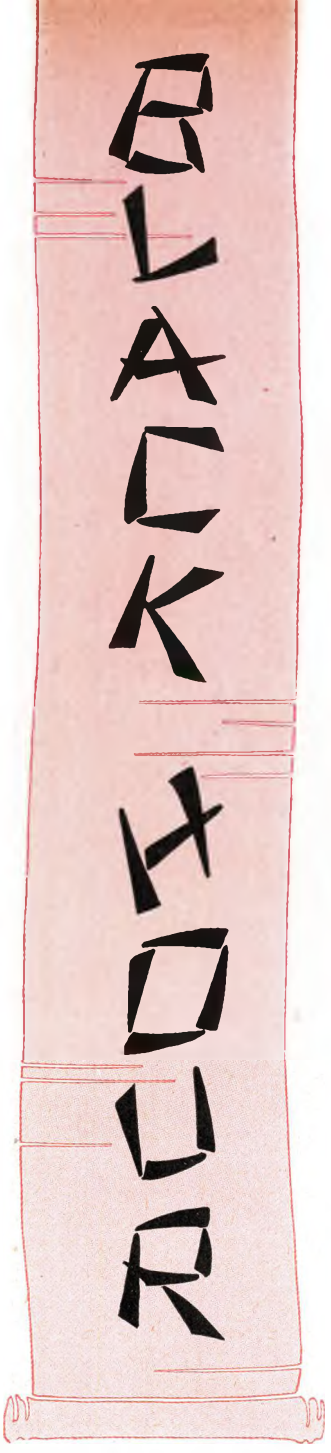
SHE never confided her troubles about Herbie to Mrs. Martin. The subject was too bewildering to her to find comfort in talk. She let it be assumed that her husband's business kept him much away. It was not regarded as important; husbands, as such, played but shadowy parts in Mrs. Martin's circle.

Mrs. Martin had no visible spouse; you were left to decide for yourself whether he was or was not dead. She had an admirer, Joe, who came to see her almost nightly. Often he brought several friends with him—"the Boys," they were called. The Boys were big, red good-humored men, perhaps forty-five, perhaps fifty. Mrs. Morse was glad of invitations to join the parties—Herbie was scarcely ever at home at night now. If he did come home, she did not visit Mrs. Martin. An evening alone with Herbie meant inevitably a quarrel, yet she would stay with him. There was always her thin and wordless idea that maybe, this night, things would begin to be all right.

The Boys brought plenty of liquor along with them whenever they came to Mrs. Martin's. Drinking with them, Mrs. Morse became lively and good-natured and audacious. She was quickly popular. When she had drunk enough *(Please turn to page 75)*


PERHAPS, SHE TOLD HERSELF, SHE REALLY WAS AFRAID — NOT OF COMMUNISTS OR THIEVES OR SICKNESS, BUT OF LIVING OUT HER LIFE IN THIS LONELY CHINESE TOWN.
ALAN FOSTER

BLACK HOUR



Illustrated by
ALAN FOSTER

RACHEL lay in her bed. It was not dawn, yet she was awake again, suddenly and for no reason. The house was still. There was nothing wrong. But sleep was snapped off as sharply as though there had been a scream in her ears. She was even breathing too quickly. But there had been no noise at all. Her own heart had waked her again.

She turned softly and lay watching the pale gray squares of the windows opened into the night. Their blankness was broken only occasionally by the waving branches of the willow trees outside. The long black shadows they made against the white of the moonlight passed over her as she lay in bed, and circled and twisted so that, for all they were so familiar, she sometimes found herself shuddering at their snakelike movement. Denis lay in the shade of the space between the windows, and at this hour of the night seemed not to exist in life at all. He lay apart in his own bed, a figure remote from her thinking and her feeling. Had he been more in the light, possibly her eyes falling on him might have recalled him to her conscious mind; but as it was, he was in the dark, and she could see him, when she tried, only as a low mound beneath the covers, with a darker spot where his head lay.

Now she could hear small noises; and each one coming in the windows seemed magnified to thousandfold intensity. On the stillness of the night a sound which would not have been heard in the normal murmur of the day became almost unbearably loud to her. Sometimes she thought it was just that even after two years she was still not entirely used to the Orient, with its hordes of people pouring out into the streets from overcrowded houses—the openness of every natural sound to any ear. Perhaps, she told herself, she really was afraid—not of communists or thieves or sickness—but of living out her life here: afraid of going on and on, year upon year, in this lonely inland Chinese town. Always there was something sinister, something overhanging in it for her. Surely this was not to be all her life?

She tried to trace her feeling back to its source, and see what it was that made her feel as she did. When she was a child, she had never been afraid of things. As a girl she had been fearless and romantic; and for that reason, extending back perhaps into her unconscious self, Denis with his position in the East—Denis, fine-featured, artistic, and yet strangely with a curious hardness about him, had drawn her love to himself. And in these two years they had had no very grave or dangerous experience among the Chinese, even when his work had taken him into places where things were uncertain, as it sometimes did. Yet always there was this overhanging feeling. . . .

Lying in the darkness, looking at the gray squares of the windows Rachel listened to the sounds of the night—a faint temple bell humming through the air until her very ears seemed to vibrate with the clarity of the sound. She loved the sound in daytime; and to step with Denis into a drowsy, sunshiny temple courtyard and watch the priests at their singsong prayers gave her a strange sort of pleasure; but in the night the single note of the bell recalled things she had heard of priests and temples, and had something uncanny and sinister about it, and she longed to close out the sound. Before it died away, there came the clatter of the watchman's bamboo sticks beaten one upon the other. In absolute rhythm, on and on and on, faintly and then more loudly, until they were at the gate to the compound, and then more faintly again until they died away and another noise came to take their place.

She did not enjoy the watchman either; for always a bitter kind of mirth came to her—the futility of the protection that announced itself to the scheming thief by the clatter of bamboo sticks—the uselessness of this protection in any real danger—the foolhardiness of living thus in the heart of China surrounded, more or less, by wandering communists and bandits.

Still, she was glad when the watchman had made this round and was on his way. At that instant the air was torn by the shrieking of an engine at the railway station. Rachel thought with irritation of how abominable it was to have to be so near the station, even though when in the daytime as they strolled in from a walk in the country, and came upon the little station, it gave her a sense of being somewhere not entirely cut off from the world. The whistles of the great imported engines did not intrude upon her in the daytime, but in the dead of night, the tearing sound repeated time after time as it often was, drove her almost to desperation. In the stillness that ensued this time she settled herself really to get back to sleep, to make an undertaking of it and really accomplish it, rather than to lie here foolishly like this, wearing herself out over nothing at all.

She turned her face away from the open windows and set herself to think of the book she had been reading in the evening; but even while she held herself to it, there came slowly in upon her consciousness an awareness of a growing sound: a chorus of voices beginning on a low note and rising higher and higher to a strained falsetto key, and ending in a screaming minor, came along the street at a rapid rate. Every now and then it became more faint and then increased again in intensity, until it was at the very gate of the compound. Rachel knew that it was a group of spirit-callers—that some one was dying, and that these people, relatives of the dying man, were out to call his spirit back—but knowing what it was did not reassure her. She liked the sound no better because she knew what it was. The chorus passed on down the street, pausing at every little alleyway and calling down it to make sure the spirit heard, before it went on.

Well, that was that, and her foolishness must stop. What sort of a day would she have if she spent the night like this—what had other days been like? She hoped that Denis had not noticed it, but sometimes a distaste for everything had carried over into the day, and she had risen to a late breakfast, unrefreshed, and wondering how long they must stay on here, and what ailed her that she was so bad at meeting the little irritations of life.

Perhaps she had counted too much on Denis. But he had not failed in any way that she could discern, even to herself. She was as much in love with him as she ever was—yet in this midnight hour she was always irrevocably alone; and that was why, she supposed, she loathed it the more. She could waken Denis, but what good would it do? And what a goose she would feel, trying to tell him of her tensity at these slight sounds of the night, and of this overhanging feeling which came upon her in this black hour and seemed to sweep away all the sureties of the day! She could not waken him, even accidentally with her tossing, and feel anything but regret.

There—the sky was lightening already, *(Please turn to page 70)*

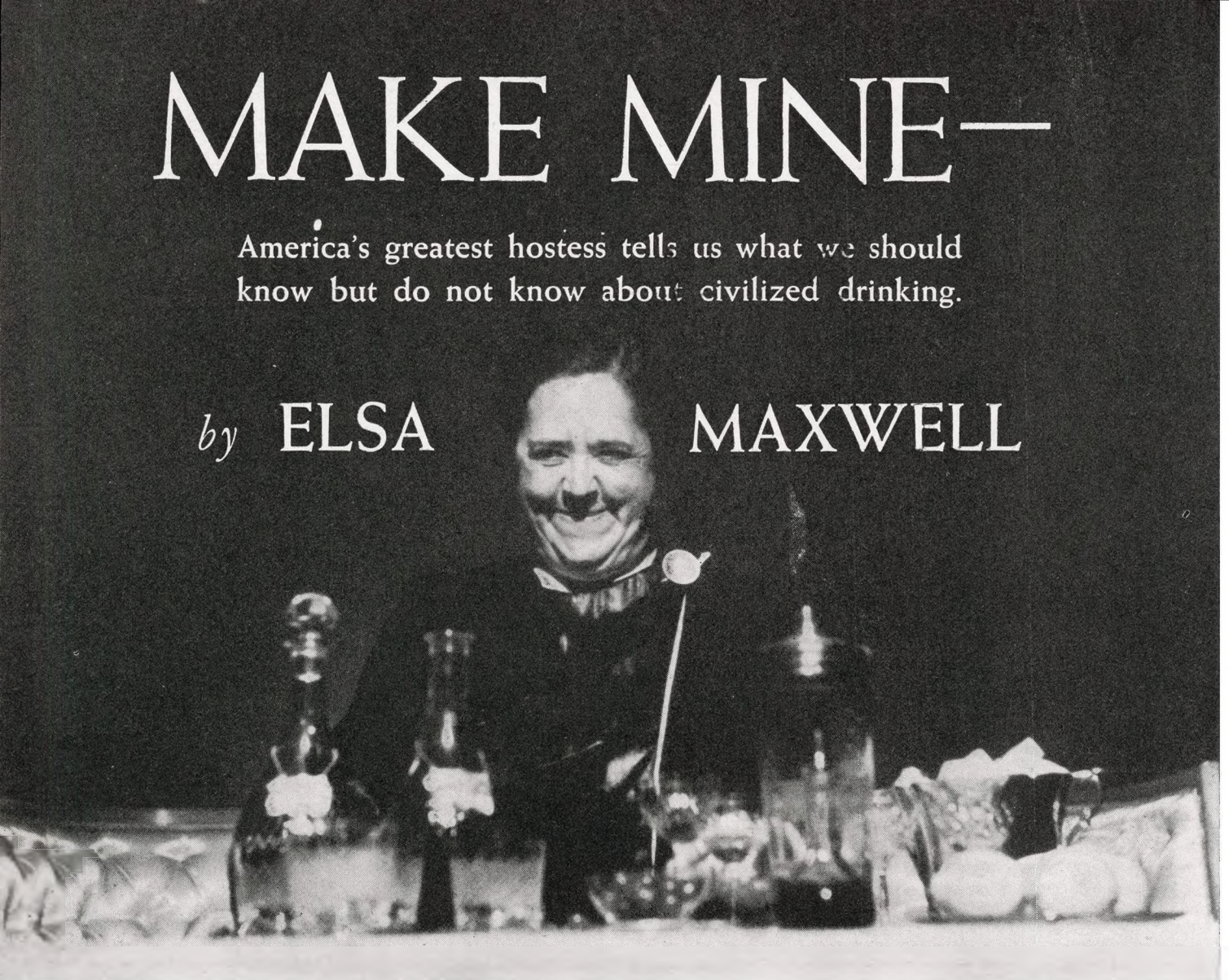
Read this magnificent story carefully, and you will hear the footsteps of four hundred million Chinese

by CORNELIA SPENCER

MAKE MINE—

America's greatest hostess tells us what we should know but do not know about civilized drinking.

by ELSA MAXWELL



Photographs by Ruzzie Green

FOUR years ago, on the afternoon of December 5, 1933, an afternoon so still that the passers-by could hear the subdued sobs of the owners of closing speak-easies, the sovereign State of Utah dealt a *coup de grace* to Old Man Prohibition.

There was much celebrating and speech-making that night. The celebrants were joyfully inarticulate—who wouldn't have been at the sight of a barrel of genuine beer?—but the orators spared no metaphors in describing what they were pleased to call "civilized drinking." They were predicting some marvelous things for the Republic.

In less than a year, they said, we would become a nation as sophisticated in its drinking habits as the French and the Italians. In less than two years, they promised, every American would know more about the various table wines than the Armenians do about the Turks. In less than three years, they guaranteed, a bar-man trying to cheat his clients as to the vintage of champagne would have as little a chance of success as a Harvard man at a Yale prom.

I do not recall what especially startling change we were supposed to undergo in less than four years, but I do know that four years are up, and that so far as our drinking habits are concerned, we are exactly where we were on the night of Repeal. We have learned nothing about wines, and worse still, we have forgotten what little we used to know about strong liquor.

In the darkest days of Prohibition we were at least afraid, afraid of losing our eyesight, afraid of getting poisoned, afraid of wrecking our digestion. And because we were afraid, we exercised a certain caution in the choice of the speak-easies we patronized and the brands of liquor we drank. Rightly or wrongly, we believed that good old Giuseppe—two flights up, knock on the door and say you are a friend of Mr. Whosis—always got his stuff "straight from Canada." Rightly or wrongly, we maintained that one should insist on a certain brand of Scotch because all other brands at Giuseppe's were either "cut" or "phony." Our faith in Giuseppe's integrity was rather naïve, but our approach to the problem was correct. We knew then what we don't seem to suspect now: That not all brands of Scotch are good. That a Martini may be either a delightful cocktail or the most pedestrian concoction in Christendom, depending on the brand of gin, the brand of vermouth and the ability of its maker. That a whisky-sour is only as good as the brand of whisky used for its preparation. That an Old-fashioned, a real, bona-fide Old-fashioned, should taste better than a mere version of a fruit-salad. That it's the quality of whisky and vermouth, and not the size and the appetizing appearance of a cherry, that makes or breaks a Manhattan.

Now, don't misunderstand me. Don't think for a moment that I, a woman and a teetotaler, am trying to teach the Big Strong Men of America how they should drink and what they should drink. God forbid! I wouldn't dream of tackling a task of such magnitude. But it so happens that having given and attended a vast number of cocktail parties, dinners and supper-dances in my life, I cannot help but admit that the nation that invented cocktails knows nothing about ordering cocktails. An average American spends twenty minutes explaining to a slightly bewildered waiter how his steak should be cooked and how his potatoes should be fried, but an average American thinks nothing of letting a bartender decide what ingredients should be used for his cocktail. It never dawns on him that while the cook is sure to overlook his fine instructions, the bartender *could* be forced to use his favorite brand of liquor.

I said "an average American." I needn't emphasize the word *average*—because with a few exceptions, any American, rich or

poor, old or young, a business-man or a loafer, knows next to nothing about liquor. He walks into a bar—be it the bar of the Piping Rock Club or the bar of a third-rate hotel—and says, "Make mine a Martini," or "Make mine a Manhattan," or "Make mine an Old-fashioned," and he expects to get a good Martini or a good Manhattan or a good Old-fashioned. Why should he? It seems to me that to walk into a bar and say, "Make mine a ———" without specifying the brand of the gin or the whisky, the brand of the vermouth and the desired proportion, is as silly a proceeding as to walk into a store and say, "I want a shirt," without specifying the size, the color or the quality of the material.

You want a Manhattan? Fine. But speak up. Say whether you prefer it to be made of a blended whisky or a straight whisky. And how about the vermouth? Would you like it to be a sweet one, or a middle-dry one or a dry one? And what's your favorite proportion? There are four possible proportions, don't you know! A fifty-fifty proportion, a sixty-forty proportion, a seventy-five-twenty-five proportion, an eighty-twenty proportion. And do not overlook the existence of the bitters. What should it be? Just a dash or a couple of dashes? And finally, the most important thing of all: What's your brand? The brand of the whisky, the brand of the vermouth, the brand of the bitters?

You hate to be "fussy," you say? Well, well! You ought to take a trip to Europe sometime, and watch an average Englishman in the act of ordering a whisky-and-soda, or an average Frenchman in the act of choosing a bottle of red wine. "I am not an Englishman or a Frenchman," you remind me. "I am an American." So I gathered, my friend. But then be fair and don't blaspheme the bar-man because your Manhattan was too sweet or too dry. In either case the fault is yours. Your stomach, accustomed to a certain brand and to a certain proportion, is bound to resent a wrong brand and a wrong proportion as strenuously as a neck, size sixteen, would resent a shirt, size fourteen.

Once in a while—too often, in fact—I hear my men-friends discuss the various bars and restaurants. According to them, only a few places in New York serve "decent liquor." Stuff and nonsense! There is nothing wrong with the bars and the restaurants, only with their customers. A man who knows how to order his drink can walk into any bar in any city in the United States and get what he wants. But a creature who insists on mumbling, "Make mine a ————" won't get a decent cocktail in the most exclusive bar in the world, least of all in his own house. For if the truth were to be known, the very worst drinks are being served not in bars and restaurants, but in private houses. Why? Because for some mysterious reason, the nature of which escapes me, every citizen of the United States imagines that he or she knows all there is to be known about the fine art of mixing a cocktail. He doesn't know a thing, of course, and neither does she; but the same boy or girl who swears that nobody could excel his or her mother when it comes to making pies, invariably grows up to be a champion cocktail mixer.

"If you want to taste the best Martini you ever tasted in your life, you must come to our house."

Whenever I hear that ominous phrase, my heart sinks. Out of every thousand of enthusiastic hosts who insist that their friends should taste their homemade Martinis, hardly five know the elementary rules of cocktail-making. What are those rules? Are they simple? Exceedingly so. Do they involve a heavy expense? Not at all, not a cent more than you were prepared to spend.

Rule Number One has to do with that old enemy of all cocktails, the huge cocktail-shaker made of silver or some other metal. If you can't afford to buy a bar glass, use a highball glass, use any tall glass you have; but I never use a cocktail shaker. In the first place, no matter how often you clean it, I find it gives a certain metallic by-taste to your cocktail. In the second place, just because it is called a "cocktail-*shaker*," you will be tempted to shake it. And—this is Rule Number Two—you should never shake a cocktail containing vermouth among its ingredients. The Martini, the Manhattan and the Bronx should be *stirred* with a spoon, but never, never shaken. You do shake the Daiquiri, the Side-Car, and all other cocktails containing this or that fruit-juice; but I find they resent the touch of a metal, any metal, be it even solid gold.

Rule Number Three, while widely known, is usually ignored by the lazy hosts intent on making the humble ice do their work for them: Never mix more cocktails than there are people present. When and if you decide to offer your guests "another round," make it then, but not beforehand. Do not let the ice melt. You promised your guests a cocktail, so why pour a glassful of colored ice-water down their unsuspecting throats? I cannot overemphasize the importance of this rule. Most of the so-called "big" cocktail parties are horrible, not because they are big, but because the people who give them don't want to be "bothered," and they therefore make a barrel of cocktails beforehand.

Rule Number Four is almost too elementary to be discussed before an audience of grown-up people, but I know thousands and thousands of hosts—and hostesses too—who go out of their way to break it. Rule Number Four has to do with your cocktail glasses. You must wash them carefully and freeze *(Please turn to page 97)*

WHAT'S IN A COCKTAIL? A LOT, JUDGING BY THESE PHOTOGRAPHS. ELSA MAXWELL REFLECTS A VARIETY OF EMOTIONS WHILE TASTING DIFFERENT COCKTAILS.

NIGHT PORTERS

IT was half a café, half a grocery.
A crowded counter was set with ham, pressed beef, cheeses and sausages. A bar with stools along it was embellished at either end with a vast urn. A hand-painted notice on the wall proclaimed the readiness of the management to serve "Any meal at any hour." Its relatively prosperous existence was due, however, less to the industry of its proprietor or the merits of its fare than to a happy accident of locality. Standing in a side-street between Knightsbridge and Piccadilly in the center of a shopping and residential district, its red and yellow signboard was the most prominent object at the junction of seven bus-routes.

At six o'clock on a June morning that heralded the continuance of a heat-wave, a short, dingily dressed man in late middle age, with tired eyes, a bald head and a walrus mustache, shuffled across its linoleum-covered floor. He was the night porter at a hotel and it was his habit to drop in every morning for a cup of coffee before catching the bus to his home in Battersea.

Across the counter a young man in full evening dress was lolling limply. He was in the early twenties. He was tall and, in a weak way, handsome. His thick wavy hair was ruffled across a high, damp forehead. A fresh clear-skinned complexion was darkened with the beginnings of a beard. There was a white smear on the shoulder of his coat. His eyes were red and tired. He was brandishing an evening paper. "If only I knew what I'd be reading there in ten hours' time!" he said.

He was pointing to the "Stop Press" column. He had, it appeared, put ten pounds each way on Falcon, a thirty-to-one chance in the Newbury Cup. He was talking in a thick, toneless voice, with a labored, truculent insistence.

"It's not just a question of four hundred pounds. It's what four hundred pounds can buy me at this moment. Happiness: my one chance for happiness."

The night porter took one look at him. He was not interested. He had seen a number of young men like that. The symptoms were easy to diagnose: steady drinking over several hours. The boy was sobering up now, or rather he was putting a thin crust over the night's excesses. At the moment he might think he was all right. For two hours he might continue to think he was all right. But sooner or later the crust would break. There'd be only one way then of holding himself together: another drink, a succession of other drinks.

"In ten hours' time," the youth was continuing, "my fate will be written in that column."

He elaborated the point with the insistence of a drink-dazed man.

But the night porter had ceased to listen. He was tired. He wanted to get home quickly, to his day-long sleep.

THE young man walked out into the cool bright morning. Across the street was a high barrack-like structure. He lifted his eyes to the eighth story, the sixth window from the left. She was there, behind those curtains, sleeping quietly.

For five, six, seven hours she would lie there, resting, while he carried on his day's routine: hurrying northward to the house in Highgate where his parents lived; changing, bathing, shaving, making conversation at breakfast with his parents; returning to London to his Holborn office, to work which would be interrupted every seventh minute by the screeching telephone. To problems of copy, space-rights, the demands of clients; to the incessant rush of detail that harassed an ad-

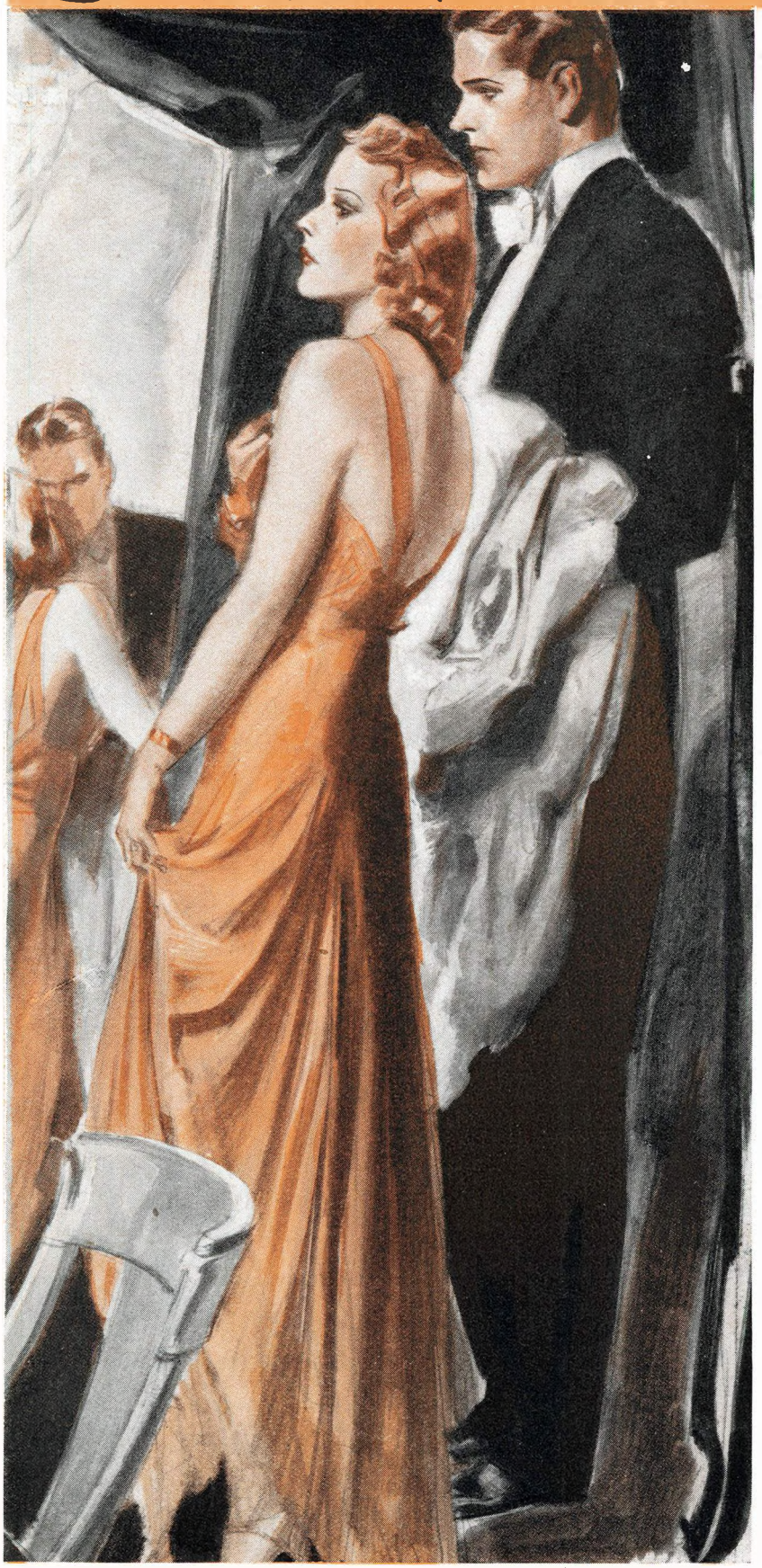
THE HEAD-WAITER'S DEFERENCE ANNOYED HIM—BECAUSE THAT

And probably they think more of it than a young man who

SEE LIFE

by ALEC WAUGH

Illustrated by JOHN LA GATTA



DEFERENCE WAS PAID IN PART TO HER HUSBAND'S PROMINENCE.

vertising agent; concentrating, or rather trying to concentrate, upon that rush, when his head throbbed, his eyes ached, when every nerve and muscle would be clamoring for a moment's pause; when every instinct of heart and sense would be turning toward that curtained window; when each screech of the telephone would start the thought, "That may be she."

Wearily he lifted his hand across his eyes: it had lain against her shoulder as they danced; it was scented, with mignonette. . . .

It was close on seven before he stood outside his parents' house. The sun was high; the sky was cloudless; the air fresh and cool. The empty street had a clean untarnished look matching the bright green of the trees that flanked it. How dignified it looked, how formal! The red brick row of houses, the solid Queen Anne line of door and window. So calm, so placid, so assured.

On the hall table was a single letter—a bill from the Union Motor Company: £2.17.6. That day at Datchet. How long ago *that* seemed!

He climbed slowly to his room. A soft collar lay crumpled by the mirror. How happy he had been when he tossed it there, hoping so much of the evening, of the long stretch of hours that lay ahead!

In a series of pictures the evening passed before him:

Stella in her drawing-room, cool and gracious, in soft chiffon. "So that I can wear my aquamarines." Stella mixing him a cocktail, bending over the glass-paneled walnut cabinet: her reflection in the Venetian mirror, her blonde slim grace, the white drawing-room that was her background.

A SERIES of pictures: Stella in the doorway of the Ritz. The head-waiter's deference, which half flattered, half annoyed him—annoyed him because that deference was paid in part to her husband's prominence: Wife of a shipping magnate.

Their corner table. The band playing, "These Foolish Things." Stella jumping to her feet. "Even if the omelette does get cold, we must dance this."

Stella in his arms again. The scent of mignonette. The release of feeling, words tumbling upon words. Stella's slow smile, her fingers' pressure upon his. "It's nice of you to feel like that about me."

The wine-waiter taking final orders. The wine-waiter collecting glasses. Stella rising to her feet. "I suppose I must be going back." His eager protestations. "But the night's young. Let's go somewhere else."

They went to the Tabarin.

They had to go somewhere like the Tabarin. He had no flat. She would never let him stay for more than a few minutes at her apartment. It looked bad, she said. Servants talked; she must consider her reputation. There was no alternative to the Tabarin.

If only they hadn't had to go there. If only they could have gone somewhere quiet, where they could have sat and talked.

Everything from that moment had started going wrong.

That friend of Stella's coming over, asking when her husband would be back, with Stella answering: "I'm not certain—but quite soon, I hope. I'm trying to persuade him to come back by air."

The reminder of what he wanted to forget: that soon her husband would be home, that only a few weeks remained—weeks which he was wasting.

has the misfortune of being in love with a married woman.

That sense of waste had jarred him into action. He began to argue, to protest, to plead. "It's more than I can stand. Being with you, and not really with you. I can't stand it. Can't you come away with me? Just for a day or two." An argument that had grown fiercer, tenser, more hysterical, with Stella trying to change the subject: "But it's impossible—you must see that. My reputation. . . . I'd be certain to be seen." With himself refusing to change the subject, coming back to the same point again, filling and refilling his glass from the bottle that by law he'd been compelled to order, since the Tabarin was a bottle-party night-club: arguing more and more hysterically till finally Stella had risen to her feet, interrupting him in the middle of a sentence: "It's late. I must go home."

He'd protested. It was quite early still, he'd said. "Look at your watch," she'd answered. It was after five. How long had they been there? Since one: four hours of arguing, of recrimination. She'd been furious. Of course she had been. But it wasn't his fault, not really. If only he had a flat! It would be different if he had a flat.

Four hundred pounds—he could buy himself a flat with that. If only Falcon were to come home first! In ten hours' time he'd know. Everything might be different then. In ten hours' time his fate would be written in a Stop Press column.

With his mind's eyes he read the placard: "Newbury Cup Result." With his mind's eyes he read the Stop Press column. At the head of the blurred list, Falcon.

Would he really read that there? If only he *could.*

HIS parents had been at the table some time, when he came down to breakfast. The dining-room faced south; it was a high room, with family portraits in dull gilt frames. The sun shone on a bowl of roses, on a long, silver-laden sideboard.

His father was progressing slowly through a large plate of scrambled eggs. The *Times* lay open by his plate, at the cricket page. He was wearing a gray flannel suit. A treasury official, he had retired several months earlier. Whenever the sun shone, he went to Lord's, to sit with old cronies in the pavilion, and argue how the game had deteriorated since the days of Ranji.

A letter was propped against his father's teacup. It was from his married daughter. It contained, as her letters invariably did, a request for money. During four years of marriage, her husband had had eight different jobs, not one of which had lasted for more than seven weeks.

His father and mother were discussing the problem in the amicably uncontentious manner of those whose points of view have grown so identical with time that conversation becomes soliloquy.

"It really is disgraceful," his father was maintaining. "We shall have to send it her, of course, but Marshall must be made to realize that this kind of thing can't go on: he must find a proper, settled job."

The son made no comment. He had argued that point so often with his father, to such little purpose. His father would not realize that the world had changed since he was twenty, that unless you got into something solid from the start, you wandered inevitably as Marshall had, from one unsatisfactory occupation to another. He himself had had the luck to get into this advertising business directly he left school. But if he had to look for a job now, heaven knew how he would manage. A quarter of his contemporaries were frittering away their time on various half-commission rackets.

"We shall have to be firm with Marshall," his father was continuing. "I've a good mind to insist that he and Muriel live here until he is suitably employed. I don't see why he should enjoy a home of his own until he's earned it. As it is, he has all the privileges of marriage, with none of its responsibilities."

Again the son made no comment. It was all very well for his father to talk like that. But this was 1937, not 1887. You couldn't talk that way now about privileges and responsibilities, of things that had been earned and things that hadn't been earned, at a time when it wasn't only miners that were unemployed. The white-collar class was in the same position. There just wasn't enough work for everyone.

But he couldn't be bothered to fight Marshall's battles. Not now, when his head was throbbing, throbbing. . . .

He poured himself out some coffee. It was hot and black. It steadied him. He took some toast and crumbled it. His mother watched him with concern. "Darling boy, you must have something more. You can't start the day on that. Wouldn't you like a boiled egg, some cold ham, or something?"

He shook his head. The very idea of food made him feel sick. He watched his father finish his high-piled plate of eggs. How the Victorian breakfast symbolized the whole Victorian world: a solid world where you started the day with calm nerves and a hearty appetite, where you had a settled job, that you worked at steadily without fear of losing it: where you retired at sixty and spent long tranquil days at Lord's: a world in which your life was as clear-cut personally as it was professionally: where there were two kinds of women, your family's and the other kind, so you knew exactly where you stood with either, so that when you married, it was to some one who'd see eye to eye with you, with whom you could plan a future. That was his father's world.

But it wasn't his—or Marshall's. Today you lived upon your nerves, in a "headline" atmosphere of alternating booms and slumps, with bankruptcy and divorce matters of everyday occurrence: where you no more knew where you stood in your relations with a woman than you did in your relations with an office. A world in which there was no peace of mind or spirit, when half the time your head was throbbing, throbbing. . . .

Throbbing so fiercely that on his way to Holborn he nearly fainted. The noise of the Tube, the heat, the swaying from a strap, the jolts at every station. No, it was no good. He couldn't go through a day like this. He'd have to have something to pull him around.

He leaned against a counter. "An Amber Moon pick-me-up," he said. . . .

On his desk was a high pile of letters. He read them mechanical-

ly, sorting out those that needed immediate answers. There was one from a cigarette company. They were planning a new publicity campaign. They invited suggestions and an estimate. They were among the firm's most valued clients. They were the most fussy too. He'd have to give this a lot of thought, real thought.

The telephone began to ring. As he lifted the receiver, his eye fell upon the clock in front of him: twenty-five to ten. How many times would he have to lift the receiver before he heard that slow voice with the unexpected stammer?

Slowly the minute-hand went round—quarter to ten—five past. The paper was still blank in front of him. His hand was shaking. His head was throbbing. The effect of the pick-me-up was wearing off. The hair of the dog: that was what he needed. But the pubs wouldn't be open for ninety minutes.

The minute-hand went round. Quarter past ten, half past—twenty to eleven. How long had she been asleep—four hours, four and a half hours? For two hours at least, he could not expect to hear from her. Two hours of suspense. In what mood would she awake? Would she be angry still?

Inside his wallet was a photo. cut from the *Bystander:* "Among those at Aintree, the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Rauforth." She was in a vast frieze coat, hands driven deep into its pockets, collar turned high and wide about her ears; only her profile showed, the clear-cut line of nose and mouth. An eighth of an inch, not more. Absurd that an eighth of an inch could make one's heart beat that way.

Beside the photograph were the half-dozen notes she had written him: hastily scrawled notes on diversely addressed stationery—clubs, hotels, or other people's houses. Three or four lines in a minute back-sloping hand. Notes of thanks for this present and for that. *"Darling—such an angelic lighter! How sweet of you! Will you be ringing me tomorrow?"* Only one of them had the least personal flicker. The very first letter she'd ever written him, sent round by hand after that first evening they'd gone out together. *"Please, please tell me I'm forgiven. I was vile, I know, but since jealousy made me that, you'll forgive me, won't you?"* How his heart had bounded when he read that note! With what eagerness he'd rung her up.

He stared at the note as though it were an amulet, as though it were proof that she could be made to care. If circumstances were only just a little different—if he had a flat! Behind closed lids he visualized the flat that Falcon's victory could buy for him: a warm and quiet flat, in Chelsea, with a view across the river: soft lights, thick carpets, deep many-cushioned chairs, a radio. It would, it could be different there. Detail by detail he built up the picture—in a daze, the paper blank beneath his hand.

His reverie was abruptly broken. The telephone again. His chief, wanting to see him in his office.

It was the first time he had been summoned there this week. The old boy *would* choose a day like this!

There was a stern look on his chief's face. He handed him a letter. "Explain that, please," he said.

He looked at the letter, puzzled. It was a letter which he himself had written, a week back. It concerned the campaign to push a new brand of cigarette. It was a letter over the phrasing of which he had taken special care. He read it over. It seemed all right.

"Is there nothing that strikes you as odd about that letter?"

He shook his head.

"Look at the address."

He turned to the foot of the letter, to the address there. Then he understood. He had sent it to the wrong people—to this particular firm's most ruthless rivals. He stared blankly. How on earth could he have made so incredible an error? He looked at the date. The fourth of June, a Friday. What could he remember of that Friday—nothing but the evening, how he and Stella had driven out to Datchet. The morning? A blank—waiting by the telephone, and wondering if she would go or not.

"You realize the consequences of this?" his chief was asking.

He nodded. He knew that all right.

"Then you won't be surprised at my having been forced to write a letter to our client that begins: 'Gentlemen, I cannot apologize enough for the mistake that has been made. The young man responsible for it is no longer in our employ.'"

"YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GET OFF SCOT FREE.... YOUR GOOD NAME—THAT'S THE PRICE!"

AGAIN the blank sheet of paper was beneath his hand. At his side were the two piles of letters. The day-by-day calendar confronted him. Thursday, June the tenth.

On Monday the fourteenth another person would be at this desk. While he, where would he be? In the same fix as Marshall.

He bent his head forward in his hands. They were hot and throbbing like his head. The effect of the pick-me-up had worn completely off. . . . The hair of the dog. There *was* no other remedy.

"I'm going," he said to the man at the next desk. "My club will find me."

In London the word *Club* is in the eyes of the law a generic label for institutions widely dissimilar. The same drink-laws control each. Two kinds of club only can afford to break them: the completely disreputable club that through extensive bribery achieves a quick profit and a get-away, and the completely respectable club whose respectability renders it immune from scrutiny. This club was the latter kind. His order of a Horse's Neck was taken as calmly as though he had asked for a bromo-seltzer, in a drug-store.

He gulped quickly at the fizzing amber liquid, drinking fast as though it were cider and he were thirsty after a game of tennis. He shuddered, closed his eyes. Ah, but that was better! He glanced at the clock. Ten past eleven. How long was it since he'd left her? Barely five hours. That was nothing. She'd sleep for at least another hour. Yes, but ten past eleven. The morning was half over. Suppose she had an appointment of some kind? Suppose she was already up, but in a rush, without time to call. It was a danger he had not visualized. "I've got to make sure of that," he thought.

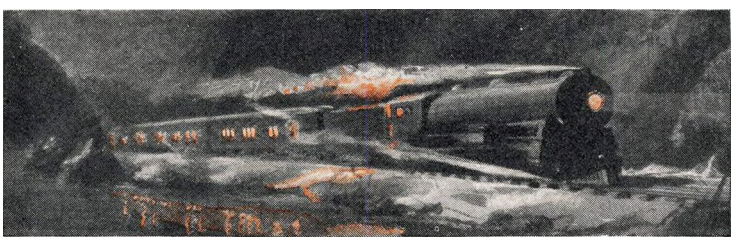
The telephone was answered by the maid.

"No sir, Mrs. Rauforth isn't awake yet," she told him.

"Oh—" He hesitated. "The point is, you see—" Again he hesitated. "This is Mr. Sterndale speaking. Do you happen to know if she has made any arrangements for this morning?" *(Please turn to page 100)*

Too Late, My Love!

by PETER PAUL O'MARA



ELISSA JERDIN was leaving her husband. She was doing it in style, as she did everything. For fifteen years Elissa's ugly, haggard, wholly charming face had appeared almost continuously on the front pages of the world's newspapers because of her habit of doing things up brown, when she did them at all. For instance, Elissa began her career by winning the three major painting prizes all in one year, where any other artist would have been content with but one. She continued on the front pages by publicly beating up a certain famous young prince. Not slapping him—beating him up. After that there was the incident of the excellent but ribald portrait of one of England's church dignitaries.

Even when she got married, she managed to be different. The ceremony itself was ordinary enough—a hurried business before a justice. But Elissa was thirty-odd at the time, and the man she married was anywhere from ten to fifteen years her junior. An unknown young man, a young man without any money, a young man who within two years of his marriage became international opera's dearly beloved Gregory Edmonds—"Tar" Edmonds, to Elissa and Elissa's friends; nobody knew quite why. He was long and good-looking and very blond, and the nickname seemed hardly appropriate, but it stuck.

And now, after five years, Elissa was leaving him. Her trunks were packed and piled high in the huge living-room of the flat near Washington Square. All her thousand cluttery intimate things were gone from the walls and the bookshelves. The tools of her profession—the canvases and brushes and easels and knives that had given the big room such an air of untidy intimacy—were packed away in odd-looking, distressingly neat tin boxes.

She gave a farewell cocktail party in the flat, and invited everybody she knew. They all came. They crowded into the dismantled rooms and mixed themselves drinks with the ingredients Elissa provided, and talked about Elissa's latest vagary with sympathy and wonder and a great deal of satisfaction. They could talk openly, because Elissa had not arrived yet; it was her invariable rule to be very late for her own parties.

"Poor Elissa!" somebody sighed. "But she must have known it couldn't last!"

Lenora Sprain shook her bleached head and snorted. "Don't you believe it! She's mad about him, and she thought she could hold him forever. Well, I always thought the whole thing was—oh, to be frank, disgusting! A woman of Elissa's age!"

Old Mrs. Janesley, sitting next to her, cackled with birdlike laughter. "You should talk, Lenora! You must be at least twenty-five years older than that new chauffeur of yours!"

Lenora reddened. "Surely there's a difference between a chauffeur and a husband!" she said defensively.

"I'm glad you realize it!" Mrs. Janesley snapped. "Of course there is! At least, I always thought there should be!"

Another woman broke the embarrassed silence. "But Mrs. Janesley, you must know why Elissa and Tar are breaking up! If you don't, who does? You know you can tell us everything in perfect confidence! It isn't as if we didn't all adore Elissa!"

Mrs. Janesley shrugged irritably. She looked like a parrot, knew it, and dressed in bright colors and flashing jewels to complete the resemblance. And now her badly painted, predatory old face wore the expression of brooding discontent that is sometimes worn by very ancient birds.

"If I did know, I wouldn't tell you!" she said grumpily. "But I don't know, so that's all right. I had them over to dinner the night before last—no, three nights ago. Everything was all right then. You know the way they are—or were: Fighting, laughing at one another—and disgustingly in love, even while they called one another names stevedores would be ashamed to use."

Lenora Sprain could not resist the opportunity to be triumphant. "I knew they were acting all the time!" she crowed. "That look in his eyes when she came into a room—I knew he must have been putting it on! But of course, she really is mad about him!"

"Listen, Lenora Sprain!" Mrs Janesley said hotly. "Just because you're a fat, spiteful old harridan and nobody loves you, is no—"

"Janesley dear! Oh, my sweet Mrs. Janesley!" a husky, lovely voice said reproachfully behind her, and Elissa stepped into the room, good old tweeds accentuating her thin, graceful body, a small hat pulled down over her brown boyish curls. "Lenora darling," she went on apologetically, "I'm sure Mrs. Janesley didn't mean to call you a fat, spiteful harridan. Did you, Janesley? Of course you didn't! After all, Lenora isn't so *awfully* fat!"

Lenora looked bewildered, muttered something, and walked across the room to join another group. Elissa pulled off her little hat and grinned down at Mrs. Janesley.

"What you need is something to cool you off!" she said in a low voice. "A Tom Collins is it!"

"Well, she got me mad!" Mrs. Janesley growled. "I don't—"

"Of course you don't! And of course she did! And I'll get you your drink. Now get unmad as quick as you can. I don't want this party to degenerate into a brawl. The people downstairs are so fussy about brawls!"

SHE strode to the refreshment table, mixed the drinks, and then turned for a moment to survey her guests. They were apparently absorbed in chatter, but she knew they were watching her, waiting for the least droop of her shoulders, the least sign of defiance in her eyes, to swoop over her with their glad sympathy.

"They're afraid of me now," she told herself. "They hope I'm only a black sheep to be welcomed back to the fold with loud bleatings, but they're afraid I might be a Rocky Mountain goat and won't take to bleatings! Poor dears, they hate me. No, I don't suppose they do, really. They just resent me."

She picked up the drinks and started across the room, then hesitated and turned back to the man who had been standing at the table by her side.

"Hi, what's-your-name! You don't happen to know if my husband has come in yet, do you?"

She asked her question in a clear voice that could be heard halfway across the room. People could not help hearing, or having heard, turning to stare in astonishment at her. Elissa appeared not to notice.

"T-T-Tar?" the man stammered. "Why—why, no, I haven't seen him!"

"Then he hasn't been here. One couldn't miss seeing the brute!"

The troubled life of a human dynamo who married a national institution

Illustrated by
BRADSHAW CRANDELL

"GET OUT!" HE ROARED. "GET THE DEVIL OUT! YOU, STUPID! ALL OF YOU! . . . . GO ON! I WANT TO TALK TO MY WIFE."

She went across the room, smiling her way through the thick groups of people, stopping occasionally to throw a friendly, or admonitory or ribald word at somebody. When she came to the couch upon which Mrs. Janesley was sitting, she gave her one of the drinks and dropped down at her side.

"Well, Elissa!" the old lady said after the first sip.

"Well, madame!"

"You've got yourself into a fine mess this time!"

Elissa shrugged. "I feel at home in a mess. And it's years since I've been in a really good one!"

THE old woman's face softened, and she leaned forward to put a hand over Elissa's. "Don't you care, my dear! You'll get over him. You'd be surprised how easy it is to get over a man!" She chuckled suddenly and withdrew her hand. "I've had one bit of satisfaction out of it, anyway. I got a chance to throw Lenora Sprain's chauffeur at her!"

"Really?" Elissa asked absently. She was watching the door. "Must have been a change for Lenora. Last I heard, she was throwing herself at her chauffeur! . . . .

"I wish he'd come!" she thought. "I wonder—oh, no, of course he'll come! If he doesn't come now, after I said he would, I'll never be able to keep them from pitying me out loud. And if they do that, I'll have to slap some one down. Whom will I slap if I have to slap someone? Lenora Sprain, of course! She has no business playing around with that nice chauffeur. He's only a child, practically, and she's a vulgar old rip. I wonder if that's what people say about me and Tar? I wonder!"

She laughed aloud. Mrs. Janesley stared at her curiously out of the sunken pits of her eyes.

"Funny, is it? What's so amusing?"

"I just thought of something funny. I—oh, damn! Here comes that Waversly wench!"

"Pretty child!" the old lady said appreciatively.

"I suppose she is," Elissa thought grudgingly. "Why, of course she is, with all that gorgeous hair and skin and everything. Like anything very young. But she won't last. No bones. Well, and what of that? She's still young, isn't she? She's still so marvelously young!"

She suppressed a sigh and stood up to greet the girl.

"Sweet child, to come! I can't think how you managed it, Kitty, at such short notice and in your first season out!"

Kitty clasped her greedy little hands together and gazed at Elissa with tragic eyes.

"I just *heard!*" she gasped. She gasped everything. "I was at the *hairdresser's,* and I heard! Elissa! Why didn't you *tell* me? Why *didn't* you call me at *once?*"

"I was too busy packing!" Elissa said with restraint, and wondered if she had really ever done anything bad enough to deserve this.

"But you should have *called* me! Elissa, what *happened?* I just can't *believe* it! And *poor* Tar! How is he taking it?"

("That's really what she wants to know," Elissa thought grimly. "Well, she can find out for herself! Nasty little Kitty!")

"What happened?" she repeated, allowing a note of weariness in her voice and sending a wrinkle of pain to decorate her forehead. "Kitty, dear, if you only knew! I don't mind Tar's drinking, if he only knew when to stop. I don't mind being beaten now and then, but not every day. I don't even mind if he does bite—have you noticed?—in the clinches; but good heavens, after five years of it, a woman of my age begins to think where is it all leading to! And it would be different if—"

But Tar came in just then and stood at the top of the little flight of steps that led down into the living-room, and she stopped talking. "I can't bear it," she thought suddenly. "If he frowns like that at me, I won't be able to go. Like Sir Launcelot after he discovered it was the Queen who lent his favorite razor to King Alfred. Or like all five Dionnes after a good spanking. . . .

"Tar!" she called clearly. "Stop looking like that! Smile at all the pretty people!"

"I WON'T SHUT UP!" TAR WAS BELLOWING. "MY WIFE'S LOCKED

He saw her then and looked more thunderous than ever. He was a huge young man with the big shoulders and chest of a singer, and the flat stomach and hips of an athlete. His very pleasant fair face did not take easily to a thunderous expression, but he wore his grimly as he stalked across the room and stood towering a head and a half above his wife.

"Didn't you hear me, oaf?" she asked grimly. "Smile!"

He glowered defiantly around the room. For a moment, everybody seemed almost to shrink away from him, and then Kitty Waversly recovered and gushed forward to greet him.

"Tar Edmonds, your wife's just been saying the most *terrible* things about you! But she was joking, *weren't* you, Elissa? I just *know* you were! *Tar* wouldn't be like that, *would* you, Tar?"

Tar was a baritone, and when he let his voice go, he could shake the top balcony of the opera house. He let it go now.

"Get out!" he roared. "Get the devil out!" He pointed an accusing finger at Kitty. "You, stupid! All of you! Go on, get out!"

For a moment, everybody stared at him in consternation; but there was something about the way he heaved his shoulders that broke the spell. Kitty was the first to go. She gave a little scared giggle and trotted to the door, barely sparing time for one glance over her shoulder at Tar's gigantic rage. Other people followed her example as quickly as they could. Only old Mrs. Janesley had enough courage to come and say good-by to Elissa.

"You too, old witch!" Tar bellowed at her. "Out! I want to talk to my wife!"

"Don't be rude, young man!" the old woman told him tartly. "Did you say witch? Well, it might have been worse!" She pecked at Elissa's cheek, and then stood looking up at Tar. Abruptly, she chuckled. "Boo!" she said, and trotted out.

SHE was the last to leave; Tar stared after her in consternation, all the thunder gone out of him. Elissa began to laugh. Laughter started somewhere inside her and bubbled out, heavy and golden and warm in the smoke-filled air. She collapsed helplessly on the couch and blinked streaming eyes at Tar, upon whose forehead the clouds were again beginning to gather.

"Boo!" she gasped. "Couldn't even scare an old lady! Boo!"

Tar started to shout, and then changed his mind and sat down next to her, grasping her hand away from her aching side.

"Elissa!" he demanded. "Are you really going away? Really?"

"Really!"

"But why? Why, Lisa?"

She looked at his troubled, bewildered, beloved face, and her heart sickened. "I know you so well!" she thought. "I know the crook of your elbow and the hollow of your shoulder and the sound of your breathing and the beat of your heart! I know what you are going to say before you say it. Oh, Tar, sweet Tar, dear, darling Tar!"

"Why?" she asked, letting the last bubble of laughter escape. "Why? Maybe I've had enough of being married. Maybe I'm a congenitally polyandrous woman!"

"You're not!" Tar insisted fiercely. "That's not true! Please, you must tell me, Lisa! I must know why you're leaving! I must!"

("Don't let me start explaining, God!" she prayed fervently. "If I start that, I'm lost. I'll say, 'Tar, darling, look—' and 'Tar, dearest, listen—' and he'll tell me I'm a fool, and he'll kiss me and I'll stay. And I mustn't stay! I mustn't!")

"But there isn't any reason, Tar!" she said gently. "I've been here long enough. Now I'm going. I told you when I married you I wasn't a permanent person!"

"But you are! You are! My God, I haven't lived with you for five years without finding out something about you, have I?" *(Please turn to page 98)*

ME OUT, AND I SHALL STAY HERE TILL SHE LETS ME IN."

Glorious Nerve

The Story So Far:

MANY people thought Lisa Sylvester looked lovelier than the bride. She came back down the aisle looking like a procession of one in spite of the fact that Felix Tufts was the accompanying usher; and everyone wondered if he would be her next accomplishment. Of course she must want him. He had all that money, and there was nothing really against him. . . .

Afterward, about two o'clock, when the dowagers had all gone home, the gist of the wedding-party and a few hangers-on gathered down in the game-room, where there was a temporary bar at one end. They began to rally Lisa about the bridal bouquet, which she had happened to catch.

"You're the next bride, Lisa. And we're all for you."

Lisa rarely said the wrong thing, for she had only kept her place in this social world by being careful. Eight years before, her mother had eloped with a lover; Lisa now lived alone with her father, who drank a great deal. Tonight, however, she was unusually careless.

"For me and what else?" she asked.

"I mean who's the man? What man do you want to marry? Take your pick."

She gave them an inspection: Felix, a little damaged by dancing and drinking; Joe Jones, close to her, stocky and noisy. Sammy —the rest of them.

"Well, if you really feel that I have to get married on account of not wasting the bouquet and ruining a fine old superstition, I think I'll marry Carl."

They had expected her to say something bright. But this just missed. Carlton Hadleigh was right there, on the other side of the room. He said: "Thanks very much." Carl was a mining engineer, very successful, home for this wedding at which his young sister Jocelyn had been a bridesmaid. He was not paying much attention to the young things around him, because he was preoccupied with a private love-affair which was going badly—a love-affair with Marie, the wife of a famous concert pianist.

"When's it coming off, Lisa?" asked some one.

"Oh, give me a year."

"You've got a glorious nerve!" exclaimed Joe Jones.

Two things happened to Lisa shortly afterward: She came home from a party to find her father lying dead on the floor: his heart had at last collapsed under too much alcohol. And after a difficult period of readjustment, made more trying by the fact that she had been dropped by most of her social circle, she had a stroke of luck: her photograph won the prize offered in an advertising contest, and with this start she developed into a success as an independent business woman. . . .

Carl Hadleigh came home again for his sister Jocelyn's coming-out party—which ended in something close to tragedy. For Jocelyn had fallen in love with a queer artist, Peter Bentlen, and had been meeting him secretly. She even left her own party, late, to see him. She did not return; Carl searching frantically for her, stopped with Lisa at her apartment to use the telephone—and found Jocelyn there. Bentlen had jilted her; and the heartbroken

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Two people who believe in living dangerously meet each other halfway in this glamorous story.

by MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

Illustrated by R. F. SCHABELITZ

"THE LUCKY THING IS THAT PETER HAS LEFT TOWN," SAID LISA. . . . JOCELYN WAS ASLEEP AT LAST.

girl, unable to face questions at home, had sought sanctuary with the only person she thought would understand. *(The story continues in detail:)*

"THE lucky thing is that Peter Bentlen has left town," said Lisa in an undertone.

Jocelyn was asleep at last, and Carl and Lisa were about to say good night. Or good morning; they had lost track of time in these last difficult hours. It had been necessary to have a doctor called in to put Jocelyn to sleep. Mrs. Hadleigh had also come, when Carl told her where her daughter had been found; but she had spent a bad half-hour in the hall below, being told by the doctor as well as Carl that she must not try to see or talk to Jocelyn now. If the girl was disturbed or moved, or those strained nerves were pressed upon even a little more, there might be a complete mental breakdown. They were all afraid of that as Jocelyn's repetitions of defeat and misery had gone on and on. But now she was quiet.

"I'd like to bring him back and kill him," answered Carl.

"I don't know that you're being fair. He may have cared for her too, you know."

"There aren't any signs of it!"

"His going away, even brutally like that, was a sign of it, I think. He knew she couldn't fit into his life or his ideas. And he wouldn't fit into hers, certainly. He knew there wasn't a chance for happiness. It may have taken courage to clear out, more courage than you think."

"Why didn't he leave her alone in the first place?"

"Because men *don't* leave women alone, do they?"

That was a question he couldn't answer. He had no right to answer it. He wasn't the man. He remembered that he had seen Jocelyn's face across the dinner-table the other day and been reminded of Marie. That was why, of course. She was in an emotional confusion. What a fool he had been then not to know what was the matter with the child!

But she was a child; he said that aloud. Lisa replied:

"Children aren't always spared. Jocelyn's eighteen. I was fifteen when I found out that the relations between men and women can be dreadful. And I didn't hear anything about love. At least she's been hearing that for weeks."

"Tough," he muttered.

"Listen," she said. "I'll tell you something, and you must make your mother feel it. I'll tell you, because I know how Jocelyn will feel, and I don't think your mother will know. Don't let them shame Jocelyn, and don't let them pity her. They mustn't avoid the subject of what's happened while she's around, and then talk about it just after she leaves the room or before she comes in. She'll know like a shot if they do that, and then she'll play up to it. She won't be frank. When Jocelyn's strong enough, if your mother could only talk about what's happened as if it weren't total disgrace, and sin and—well, she'll save Jocelyn from herself that way. And I think it's the only way she can do it. I was so sorry for your mother."

"What she owes to you!" answered Carl. "If Jossy hadn't had you to come to, tonight, where would she have gone?"

"Don't let's think of it. Only they must take care of her now."

"I shall never forget," he said simply.

SHE thought he was speaking of gratitude for saving a situation, and he was. But beyond that, he was remembering seeing Lisa take his young sister in her arms—and they had been the arms of a tender woman.

"There's nothing to remember," said Lisa; "and I haven't even told you yet how grand you were to steer me around at the party tonight. I suppose it may have put me back on the map."

"You are the map," he told her. "You're the globe. Don't talk nonsense. When shall I see you again?"

"I don't know. The doctor's right. Jocelyn ought to be whisked out of earshot until she can hang on to herself. She ought to be taken away immediately. I hope you'll see that it's done."

"I'll go with her, if it's necessary."

"And soon. Tomorrow or next day, if you can. Carl, I hope you are going to be happy yourself."

He could find no answer except: "You're a wonderful girl."

"Now you sound like the advertisements that run my picture."

He tried to laugh, but it didn't amount to much as a sound of amusement. He went back through a dreary dawn to his father's house, which was scattered with remnants of the party. Several long-distance calls had come for him. He was notified to call Operator 19 whenever he might come in. But looking at his watch, he decided against that. . . .

In the morning order was reëstablished in the Hadleigh household. It wasn't just that the carpets were quickly cleaned and every careless cigarette-ash brushed up, and forgotten gloves and powder-cases put in neat heaps in the downstairs dressing-room. But even anguish had given way to social effectiveness by ten o'clock. Deeply ringed though her eyes were, Mrs. Hadleigh took command of the situation. She made a point of not denying herself to telephone-calls.

Carl heard one of them as he came out from breakfast.

"Yes," Mrs. Hadleigh was saying, "Jocelyn was simply exhausted. She had a wonderful time, but I really thought it was better for her to slip off to bed about three o'clock. You know we have to protect these girls from themselves. They don't know when to stop, do they?"

She listened, smiled as if taking breath, and went on:

"Yes, didn't she look lovely last night? But she's so high-strung that I'm not going to let her have a full winter season. No, they shouldn't be allowed to wear themselves out at that age. And Jocelyn has been going right along with her art study. I talked it over with Mr. Hadleigh this morning, and made up my mind that I'm going to run down to Florida for a little holiday and take Jocelyn along."

There was another short pause.

"Oh, I think we'll go at once," said Mrs. Hadleigh. "I've had it in mind for some time. I'll be glad to get away from cold weather. And since Carl has to go back to his business so soon, I thought we might go along with him. He and Jocelyn enjoy each other so much."

"REMARKABLY done," commented Carl as she put down the telephone.

He thought of what a barricade of protection it threw around Jocelyn. Her mother was taking gossip by the forelock and so preventing the harm it might do. A girl of Jocelyn's age needed some one like that to help her out. He remembered what Lisa had said last night, that at fifteen she had faced the cruelties between men and women, and the concentrated gossip of all these older people, quite alone. It must have been awful. It wasn't fair.

Mrs. Hadleigh said: "I think it can all be covered up. No one need know anything about it."

Her reassurance was for her husband, who was walking anxiously up and down.

"It will take tact," she went on; "but I am sure that we can manage it. And we must help poor little Jocelyn to forget all about it. She must be made to feel that it never happened. I think that if the incident is never mentioned, and if we completely ignore it, it will be best."

"Quite right," said Mr. Hadleigh. "Keep her from dwelling on it. Never speak of it in her presence."

"I wouldn't do that," said Carl. "She'll close in on herself if you do. If I were you, Mother, I'd try to make her believe that it wasn't so awful. That maybe it was natural."

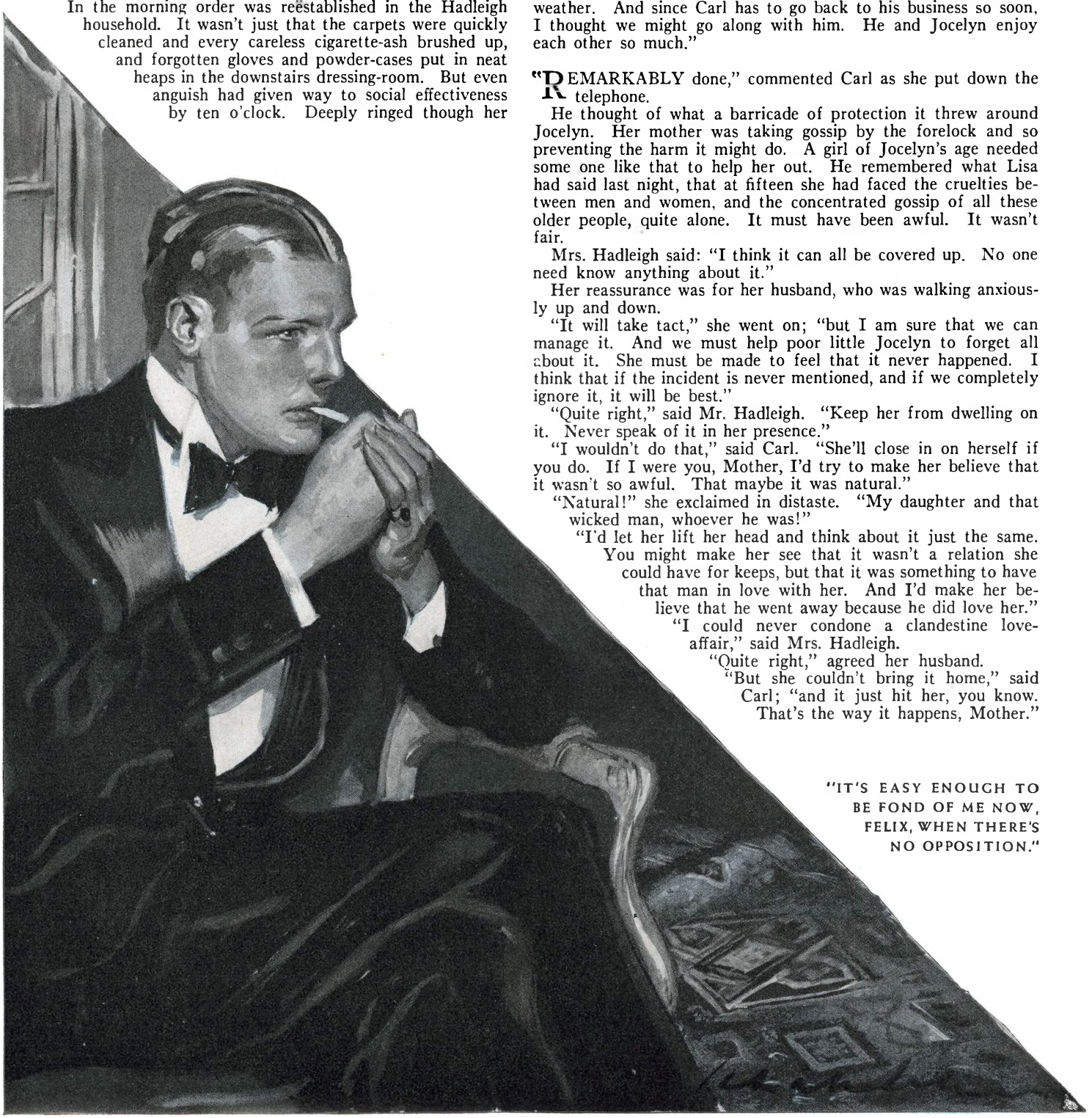
"Natural!" she exclaimed in distaste. "My daughter and that wicked man, whoever he was!"

"I'd let her lift her head and think about it just the same. You might make her see that it wasn't a relation she could have for keeps, but that it was something to have that man in love with her. And I'd make her believe that he went away because he did love her."

"I could never condone a clandestine love-affair," said Mrs. Hadleigh.

"Quite right," agreed her husband.

"But she couldn't bring it home," said Carl; "and it just hit her, you know. That's the way it happens, Mother."



"IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO BE FOND OF ME NOW, FELIX, WHEN THERE'S NO OPPOSITION."

She sat very quietly. Carl had never spoken like that before. He had never hinted at anything that might go on in his life and not be a matter for family discussion. Mrs. Hadleigh was no fool. She knew that she was more in her son's confidence, at that minute, than she had ever been. But it tore her heart to think of what he might have been through. So there were things he too couldn't bring home!

"Well, I want to say one thing," Mr. Hadleigh remarked, for he was a little out of all this: "I feel we've done an injustice to the Sylvester girl. She proved herself an excellent friend to Jocelyn. In fairness we must admit that. She may be a little—well, modern; but she's sound. I suppose she can be relied on not to talk?"

"She won't talk," answered Carl. "She knows too much about talk."

Mr. Hadleigh hemmed.

"Before John Sylvester took to drinking and got so involved in his private affairs, he was quite a friend of mine—in the early days. If you think there's anything we can do for his daughter to show that we appreciate her friendship, I'd like to do it."

"I wouldn't make up a purse," said Carl dryly; "but you might give her a smile next time you meet her in a reception-line."

That was his only comment on the party of the night before. Mrs. Hadleigh winced. She had remembered that part of it at a certain hour about dawn. Carl had been right about the girl, in standing up for her. If he was really interested, what was wrong with it? She didn't quite say to herself that it would keep everything in the family, and destroy her feeling that Carl was as adrift as Jocelyn.

"I'll try to make up for that, Carl," she said.

"And now the sooner we get Jocelyn off, the better," Mr. Hadleigh planned. "It will be very satisfactory if you can take them as far as Chicago, Carl. If the doctor says it's all right. I thought I'd tell them to get a couple of drawing-rooms on the Limited tomorrow night."

"Fine," agreed Carl, not too cheerfully. But he had no excuse to linger. He had said all along that the latest he could stay would be a couple of days after Jocelyn's party.

WHEN he put his mother and sister on the train for Florida, in the Chicago station, Carl felt that Jocelyn was safe. He had talked to her about it a little as they traveled.

"I'd like to know a little more about this man," he had begun.

Jocelyn's face quivered.

"You all think he was a tramp," she said.

"No. I don't. Or you wouldn't have noticed him."

"And he did care for me!"

"That's probably why he went away," said Carl. "Had you thought of that?"

"That's what he told me he ought to do—again and again," Jocelyn admitted, and burst into tears. But they were easier tears now. They didn't seem wrung out of her spirit.

"I believe that if that fellow had thought he could be of any good to you, he'd have stayed right where he was," said Carl. "You know, Jocelyn, there are times when a man has to get out of a woman's life, no matter how it hurts when it's done. There are times when he can look down the road he's got to go, and see that it isn't any place to take a certain woman. They can't go along together. And sometimes it doesn't mean that it isn't the best thing in the world for both of them to have known each other."

"It was good for me!"

"Why, sure it was. I could tell when I first met you at Christmas that you weren't just a raw kid any more. I tell you what will happen: Some day you'll see some of this man's pictures in a famous gallery somewhere, and you'll see yourself right in them."

"He did a wonderful picture of me. I didn't tell Mother. He didn't want her to buy it."

"They'll probably buy it for the Metropolitan," said Carl.

"Oh, Carl, you are so grand."

He could tell as he watched her now and then after that talk that she had started to make a romantic future out of it. She was probably imagining herself in a picture gallery looking at a wonderful picture of herself, done from memory. "Well—maybe," thought Carl skeptically. "But by the time she begins to doubt that will happen, she won't be aching any more."

He was further reassured. Once Jocelyn turned to her mother and asked if anybody had remembered to put in her yellow bathing-suit.

He took Mrs. Hadleigh and Jocelyn from train to train; and after they were gone, went to his club and looked over the mail which had come to that address. Most of it was social, and most of it uninteresting. There was also a slip, marked *(Please turn to page 105)*

The fears of the present! Is there anyone among us who is not haunted by this or that fear? The fear of growing old; the fear of losing money; the fear of losing one's job; the fear of death. In this first of a series of articles based on the observations of America's leading neurologists, we present the imaginary portrait of a woman who was afraid of growing old.

—*The Editors*

The Woman Who

IT had been a pleasant summer Long Island evening, and the dinner had gone famously. The lovely Mrs. Draforth stretched luxuriously in her silken sheets and prepared to sleep the sleep of the just and the successful. Her husband had kissed her goodnight, and a room or so away she could hear him calling the pampered golden spaniel that slept always on the foot of his bed.

The moon was at her window, and when the lights were extinguished, the brave pale glow flooded the room. Mrs. Draforth lay quiet for a long time; then she kicked the cool sheets away and walked pleasurably to the window. What a salt breeze it was, and how satisfactorily the obedient moon spread its luminous wings upon the water! The proper Mrs. Draforth slipped her nightgown from her shoulders and stood there a moment in sheer delight.

It was then, unfairly enough, that an echo of the evening returned to haunt her. There had been something that, metaphorically, had left a bad taste in her mouth, something that had made her feel insecure and a little ashamed. Mrs. Draforth frowned into the moonlight. Now she remembered. Norris Parmalee had remarked on her dress and her hair, and then he had said: "Lily, I'll swear you look like a girl of twenty." It wasn't what Norris Parmalee had said that was of any importance—she had always been a little contemptuous of Norris and indifferent to his compliments; it was something else that she did not like to face. She, Lily Draforth, had flushed with pleasure at a remark that had always before been a commonplace. She had felt warm and excited and inexplicably gay. She had stooped to accept, she now knew guiltily, a bit of empty flattery that her intelligence should have been quick to disclaim.

It was there in the moonlight that the lovely Mrs. Draforth realized for the first time that she was growing old—and that she was afraid of growing old.

Lily Driggs Draforth was one of the most phenomenal women that New York society ever knew. She was a career woman in a sense that no polite graduate of the Misses Chapin's could ever comprehend. Step by careful step, and yet audaciously, she built her own destiny, and it was the very structure which calculatingly she made of her life that in the end destroyed her.

Lily Driggs was born in a shanty on one of the most anemic cotton-patches in southern Oklahoma. Her parentage provides no answer to the riddle of her vitality and triumphant ambition. Her father was a dull emigrant from Arkansas who, so far as the record is clear, never farmed successfully anywhere; and her mother died too soon after Lily's birth to place any imprint upon her daughter. No, the answer lay elsewhere. It was as though Lily were born already armed for the conflict, and endowed with the complete blueprints for fashioning success. Even in her rickety cradle she seemed to have known that somewhere beyond the mean world of shanties and cotton-rows, there was another world more worthy to be a background for the extraordinary wit and beauty that were hers.

Lily's schooling was not entirely meager; she managed two years of high school brilliantly before she was able to escape from her father. She could not remember a time when she had not meant to get away, or when the possibility of failure ever entered her mind. She was possessed of that blind and burning ambition that consumes timidity and irresolution in its own hot flame.

LILY made her escape by a first audacious step. She met a wandering oil-driller at a neighborhood dance, and that same night asked him to marry her. Two hours later she was Mrs. Pendler. She never saw her father again. For several years Pendler and Lily followed the train of oil into a half-dozen boom fields. Sometimes they lived in a frame hotel and sometimes they lived in a tent. Pendler was good enough to her when he wasn't drinking; there was something about Lily that protected her in the rowdiest camps. Born of submerged people, accustomed to rough usage, she still carried about her an aura that kept the other shanty women at a distance, and convinced their menfolk she was made of superior stuff.

I suppose that to the casual eye she was *gauche* enough when Jeffery Draforth met her. He had come West to look after his

The names of all characters and situations used in this article deal with types, and are fictitious.

by
MILTON
MacKAYE

Photo by Ruzzie Green

NOBODY NOTICED THAT LILY TURNED WHITE AT THE NEWS THAT NORRIS PARMALEE HAD BECOME ENGAGED TO VALERIE.

Wouldn't Grow Old

father's oil interests in Oklahoma and Texas. The Draforths were Philadelphia people. Jeff had gone to Harvard, he bought his clothes in London; he was not unwelcome at the Assembly dances; and he knew a beautiful woman when he saw one. He was in his thirties, unmarried, already beginning to expand modest family riches into a great fortune.

There are a good many legends about how they met, and the legend you believed a few years ago was a matter purely of literary choice. One of the most popular stories pictured Jeff approaching the oil-driller's tent to ask for a drink of water, and finding Lily (1) washing out her husband's socks, (2) frying bacon over a gasoline stove, (3) taking a bath in a corrugated washtub. There were many versions, also, of succeeding events. The most uncharitable tale reported that Draforth, dazzled by the beauty of the Galatea of the oil-fields, promptly paid a generous price for Mr. Pendler's holdings, with an understanding that not only Mr. Pendler's holdings but Mr. Pendler's wife was included in the purchase price. And that Mrs. Pendler drove the bargain.

Whatever the truth of these stories, the fact is that after a suitable length of time young Mrs. Pendler became young Mrs. Draforth. Lily had found what she wanted, the stepping-stone to the other world. It is no tribute to Jeff's pioneering that he was able to discover beneath the anonymity of a well-washed house-dress evidences of that imponderable charm which was to carry Lily—the peasant from Oklahoma—into the citadels of society. Discovering Lily was like discovering a comet; it was not a matter of acumen or observation, but simply playing a rôle in a cosmic event. Lily was making her destiny, and Jeff fitted in. It was as inevitable, she felt, as that.

Lily knew that she knew nothing, and she wanted to learn. There was no false pride in her; she did not then, or ever, attempt to conceal her humble beginnings. Lily, I suppose, was a woman of such complete self-confidence that she was free of the smaller vanities and misgivings; their absence gave her humor and honesty and even, in those days, humility. She was not even vain about her great beauty; she accepted it.

The Draforths were in the West for several years. Lily thought of those as her "school" years; she was learning the technical minutiæ of being a lady. Jeff found himself delighting in his tutorship, smoothing her English, straightening her out on the ponderous nonsense of the knife and fork. For a time he bought her clothes; but soon, through a process of absorption and intuitive observation, she was able to do that for herself.

AT first, because of the odd circumstance of their marriage, only men came to the hotel suites they called home. That didn't disturb Lily; the truth was she didn't want to meet the women yet—she wasn't ready, and she knew it. The men were kind; they liked her straightforward questionings, her breathless interest in their answers, her occasional flash of wit. Jeff was interested to observe the gradual weeding-out of the shoddier visitors, amused at the utilitarian way she maneuvered him into bringing guests who could fill in the gaps in his own cultural knowledge. There was an artist who spent an enjoyable evening telling the beautiful woman about Renaissance painters, and actually worked out for her a program of reading on the subject. There was the young Congressman who first acquainted her with the fact there was a historical background to the now; he came often with books under his arm. And there were dozens of acquaintances from the East who went to their wives with stories of the fabulous woman Draforth had married. . . .

It was Lily who persuaded Jeff to sell a part of his holdings and buy into an English oil-company. The Draforths went abroad. Lily took England by storm.

Those were the crowded restless years just after the war, the years (as some one said later) of the Americans. Lily was rich, beautiful, amusing. Her beginnings were of no interest to anyone except in that they were picturesque. The American caste system has always been a little droll to some Englishmen, and quite incomprehensible to most. One American seems pretty much like another, out of Philadelphia or out of Kansas. You either like them, or you don't. The success of the Draforths' first parties

might have been due to the superior quality of the champagne and the unlimited quantity of it; but after that, the success all belonged to Lily. She was not only received; she became the fashion.

It was just before they came home to America to stay that Lily went to Venice and there picked up the goblet of *millefiori* glass that became her talisman. She had listened idly at first while the dealer talked. *Millefiori.* Even her stumbling Italian was equal to that. It meant "a thousand fires." A thousand fires. Lily raised the goblet in both her hands. "Why, I'm like that," she told herself in secret excitement. "A thousand fires made me, and tempered me, and produced a work of art."

In later years that goblet was always on Lily's bedside table. Maids were forbidden to touch it. Lily dusted it herself. She wanted it always with her.

LILY DRAFORTH was at her zenith as she walked to the window and watched the friendly moon encompass the water. She had achieved everything she wanted to achieve; she was, even in her own eyes, a success. And, a humble girl out of Oklahoma (but that part of the story seemed so far away that it might have happened to some one else), she had managed it for herself. The first siege of the citadels of New York society had been difficult enough, despite Jeff's riches. The old families held out stubbornly despite the legends of her charm. But when a certain prince chose the Draforths' estate as his American headquarters, even the most moth-eaten lion-hunters were forced to give in. Lily managed that. She frankly told the Prince her problem; and he, with surface solemnity but secret glee, permitted himself to be lent around only to the hostesses who admitted, intangibly, their willingness to come to terms. . . .

That night, after fifteen years of dazzling triumphs, it occurred to Lily for the first time that she might not be able to keep what she had won. She was forty-one; there was a narrow handsome wing of gray in her smooth black hair; there were patterns of faint lines beneath her eyes. She had not minded these scratchings of the surface; had told herself they added that ultimate touch of distinction only maturity brings.

But now in the light of that unchanging moon, it came to her relentlessly that she must change. She shivered; and involuntarily, out of the lost superstitions and shibboleths of childhood came a forgotten phrase: "Some one's walking over my grave." And then, as softly as if it too were an echo of her youth, Lily heard a man's voice saying: "Darling!" Half startled, half expectant, she looked into the shadows of the shrubbery below her window. A man stood there in the gentle mystery of the night, and he had a woman in his arms. His voice rose softly again. . . .

Abruptly the night seemed cold and sick and dead to Lily Draforth. She pulled her nightdress around her; she dropped heavy draperies across the window to shut out the moon. She had watched her chauffeur kissing her maid.

Lily awoke heavy-eyed and unrefreshed, she who was usually so energetic of mornings. She lay for a time with her eyes closed, determined that she would blot from mind the memory of her emotions of the night before. The door opened; her maid entered.

"Madame looks tired this morning," Julia said solicitously as she approached. "Wouldn't madame like to have me bring her breakfast to her bed?"

Lily had never spoken angrily or rudely to a servant before in her life. But somehow she could not keep back the bitter words. She had never, she said, felt better in her life. And breakfast in bed was a nasty, untidy custom. When Mrs. Draforth put rouge on her lips ten minutes later and went down to breakfast, she left an uncomprehending Julia in tears.

OTHERS MIGHT HEAR THE SOUND OF THE RUNNING FEET OF YOUTH, AND ABANDON THE STRUGGLE. BUT SHE COULD NOT.

The scene with Julia was only the first of a series of incidents which began, impalpably, to change the household. For years, despite Lily's tremendous entertaining, the household had moved with an almost arrogant smoothness; it took everything in its stride from a hunt breakfast to the scramble of a charity lawn fête. But now a kind of psychic insecurity infected the place; there were feuds among the servants, absent-mindedness, injured feelings, discontent.

Even Jeff, who seldom went to business any more, noticed it. And sometimes, puzzled, he looked questioningly at Lily in vague alarm. He seemed to feel in her a strained, feverish quality that had never been there before. And then again, when he had prepared himself to speak, he would find the same generous, calm, glittering woman of whom he was so fond, so proud.

Lily had determined that she would not think again of Norris Parmalee and his silly remark that she looked like a girl of twenty. What troubled her was that she had betrayed her pride by being pleased at something obviously untrue. She was forty-one, but she was still a great beauty—she was more than that: she was a great lady who would continue to rule by charm and personality when her looks were gone. . . . But would she? Her beauty, her vitality, her gayety—they were the tools with which she had carved out her career; and now—no, not now, but in a few years—her tools would be taken from her. Could she survive?

Lily had never known fear before. She had never had time for fear before. The will to power had been a pitiless taskmaster that gave her few moments for reflection and reverie; even those secret moments in the night watches that invite contemplation had been impressed into utilitarian duty. She was without inner resources—she had trained herself to live in a world of externals. But she could bend that world to her will. She knew that she could. Her mind was her own; she was the mistress of her thoughts. She had the wit to perceive the emptiness of flattery; she, Lily Draforth, was above it.

Lily called Norris Parmalee for tea. Jeff had gone to town, and she was a little glad. Jeff was a dear, but a man of fifty-five sometimes found a man of thirty wearing. It was quite the gayest afternoon she had had in months.

That night in her bedroom Lily picked up her Venetian goblet and studied the colored patterns buried in transparent glass. "A thousand fires," she said to herself, "a work of art." But that night she could not sleep.

THAT fall Mrs. Draforth was seen everywhere, at the important openings, at the opera, at the polo-matches in Aiken. Her dinner-parties were as matchless as ever; the crowds around her seemed greater. It was as though she were meeting a challenge to her dominance, and meeting it so that the issue might be settled once and for all. But to some of her friends her activities seemed a little frenetic, her vivacity a little strained. There were too many Parmalees and Black Fardys and Jim Naylens in her house to satisfy some of Jeff's friends; the crowd seemed to be getting younger.

And Jeff himself was beginning to protest at the continued night-clubbing. "We're overdoing it," he said, half humorously. "I can't stand the gaff."

"I can," said Mrs. Draforth, although her mirror was already telling her she couldn't. The patterns of lines beneath her eyes were deeper; her cheeks seemed suddenly pinched; her whole face a little haggard. She who once could dance till sunup without tiring, found that a little too much champagne had become necessary to preserve the illusion of pleasure. . . .

It was after a night of dancing that the illogical incident on the golf-course occurred. Lily had slept only by aid of a sedative,—

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she seemed to need sedatives often now, —and her nerves felt like little tingling wires. She was in no condition for golf, but relentlessly she drove herself from bed and into her tweeds. She and Jeff played six holes in the face of a cold wind, Jeff in his most jovial mood, she in black despair. The seventh hole was at the top of a steep rise; and Dr. Norbert Williams and Ned Custer, always slow, motioned for them to play through. Climbing the rise, she found herself panting from exertion, trickles of cold perspiration running into the nape of her neck. Almost through a haze she saw that Jeff was laughing at her.

"Too much El Morocco," he said. "You're getting too old for that sort of thing, old dear."

She struck him full across the face with her mid-iron. And then in shock and horror, she was on her knees beside him, wiping the blood from his forehead, crying desperately over and over:

"Darling! Darling! *Darling!*"

LILY was in agony that evening. Jeff sat a while on the edge of her bed and stroked her hand. He attempted to be merry about his taped forehead; he insisted stanchly that she had been entirely justified; he said that she had made the fitting reply to all unfunny jokes. But Lily knew he was bewildered. As she was bewildered! How could she explain why she had struck him, when she herself did not know? It had been a blind emotional explosion, something she could not control, something beyond volition.

She heard Jeff calling his spaniel. Could it be, she wondered, that she was sick, that she had some incurable illness? That might account for the fact that she could not sleep, that she seemed driven by an internal fever, that she was haunted, haunted by the fear of having to relinquish the power and applause she had spent her life to attain. Lying there, Lily for the first time admitted the perishable flesh she wished to deny; her body no longer belonged to her, because it would not do her bidding. She looked at her long white arms, and knew the muscles would become stringy and loose. The muscles would become stringy and the skin would yellow because Nature, the old trap-setter for breeding, didn't care any more.

Mrs. Draforth consulted Dr. Williams next day. He had witnessed the scene on the golf-course. Was it an irrational act? In detail she described her physical symptoms. She felt in her throat a constricted choking feeling which made it difficult to breathe; her heart pounded and beat irregularly; there had even been a few weeks ago, she remembered, a rather loathsome patch of eczema on one of her hands. When she had finished, the physician told her gravely that her nerves were in a dangerous state, that she must retard her pace, that perhaps the best idea would be to go away on a yachting cruise.

But of course Lily did not go. She could not yet relinquish the reins at a time when her dominance might be challenged. She knew there must be talk about the scene on the golf-course; you couldn't keep some version of such a story from going the rounds. She wondered what people were saying—she who once had been so magnificently indifferent to public opinion. Did they think she was drinking too much, that her looks were going? She found herself searching people's eyes for criticism or approval, eavesdropping on conversations, erroneously interpreting as slights casual and ordinary misunderstandings. And one day, ridiculously, embarrassingly, she had walked out of a beauty salon when an operator innocently suggested a new facial cream "positively guaranteed, madame, to rejuvenate the skin."

There grew in her an almost irresistible desire to prove her security to herself. On several occasions she invited young but mousy girls to dinner-parties, so that she, the aging woman, might have the satisfaction of concentrating male attention on herself. Her vanity could not forgive her one venture. Jeff had stayed in town for several days, preoccupied with business. Lily found herself driving her own car to town and making an unannounced visit at his office. She told herself that she wanted to make sure he renewed the insurance on the silver plate; but she knew that she really wanted to make sure that Jeff—poor, loyal Jeff—had not engaged an attractive new secretary. . . .

It was at her Christmas party that Mrs. Draforth learned that Norris Parmalee had become engaged to Valerie Woodridge. Nobody noticed that Lily turned white at the news; nobody knew that the Christmas tree ornaments were swimming before her eyes, that the blood was hammering in her temples until she could hardly hear her own voice as it uttered the polite, the proper congratulations. Valerie was one of the mousy young women whom Lily had invited to dinner; and it was at one of Lily's dinner-parties that Parmalee had met her.

Nobody guessed that Norris Parmalee was important to Lily. He was not, in himself. Even Lily, in her torment that night, understood that something was wrong with her thinking, that she was weeping in bitter anguish at the defection of a reasonably shallow and worthless young man. She did not want Norris Parmalee. She was not a woman who took lovers; she had always been loyal to Jeff and would continue to be. What she did not understand, or possibly could not admit to herself, was that she had made the capture of Parmalee a test of her power, a challenge to her career, a symbol that she was not too old for triumphs.

Others might hear the sound of the running feet of youth, and might abandon the struggle. Others might say it was natural that youth should turn to youth, sigh in private and turn their thoughts to the selection of a suitable wedding present. But she, Lily Draforth, could not, would not. The capacity to surrender was not in her character; she had no wish to acquire it. She was menaced, but unintimidated. Valerie Woodridge could not hold out against her. Calm and peace came to Lily Draforth as she decided to break off the match.

THERE is no doubt that Parmalee was dazzled by the attentions Lily showered upon him. Whereas he had been only one of a crowd of admiring courtiers, he now was bowed to as her sole escort. Even then the more realistic commentators knew that Lily's star was on the wane, but at night-clubs and restaurants her name was a password to the best table in the house, and her presence anywhere brought the newspaper photographers galloping like fire-horses.

Jeff took it all very well. Sometimes the three of them, Jeff and Lily and Parmalee, went places together. What I think Jeff objected to most were the newspaper pictures of the beautiful Mrs. Jeff Draforth and (Jeff's words) the beautiful Mr. Parmalee making a twosome at the night-clubs. But Jeff said nothing; I think he knew Lily was having her last fling.

The end came, dramatically and unmercifully, on Lily's birthday.

Only five people had been invited to dinner, and only four people had appeared when Lily, looking tired but radiant, came down the stairs. She had on a dress, Jeff noticed, that was an exact copy of one she had worn in London fifteen years before, when she had bowled over the prince. Jeff frowned a little; it seemed, he thought, a trifle young. It was while Jeff was pouring the cocktails that the telegram came. It had been sent from Tuckahoe, of all places. It read:

SORRY TO MISS DINNER. VALERIE AND I WERE MARRIED TODAY. SEE YOU SOON. BEST REGARDS, LILY DEAR, ON YOUR BIRTHDAY.

And, of course, it was from Parmalee.

Lily fell over forward, and laughing and crying, began to tear the polished floor with her beautiful fingernails.

When Dr. Williams had got her to bed, he gave her a hypodermic of morphine. After a while Lily smiled.

"I'll leave a few morphia tablets—to be taken by mouth—in her medicine-cabinet," Williams told Jeff. "They are only for emergencies. I'll be back in the morning."

The tablets weren't needed. Lily slept throughout the night; and then, in the morning, they took her away.

WHEN Lily left the sanitarium—she had had, they said, a nervous breakdown,—she was much quieter than before. She was sweet to Jeff, and said she did not want to go out for a while, or to see people. Gradually, however, they went out more, to the races at Belmont or to a theater in town. Lily took long walks on her own estate, and refused to answer telephone-calls. . . . Once she beat Jeff's spaniel with a whip when he trailed his dirty paws across her counterpane. She cried about it afterward.

Lily was quiet those days because she was trying to orient herself to a new life. Her best years, the friendly doctors at the sanitarium had said, were still before her. But Lily could not believe it. She would recover from her depression, but things would not be the same. She was a career woman, and without applause and power, she could not find happiness. That was the way she had made her life. There was no resignation, no submission, in her.

Lily had lived her life as an ego, and she had been convinced that her body was imperishable, and inseparable from the purpose that guided her. Now she was possessed by a sense of betrayal. She had not changed; she had kept the faith, but her body was moving away from her. It would continue to move away from her. She was young in spirit, young! *She* was young, but who would believe it when they saw the decay of her outward shell? She could stand at her window and tell

the moon about it, and tell herself about it; but the world accepted only physical evidence—and the evidence was that she was growing old. Lily looked at her body with bitterness and loathing. She felt a sort of cosmic chagrin that she had so intimately associated herself with a naturally failing enterprise.

There were plenty of evidences that she no longer possessed herself. She cried easily; she had headaches. She stepped into the bathtub with the greatest trepidation, because of a fear that she might drown. She knew it was nonsense, but she had become tired of fighting fantasy; it was so much more comfortable to admit weakness and give in. She knew anyway that her body was aimed for a predestined end. It was astonishing and unfair that she, Lily Draforth, the successful woman, could not secede from her physical envelope, but now she knew she could not.

But what delight if her traitorous body (she thought once as she lay sleepless on her bed) should be swept away on the impersonal river of time, while she, the essential she, sat on the river-bank equably and timeless and quite unmoved. Then she need not submit. That would be peace indeed.

Lily thought about peace now. In her lifetime she had wanted men and money and applause and acclaim. And she had got them. But now she wanted peace. In a moment Jeff would be in her room suggesting that they go to the theater, to the race-track, to town. That meant struggle and conflict again, the facing of realities, the dreadful horror of thinking, thinking.

IT was then, in her silken bed, that Lily Draforth recalled the sweet escape of morphine. . . . Her medicine-cabinet: Dr. Williams long ago had left it there. A deep, a warm sleep. A rosy sleep. Lily rose from her bed. She would not take one of the tablets. She would simply look to see whether they still were there.

When Lily Draforth—once beautiful, unique, and mistress of what she might survey—came out of her bedroom, she was indeed at peace. She had been gone a long time, and there in the medicine-cabinet she had found the escape that, in the shadowy days to come, was to lead her inevitably down the pale and ever paler steps of oblivion until at last even the echo of her footsteps was gone. Morphine. . . . Now she walked equably to the window and pulled back the draperies so that the moon might once more shine in. What a salt breeze it was, and how satisfactorily the obedient moon spread its luminous wings upon the water!

The lovely Mrs. Draforth slipped her nightgown from her shoulders and stood there a moment in sheer delight. Slowly she returned to her bed, lay down. There was silence in the room. Then a drowsy hand reached for the bed-lamp on the side-table.

The light did not go out; but the *millefiori* goblet, like a bell sounding, smashed upon the floor.

Mrs. Draforth smiled in her sleep.

OTHER KINDS OF CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 21)

But no meal could be eaten without previous drinking, here. By the time they sat down, the turkey was dried up. The stuffing tasted odd—a Southern taste instead of the taste she knew. The cranberry sauce was wrong. Telford and the others refused the mashed pumpkin.

"You're not givin' us very much to eat, honey," Telford said mildly.

"You didn't eat your pumpkin."

"You know I can't eat squash. Nobody eats squash."

She choked.

The pies were eaten, one piece by each person. Vera tried to explain that they were supposed to take a piece of each on their plates, but they only looked vaguely at her.

"Vera's still a little Northerner," Telford said, laughing. "We'll teach her different. Aren't we goin' to have any plum pudding, honey?"

"That isn't the way we do it," she said stiffly.

He raised his eyebrows. "*We*—that's you and me, honey."

AFTER dinner Vera went in and lighted the tree; and then the others came in. They took a long time, and before they came, she had a moment to look at the lighted tree alone. With the curtains drawn, the room dark, it was beautiful and right and exalted: On the top a huge tinsel star; from every bough-end, balls of red and green and gold and silver; and over all a pure crystal shower of silver rain, disguising the pitiful bareness of the pine-tree; the presents lay in piles at the foot, wrapped so carefully in papers of white and dark blue, of red tissue and silver tinsel, in ribbons of blue and red and gold. For that moment all the chaste mystery of Christmas, all the poetry and order, was there; the room was as lovely as a secret box of Christmas jewels. For that moment she stood alone, feeling it all delicately, longingly; she loved the quiet, the candles twinkling in the dark room; this was Christmas—Christmas!

Suddenly she wished that the others would never come in. She wished she were a child again, without passion, with only a child's pure heart, as hard as a diamond. She felt sudden hate for the child that swelled her body, for her body itself; she wished she had no body, but were filament of air, of water, something free and chaste and unsubdued. . . . Her Christmas, the Christmas she loved, was a chaste, child's thing; there was no fleshly passion in it.

Then the others came in, laughing and talking in their high-pitched voices. The children ran and snatched at the toys before she could stop them. She had wanted to give out the presents, in the ancient way, one at a time, making the magic of the hour last. But these children grabbed up the packages, running about with them, tearing off the careful wrappers and throwing them about. The grown-up people had whisky-glasses in their hands; the sight of the whisky in the room with her lovely tree made her a little sick. It was all ruined now. She sat down, heavily, and watched them all opening the presents. She saw it was no use. She looked away, up at the top of the tree at the tinsel star, trying not to see the sight below.

Dashing up to the tree, one of the children caught fire to its filmy dress from a leaning candle. Vera did not even stir, as Beaufort seized the child, or as Langley beat the flames out with a small rug.

Beaufort took her child from Langley and shook it by the shoulders.

"Child, you want to kill yourself? These aren't electric lights like you're used to; these are real candles that burn. Mother's going to punish you to remind you never to go near fire."

With an easy, habitual gesture she pulled the child across her lap, spanked it.

"Vera, honey, it's much more modern to use electricity on the tree," Beaufort said, setting the weeping child on its feet again.

"I don't want to be modern," Vera explained stiffly. These people would never understand!

"Telford, isn't it most time for setting off the fireworks?" Langley asked. "Seems like all the presents were open, and it's getting dark outside."

"Come on," Telford said.

There was no watching the candles burn low, no slow folding up of the wrapping papers, saving the ribbons for next year. It had all taken not more than ten minutes, all that she had prepared for, all that was to have taken a long, lovely afternoon. Vera tightened her lips and followed the others outdoors. Her Christmas was over. She felt tears and rage and despair mounting desperately inside her.

THEY sat along the edge of the porch while the men set off the fireworks on the lawn.

"My, isn't that pretty!" Beaufort cried. "I just love Christmas."

Vera stared at her and sat clenching her fingers, her disappointment bitter as poison in her throat, her despair complete.

After a while the men returned to the porch and picked up their whisky-glasses. They settled comfortably into chairs in the soft winter dusk, and sat drinking. The air was mild.

"Did you like the fireworks, darling?" Telford asked Vera.

"I—hated the fireworks."

"*Darling!*"

"I hated the rotten things, turning Christmas into the Fourth of July, spoiling my Christmas. My whole Christmas has been ruined. You've all spoiled everything. You don't know anything about beautiful things. . . . I hate you. . . . I hate you."

"Vera!"

"I don't care."

She was screaming now, not caring what she did. Nothing she did mattered now after the confusion, the messy void, into which her day had been thrown. She hoped she hurt them; she hoped they guessed even a fraction of her loathing for them.

"She's not herself," Telford said in a low, strained voice.

"Honey, run play down on the lawn," Beaufort said to a child who hung around, staring.

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"It won't hurt your child to hear me! You've spoiled my Christmas. . . . I cared so. . . . Now you'll never see what Christmas is really like; you'll never know. Only me, I've got it locked in my heart; it's the one lovely thing I've still got. . . . Oh, Christ, I wanted it to be nice!" She drowned in sudden hopeless tears.

"Come into the house," Telford said dully. "She'll be better tomorrow."

LATER she had exhausted herself with crying, lying full length across the bed in their room. The room was dark; she did not know where Telford was, until a crack of light came in the door, and she felt him sit down on the bed beside her.

"I suppose everything's over now," she said without opening her eyes. Now she wanted to cry again, but weakly, with her arms around Telford. But he would never want her again.

"No," he said. He smoothed her hair back from her forehead and kissed it; his lips moved gently down her face, her neck, her shoulders; he pulled the dress quietly away from her body and held her in his arms, very firmly, silently, now covering her mouth with his so that she did not speak at all. . . . Then she was quiet too, utterly exhausted, and all the confusion had gone out of her tired mind.

He rolled over beside her on the bed, still holding her firmly in his arms, and began to talk.

"It wasn't Beaufort and Langley, and me, that spoiled Christmas, darling; it was you; you spoiled the spirit of Christmas. You were like a bad child that wants everything its own way; and if you were yourself, I would punish you, like a bad child. I would punish you, darling, to make you good and ask to be forgiven. But you are not yourself, and I am only going to love you so that I am all around you and you become part of me. That's what I want. You are my wife, and you are mine, and you are going to want what I want and *be* me. You are my own wife, and you are going to bear my children and love what I love, and belong entirely to me, in my own way. Then you'll be happy. . . .

"Darling," he went on; he put one arm behind his head and loosened the other around her body: "When I was a little boy, we used to have such fine Christmases. There was a big bowl of egg-nog all day long, and dozens of our friends would come in, all day, and keep Christmas with us. At dinner there'd be twelve or fifteen at the table. At one end a roasted pig with an apple in its mouth, and at the other a couple of geese. The servants loved bringing in the big platters of food. My mother used to make things for days beforehand—a big plum-pudding in a bag, with citron and plums in it. We were all happy, and there were so many of us. It was a big, lusty Christmas, darling, a fine old-fashioned Christmas. It was the Christmas that belongs to this country. There are lots of other kinds of Christmas, in other places all over the world; but that's the one that belongs in this country, down here. . . .

"Darling," he said, "you felt lonely today for your own kind of Christmas that you used to have when you were a child. I was lonely as hell too, homesick for my kind of Christmas. But you're my wife, darling; you've married me and my life and my country, and neither of us are children any more. We have to make Christmas for our children, in the way that belongs here. You remember a Christmas in which you were a little girl, just a child. You want it to be that way now, with yourself a little girl in it. But you're not a little girl; you're a grown woman, a wife, a possible mother of many children. And I'm not a child, either. It wouldn't be right to go back to anything. We have to make a good Christmas for our grown-up selves.

"I love you. I love Christmas too, just as much as you do. Christmas is good and wonderful everywhere, if you give yourself up to the spirit of it as it exists, and don't try to make a synthetic construction of some foreign Christmas. Don't you know we'll have wonderful Christmases all our life, Vera, darling?"

"Yes," she said, very low.

THE room was dark, the sky black outside the window, with stars white in the sky. It was Christmas night. She stared at the still, soft stars outside, the stars that were not frosty but rich, deep, warm stars. But they were still Christmas stars, the Christmas stars of all her life. She lay still, appeased, and felt her husband beside her, the child within her, and thought of the long years ahead, rolling richly by from one great Christmas festival to the next, full of comfort and fertility and love and growth. She stared at the big yellow stars of the South, of Christmas night, and felt life before her.

BLACK HOUR

(Continued from page 47)

and she would be exhausted if she did not get a little nap. She turned resolutely from the windows again, and began to think of the loveliness of the dawn, drenching the garden, the soft, sleepy chirping of birds, and the coolness of the early air, the good smell of coffee as Da Seng made it, the freshness of the table with early roses at its center—all the comfortable, reassuring things which she could summon at her wish.

LATER, they were at the breakfast-table. Denis put out his thin brown hand for the fruit-bowl and chose a deep red peach. Rachel noticed, as she had for the thousandth time, the slender sensitiveness of his hand. She let her eyes rest too on his lean face, concentrated on the peach he was peeling. The straight black brows, the deep-set gray eyes, the thin irregular nose and the tensed though full lips made a face one did not often see. There was at once sensitivity and determination in it; and Rachel, looking at it, wondered at herself for finding anything to be concerned about as long as she had Denis. He looked up at her.

"What about some riding, Rachel? Can we manage it today? Brownie is in good shape, and Zephyr always is. Let's get out on the plain. I need a jogging up after sticking at those records."

"How long has it been, Den?" she answered easily. "Ever since your rush began, I guess, and it would seem awfully good. But can you really get away, or are you just doing me a favor? You needn't, you know, for there are the Fairweathers I can round up for something in the way of diversion—don't bother about me!"

Rachel busied herself with the meal and thought uncomfortably of the small hours of the night. Was she beginning to show the effects of allowing moods to conquer her like that? Did Den guess that something was wearing on her? How weak and small she would feel! At once she began to talk of this and that, and determined that never should he guess that dread of the small hours.

Denis went on with his meal in silence, glancing at Rachel from time to time. His face showed nothing; but he was watching her, listening to her. Something about her gayety troubled him. She could be clever at it, he knew, although he strongly suspected that now it was forced. It troubled him considerably of late that they were so alone here and so quiet—that there was only the companionship of middle-aged people to relieve the loneliness of Rachel while he worked in his office all day.

There came beating through his brain the recollection that he had heard of people going insane over enforced loneliness and monotony. Rachel was not hardened to this sort of thing. Hers had been a gay and happy sort of life, full of friends and parties and travel here and there—but she had wanted to come. He thrilled yet to the remembrance of her ardor when it had all been decided. He almost laughed when he thought of the gayety with which she had pointed out on a little map the exact spot where they were to be.

She loved him, that was sure—and he her, God yes! But he could not stand to see her wither before his very eyes. He would have to get her away for a while—a long trip, expensive or no. The hot weather would be on soon. That would be excuse enough—get her to the seaside, where she would forget all about this place for a little while.

That afternoon they rode over the vast spreading plain with the mountains off in the distance, and then came back to baths and dinner for two set by candle-light. Rachel was flushed and lovely, and Denis deeply refreshed. It seemed impossible that he had been concerned about Rachel, she had been so gay, so full of life.

AGAIN she lay watching the dull gray squares of the windows opened to the summer night. A determination was upon her to lie awake if need be, but to defeat utterly the black mood as it came upon her. She would watch the waving of the branches; she would listen to the sounds and analyze them as they came; she would deliberately wait until sleep was ready to come without courting it. As she lay there, the round of night sounds began again; and as each came, Rachel said to herself:

"Yes, that is the watchman . . . And that the wind. . . . That the peddler.

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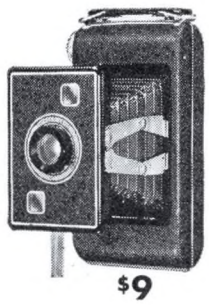

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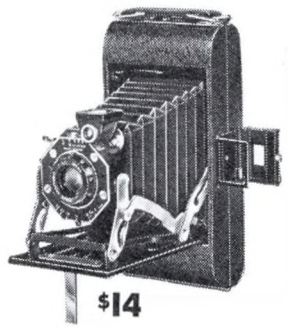

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TWENTY years ago the United States government took over the American railroads as a war measure.

It gave those roads back to their owners in 1920—on the eve of a depression.

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Then started an uphill job. Stretching ahead of railroad men and management were such tough problems as these:

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They had to repair and replace war-worn equipment.

They had to face new forms of competition.

They had to serve a nation increasing in population—extending its industrial frontiers—demanding better transportation than ever before.

And they had to operate under rules, regulations and restrictions more complex and bewildering than those imposed on any other business in America.

It was a job to test courage and challenge enterprise—but the railroads started the long slow climb.

Let us look now at the progress they have made: Great new locomotives have been developed—twice as able as the engines of 17 years ago.

Freight moves today 50% faster than in 1922.

Curves have been straightened — stronger bridges built — thousands of miles of heavier rails laid to make safe speed possible.

Safety has steadily advanced — for passengers and railroad employes — and the magnificent safety record of the railroads has won universal recognition.

Everyone is familiar with the streamlined trains, air conditioning, and all the other improvements pioneered for passenger comfort.

And the American railroads pay a tax bill of close to a million dollars a day.

When you sum up the record of American railroad progress in the face of all obstacles, it packs into this:

They deliver the finest railroad service in the world—so fine that delegations from foreign countries regularly visit America to study their methods.

They haul freight at the lowest railroad rates in the world—moving a ton a mile for an average revenue of less than one cent. Today's average freight revenue is 23½% lower than the peak of 1921, shortly after Government operation ended.

And with all this, *they pay the highest railroad wages in the world.*

Meanwhile the mountain of regulation has piled steadily higher—under state law as well as federal.

An immediate threat is the TRAIN-LIMIT-BILL in Congress — a bill to put an arbitrary limit on the length of freight trains and so to force the railroads to run more trains than are needed to handle the Nation's business. This "make-work" bill is proposed under the pretext of safety.

In face of the fact that the American railroads have reduced accidents to employes by three-fourths in the past fifteen years, the same years in which the railroads developed longer and faster trains for better service—

In face of the fact that the more trains you run the *greater* the chances of accident, especially at grade crossings—

In face of the fact that this one law would add more per year to the cost of railroad operation than the *total* cost of all air conditioning to date—*this bill has already passed the Senate.*

The harm of this legislation is measured in more than money-cost, great as that will be. It wipes out the major benefits of the fine new equipment, tracks and terminals the railroads have developed for handling freight today—*but more important still it stymies progress, and hamstrings future initiative, enterprise and invention.*

Do you want the advancement of the nation's basic transportation system brought to a standstill? If not—it's up to you!

Don't set the brakes on railroad progress!

ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

And what of it! Yes, there are the spirit-callers—people must die everywhere—and there the temple gong—quietness and low lights within the temple—what of that? And that thumping is only the knocking on some one's door—some one home late from the winehouse. I *will* get over this. I will down it and fall asleep yet."

But even as she lay there saying it to herself, shouting seemed to come from the distance; and sitting up in bed, she was convinced that there was really a growing volume to the sound. Suddenly she was hot and cold by turns, and her hands were moist and clammy. It was not that she feared this shouting and this noise—the nights were full of unexplainable noises; it was that now it gave body to what had before been a mental state. She did not know what the uproar could be. She scarcely cared. The fact that she was there awake, tensed in every nerve, was what really frightened her.

She determined to lie back in bed and let it come to pass. She managed to lie back, but threw the covers off, for she was wet with perspiration. Denis stirred in his bed; and although she longed to have him awake, at the same time she almost prayed that he would not waken, for it would not take long for him to see that she was awake, and in a state of mind of which she was not proud.

To Rachel it seemed the sound grew and grew until she nearly wallowed in an agony of sound which seemed to terrify and weaken her. Occasionally individual voices rose above the uproar in horrible, tearing screams. In her agony of fear, Rachel yet wondered how much her imagination magnified the sounds to her own ear. More than the fear of the sound was the fear of her own fear. A feeling of defeat was upon her. She could not master herself. Suddenly she felt a conviction that she could not stand it—that she could not go on to see the utter dissolution of herself as she had known it and Denis had loved it. She hated to recognize this shaken, terrified self as hers. She must either give way completely, or else rebuild a certain strength in herself.

Quite secretively she lifted her head to look in the direction of Denis' bed. He lay perfectly still in the deep slumber of early morning. Rachel looked long and keenly at him; then throwing back her covers gently, she got out of bed and put on a light robe. The sky was beginning to lighten with dawn as she stepped to the open windows. The uproar had somehow died away, and even in her own thinking seemed almost forgotten.

As she stood there a sudden breeze, coming with the early morning as it so often did, blew the robe about her and billowed the curtains and at the same time banged a door shut with swift sharpness. Denis stirred, and as Rachel turned to see him, his eyes opened first with dazed sleepiness and then with full clarity. A look of surprise spread slowly over his face as he saw Rachel standing at the window.

"What, up so early, dear?" he asked with instant anxiety.

"It's been a wonderful morning, Denis," she answered calmly. "Gorgeous sky, and the dim uproar of the city growing as the daylight came. I was slept out, and got up to watch the day come on."

Denis remembered his impression of the day before. He had fallen asleep with the two impressions, her nervousness and her easy gayety on the ride, battling in his mind; but now her voice quieted him. His fears seemed a dream without substance. Standing here in the rosy light of early morning, she surely looked refreshed and at peace—his Rachel.

"Wonderful days and wonderful nights, Rachel—the two of us."

"Yes," said Rachel, and smiled into the sunrise as she turned from the open window.

BIG BLONDE

(Continued from page 45)

to cloud her most recent battle with Herbie, she was excited by their approbation. Crab, was she? Rotten sport, was she? Well, there were some that thought different.

Ed was one of the Boys. He lived in Utica—had "his own business" there, was the awed report—but he came to New York almost every week. He was married. He showed Mrs. Morse the then current photographs of Junior and Sister, and she praised them abundantly and sincerely. Soon it was accepted by the others that Ed was her particular friend.

He staked her when they all played poker; sat next her and occasionally rubbed his knee against hers during the game. She was rather lucky. Frequently she went home with a twenty-dollar bill or a ten-dollar bill or a handful of crumpled dollars. She was glad of them. Herbie was getting, in her words, something awful about money. To ask him for it, brought an instant row.

"What the hell do you do with it?" he would say. "Shoot it all on Scotch?"

"I try to run this house halfway decent," she would retort. "Never thought of that, did you? Oh, no, his lordship couldn't be bothered with that."

Again, she could not find a definite day, to fix the beginning of Ed's proprietorship. It became his custom to kiss her on the mouth when he came in, as well as for farewell, and he gave her little quick kisses of approval all through the evening. She liked this rather more than she disliked it. She never thought of his kisses when she was not with him.

He would run his hand lingeringly over her back and shoulders.

"Some dizzy blonde, eh?" he would say. "Some doll."

One afternoon she came home from Mrs. Martin's to find Herbie in the bedroom. He had been away for several nights, evidently on a prolonged drinking bout. His face was gray; his hands jerked as if they were on wires. On the bed were two old suitcases, packed high. Only her photograph remained on his bureau, and the wide doors of his closet disclosed nothing but coat-hangers.

"I'm blowing," he said. "I'm through with the whole works. I got a job in Detroit."

She sat down on the edge of the bed. She had drunk much the night before, and the four Scotches she had had with Mrs. Martin had only increased her fogginess.

"Good job?" she said.

"Oh, yeah," he replied. "Looks all right."

He closed a suitcase with difficulty, swearing at it in whispers.

"There's some dough in the bank," he said. "The bank-book's in your drawer. You can have the furniture and stuff."

He looked at her, and his forehead twitched.

"Damn it, I'm through, I'm telling you," he cried. "I'm through."

"All right, all right," she said. "I heard you, didn't I?"

She followed him down the hall. There was a song, a song that Mrs. Martin played doggedly on the phonograph, running loudly through her mind. She had never liked the thing.

"Night and daytime,
Always playtime.
Aint we got fun?"

At the door he put down the bags and faced her.

"Well," he said, "well, take care of yourself. You'll be all right, will you?"

"Oh, sure," she said.

He opened the door, then came back to her, holding out his hand.

"'By, Haze," he said. "Good luck to you."

She took his hand and shook it.

"Pardon my wet glove," she said.

She was flushed and lively when she went in to Mrs. Martin's that evening. The Boys were there, Ed among them. He was glad to be in town, frisky and loud and full of jokes. But she spoke quietly to him for a minute.

"Herbie blew today," she said. "Going to live out West."

"That so?" he said. He looked at her, and played with the fountain-pen clipped to his waistcoat pocket.

"Think he's gone for good, do you?"

"Yeah," she said. "I know he is. I know. Yeah."

"You going to live on across the hall just the same?" he said. "Know what you're going to do?"

"Gee, I don't know," she said. "I don't give much of a damn."

"Oh, come on, that's no way to talk," he told her. "What you need—you need a little snifter. How about it?"

"Yeah," she said. "Just straight."

She won forty-three dollars at poker. When the game broke up, Ed took her back to her apartment.

"Got a little kiss for me?" he asked.

He wrapped her in his big arms and kissed her violently. She was entirely passive. He held her away and looked at her.

"Little tight, honey?" he asked anxiously. "Not going to be sick, are you?"

"Me?" she said. "I'm swell."

WHEN Ed left in the morning, he took her photograph with him. He said he wanted her picture to look at, up in Utica.

"You can have that one on the bureau," she said.

She put Herbie's picture in a drawer, out of her sight. When she could look at it, she meant to tear it up. She was fairly successful in keeping her mind from racing around him. Whisky slowed it for her. She was almost peaceful, in her mist.

She accepted her relationship with Ed without question or enthusiasm. When he was away, she seldom thought definitely of him. He was good to her; he gave her frequent presents and a regular allowance. She was even able to save. She did not plan ahead of any day, but her wants were few, and you might as well put money in the bank as have it lying around.

WHEN the lease of her apartment neared its end, it was Ed who suggested moving. His friendship with Mrs. Martin and Joe had become strained over a dispute at poker; a feud was impending.

"Let's get the hell out of here," Ed said. "What I want you to have is a place near Grand Central. Make it easier for me."

So she took a little flat in the Forties. A colored maid came in every day to clean and to make coffee for her—she was "through with that housekeeping stuff," she said, and Ed, twenty years married to a passionately domestic woman, admired this romantic uselessness and felt doubly a man of the world in abetting it.

The coffee was all she had until she went out to dinner, but alcohol kept her fat. Prohibition she regarded only as a basis for jokes. You could always get all you wanted. She was never noticeably drunk and seldom nearly sober. It required a larger daily allowance to keep her misty-minded. Too little, and she was achingly melancholy.

Ed brought her to a "speakeasy." He was proud, with the pride of the transient who would be mistaken for a native, in his knowledge of small, recent restaurants occupying the lower floors of shabby brownstone houses; places where, upon mentioning the name of an habitué friend, might be obtained strange whisky and fresh gin in many of their ramifications. This place was the favorite of Ed's acquaintances.

There, through Ed, Mrs. Morse met many men and women, formed quick friendships. The men often took her out when Ed was in Utica. He was proud of her popularity.

She fell into the habit of going to the speakeasy alone when she had no engagement. She was certain to meet some people she knew, and join them. It was a club for her friends, both men and women.

The women she met looked remarkably alike; and this was curious, for through feuds, removals and opportunities of more profitable contacts, the personnel of the group changed constantly. Yet always the newcomers resembled those whom they replaced. They were all big women and stout, broad of shoulder and abundantly breasted, with faces thickly clothed in soft, high-colored flesh. They laughed loud and often, showing opaque and lusterless teeth like squares of crockery. There was about them the health of the big, yet a slight, unwholesome suggestion of stubborn preservation. They might have been thirty-six or forty-five or anywhere between.

They composed their titles of their own first names with their husbands' surnames. This gave at the same time the solidity of marriage and the glamour of freedom. Yet only one or two were actually divorced. Most of them never referred to their dimmed spouses; some, a shorter time separate, described them in terms of great biological interest. Several were mothers, each of an only child—a boy at school somewhere, or a girl being cared for by a grandmother. Often, well on toward morning, there would be displays of kodak portraits and of tears.

They were comfortable women, cordial and friendly and irrepressibly matronly. Theirs was the quality of ease. Become fatalistic, especially about money matters, they were unworried. Whenever their funds dropped alarmingly, a new donor appeared; this had always happened. The aim of each was to have one man, permanently, to pay all her bills, in return for which she would have immediately given up other admirers and probably would have become exceedingly fond of him; for the affections of all of them were, by now, unexacting, tranquil and easily arranged. This end, however, grew increasingly difficult yearly. Mrs. Morse was regarded as fortunate.

Ed had a good year, increased her allowance and gave her a sealskin coat. But she had to be careful of her moods with him. He insisted upon gayety. He would not listen to admissions of aches or weariness.

"Hey, listen," he would say, "I got worries of my own, and plenty. Nobody wants to hear other people's troubles, sweetie. What you got to do, you got to be a sport and forget it. See? Well, slip us a little smile, then. That's my girl."

She never had enough interest to quarrel with him as she had with Herbie, but she wanted the privilege of occasional admitted sadness. It was strange. The other women she saw did not have to fight their moods. There was Mrs. Florence Miller who got regular crying jags, and the men sought only to cheer and comfort her. The others spent whole evenings in grieved recitals of worries and ills; their escorts paid them deep sympathy. But she was instantly undesirable when she was low in spirits. Once, when she could not make herself lively, Ed had walked out and left her.

"Why the hell don't you stay home and not go spoiling everybody's evening?" he had roared.

Even her slightest acquaintances seemed irritated if she were not conspicuously light-hearted.

"What's the matter with you, anyway?" they would say. "Be your age, why don't you? Have a little drink and snap out of it."

HER relationship with Ed had continued nearly three years, when he moved to Florida to live. He hated leaving her; he gave her a large check and some shares of a sound stock, and his pale eyes were wet when he said good-by. She did not miss him. He came to New York infrequently, perhaps two or three times a year, and hurried directly from the train to see her. She was always pleased to have him come, and never sorry to see him go.

Charley, an acquaintance of Ed's that she had met at the speakeasy, had long admired her. He always made opportunities of touching her and leaning close to talk to her. He asked repeatedly of all their friends if they had ever heard such a fine laugh as she had. After Ed left, Charley became the main figure in her life. She classified him and spoke of him as "not so bad." There was nearly a year of Charley; then she divided her time between him and Sydney, another frequenter of the speakeasy; then Charley slipped away altogether.

Sydney was a little, brightly dressed, clever Jew. She was perhaps nearest contentment with him. He amused her always; her laughter was not forced.

He admired her completely. Her softness and size delighted him. And he thought she was great, he often told her, because she kept gay and lively when she was drunk.

Then Sydney married a rich and watchful bride, and then there was Billy. In her haze, she never recalled how men entered her life and left it. There were no surprises. She had no thrill at their advent, nor woe at their departure. She seemed to be always able to attract men. There was never another as rich as Ed, but they were all generous to her, in their means.

ONCE she had news of Herbie. She encountered Mrs. Martin, and the former friendship was vigorously renewed. The still-admiring Joe, while on a business trip, had seen Herbie. He had settled in Chicago; he looked fine; he was living with some woman—seemed to be crazy about her. Mrs. Morse had been drinking vastly that day. She took the news with mild interest, as one hearing of the sex peccadilloes of somebody whose name is, after a moment's groping, familiar.

"Must be damn' near seven years since I saw him," she commented. "Gee! Seven years."

More and more, her days lost their individuality. She never knew dates, nor was sure of the day of the week.

"My God, was that a year ago!" she would exclaim, when an event was recalled in conversation.

She was tired so much of the time. Tired and blue. Almost everything could give her the blues. Those old horses she saw on Sixth Avenue—struggling and slipping along the car-tracks, or standing at the curb, their heads dropped level with their worn knees. The tightly stored tears would squeeze from her eyes as she teetered past on her aching feet in the stubby champagne-colored slippers.

The thought of death came and stayed with her and lent her a sort of drowsy cheer. It would be nice, nice and restful, to be dead.

She slept, aided by whisky, till deep into the afternoons, then lay abed, a bottle and glass at her hand, until it was time to dress to go out for dinner. She was beginning to feel toward alcohol a little puzzled distrust, as toward an old friend who has refused a simple favor. Whisky could still soothe her for most of the time, but there were sudden, in-

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(left) Mrs. Bailey skeet shooting at her home in Tuxedo Park. (center) Leaving the Plaza after luncheon.

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explicable moments when the cloud fell treacherously away from her, and she was sawn by the sorrow and bewilderment and nuisance of all living. She played voluptuously with the thought of cool, sleepy retreat. She had never been troubled by religious belief, and no vision of an after-life intimidated her. She dreamed by day of never again putting on tight shoes, of never having to laugh and listen and admire, of never more being a good sport. Never.

BUT how would you do it? It made her sick to think of jumping from heights. She could not stand a gun. At the theater, if one of the actors drew a revolver, she crammed her fingers into her ears and could not even look at the stage until after the shot had been fired. There was no gas in her flat. She looked long at the bright blue veins in her slim wrists—a cut with a razor blade, and there you'd be. But it would hurt, hurt like hell, and there would be blood to see. Poison—something tasteless and quick and painless—was the thing. But they wouldn't sell it to you in drugstores because of the law.

She had few other thoughts.

There was a new man now—Art. He was short and fat and exacting, and hard on her patience when he was drunk. But there had been only occasionals for some time before him, and she was glad of a little stability. Too, Art must be away for weeks at a stretch, selling silks, and that was restful. She was convincingly gay with him, though the effort shook her.

"The best sport in the world," he would murmur, deep in her neck. "The best sport in the world."

One night, when he had taken her to the speakeasy, she went into the dressing-room with Mrs. Florence Miller. There, while designing curly mouths on their faces with lip-rouge, they compared experiences of insomnia.

"Honestly, Flo," Mrs. Morse said, "I wouldn't close an eye if I didn't go to bed full of Scotch. I lie there and toss and turn and toss and turn. Blue! Does a person get blue lying awake that way!"

"Say, listen, Hazel," Mrs. Miller said, impressively. "I'm telling you I'd be awake for a year if I didn't take veronal. That stuff makes you sleep like a fool."

"Isn't it poison, or something?" Mrs. Morse asked.

"Oh, you take too much and you're out for the count," said Mrs. Miller. "I just take five grains—they come in tablets. I'd be scared to fool around with it. But five grains, and you cork off pretty."

"Can you get it anywhere?" Mrs. Morse felt superbly Machiavellian.

"Get all you want in Jersey," said Mrs. Miller. "They won't give it to you here without you have a doctor's prescription. . . . Finished? We'd better go back and see what the boys are doing."

That night Art left Mrs. Morse at the door of her apartment; his mother was in town. Mrs. Morse was still sober, and it happened that there was no whisky left in her cupboard. She lay in bed, looking at the black ceiling.

She rose early, for her, and went to New Jersey. She had never taken the tube, and did not understand it. So she went to the Pennsylvania station and bought a railroad ticket to Newark. She thought of nothing in particular on the trip out. She looked at the uninspired hats of the women about her and gazed through the smeared window at the flat, gritty scene.

In Newark, in the first drug-store she came to, she asked for a tin of talcum powder, a nailbrush and a box of veronal tablets. The powder and the brush were to make the hypnotic seem also a casual need. The clerk was entirely unconcerned. "We only keep them in bottles," he said, and wrapped up for her a little glass vial containing ten white tablets, stacked one on another.

She went to another drug-store and bought a face-cloth, an orange-wood stick and a bottle of veronal tablets. The clerk was also uninterested.

"Well, I guess I got enough to kill an ox," she thought, and went back to the station.

At home, she put the little vials in the drawer of her dressing-table and stood looking at them with a dreamy tenderness.

"There they are, God bless them," she said, and she kissed her fingertips and touched each bottle.

The colored maid was busy in the living-room.

"Hey, Nettie," Mrs. Morse called. "Be an angel, will you? Run around and get me a quart of Scotch." She hummed while she awaited the girl's return.

During the next few days whisky ministered to her as tenderly as it had done when she first turned to its aid. Alone, she was soothed and vague; at the speakeasy she was the gayest of the group. Art was delighted with her.

THEN, one night, she had an appointment to meet Art there, for an early dinner. He was to leave afterward on a business excursion, to be away for a week. Mrs. Morse had been drinking all the afternoon; while she dressed to go out, she felt herself rising pleasurably from drowsiness to high spirits. But as she came out into the street, the effects of the whisky deserted her completely, and she was filled with a slow, grinding wretchedness so horrible that she stood swaying on the pavement, unable for a moment to move forward. It was a gray night with spurts of mean, thin snow, and the streets shone with dark ice. As she slowly crossed Sixth Avenue, consciously dragging one foot past the other, a big, scarred horse pulling a rickety express-wagon crashed to his knees before her. The driver swore and screamed and lashed the beast insanely, bringing the whip back over his shoulder for every blow, while the horse struggled to get a footing on the slippery asphalt. A group gathered and watched with interest.

Art was waiting, when she arrived.

"What's the matter with you, for God's sake?" was his greeting to her.

"I saw a horse," she said. "Gee—I—a person feels sorry for horses. I—it isn't just horses. Everything's kind of terrible, isn't it? I can't help getting sunk."

"Ah, sunk, me eye!" he said. "What's the idea of all the bellyaching? What have you got to be sunk about?"

"I can't help it," she said.

"Ah, help it, me eye," he said. "Pull yourself together, will you? Come on and sit down, and take that face off you."

She drank industriously, and she tried hard, but she could not overcome her melancholy. Others joined them and commented on her gloom, and she could do no more for them than smile weakly. She made little dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief, trying to time her movements so they would be unnoticed, but several times Art caught her and scowled and shifted impatiently in his chair.

When it was time for him to go to his train, she said she would leave, too, and go home.

"And not a bad idea, either," he said. "See if you can't sleep yourself out of it. I'll see you Thursday. For God's sake, try and cheer up by then, will you?"

"Yeah," she said. "I will."

In her bedroom, she undressed with a tense speed wholly unlike her usual slow uncertainty. She put on her nightgown, took off her hair-net and passed the comb quickly through her dry, vari-colored hair. Then she took the two little vials from the drawer and carried them into the bathroom. The splintering misery had gone from her, and she felt the quick excitement of one who is about to receive an anticipated gift.

She uncorked the vials, filled a glass with water and stood before the mirror, a tablet between her fingers. Suddenly she bowed graciously to her reflection, and raised the glass to it.

"Well, here's mud in your eye," she said.

The tablets were unpleasant to take, dry and powdery and sticking obstinately halfway down her throat. It took her a long time to swallow all twenty of them. She stood watching her reflection with deep, impersonal interest, studying the movements of the gulping throat. Once more she spoke aloud.

"For God's sake, try and cheer up by Thursday, will you?" she said. "Well, you know what he can do. He and the whole lot of them."

She had no idea how quickly to expect effect from the veronal. When she had taken the last tablet, she stood uncertainly, wondering, still with a courteous, vicarious interest, if death would strike her down, then and there. She felt in no way strange, save for a slight stirring of sickness from the effort of swallowing the tablets, nor did her reflected face look at all different. It would not be immediate, then; it might even take an hour or so.

She stretched her arms high and gave a vast yawn.

"Guess I'll go to bed," she said. "Gee, I'm nearly dead."

That struck her as comic, and she turned out the bathroom light and went in and laid herself down in her bed, chuckling softly all the time.

"Gee, I'm nearly dead," she quoted. "That's a hot one!"

NETTIE, the colored maid, came in late the next afternoon to clean the apartment and found Mrs. Morse still in her bed.

But that was not unusual. Usually, though, the sounds of cleaning waked her, and she did not like to wake up. Nettie, an agreeable girl, had learned to move softly about her work.

But when she had done the living-room and stolen in to tidy the little square

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bedroom, she could not avoid a tiny clatter as she arranged the objects on the dressing-table. Instinctively, she glanced over her shoulder at the sleeper, and without warning a sickly uneasiness crept over her. She came to the bed and stared at the woman lying there.

Mrs. Morse lay on her back, one flabby white arm flung up, the wrist against her forehead. Her stiff hair hung untenderly along her face. The bed covers were pushed down, exposing a deep square of soft neck and a pink nightgown, its fabric worn uneven by many launderings; her great breasts, freed from their tight confiner, sagged beneath her armpits. Now and then she made knotted, snoring sounds, and from the corner of her opened mouth to the blurred turn of her jaw ran a lane of crusted spittle.

"Mis' Morse," Nettie called. "Oh, Mis' Morse! It's terrible late."

Mrs. Morse made no move.

"Mis' Morse," said Nettie. "Look, Mis' Morse, how'm I goin' get this bed made?"

Panic sprang upon the girl. She shook the woman's hot shoulder.

"Ah, wake up, will yuh?" she whined. "Ah, please wake up."

Suddenly the girl turned and ran out in the hall to the elevator door, keeping her thumb firm on the black, shiny button until the elderly car and its negro attendant stood before her. She poured a jumble of words over the boy, and led him back to the apartment. He tiptoed creakingly in to the bedside; first gingerly, then so lustily that he left marks in the soft flesh, he prodded the unconscious woman.

"Hey, there!" he cried, and listened intently, as for an echo.

"Jeez. Out like a light," he commented.

At his interest in the spectacle, Nettie's panic left her. Importance was big in both of them. They talked in quick, unfinished whispers, and it was the boy's suggestion that he fetch the young doctor who lived on the ground floor. Nettie hurried along with him. They looked forward to the limelit moment of breaking their news of something untoward, something pleasurably unpleasant. Mrs. Morse had become the medium of drama. With no ill will toward her, they hoped her state was serious, that she would not let them down by being awake and normal on their return. A little fear of this determined them to make the most, to the doctor, of her present condition. "Matter of life and death," returned to Nettie from her thin store of reading. She considered startling the doctor with the phrase.

The doctor was in and none too pleased at interruption. Always something, he grumbled. Couldn't let anybody alone after a hard day. But he put bottles and instruments into a case, changed his dressing-gown for his coat and started out with the negroes.

THE doctor strode loudly into Mrs. Morse's flat and on to the bedroom, Nettie and the boy right behind him. Mrs. Morse had not moved; her sleep was as deep, but soundless now. The doctor looked sharply at her, then plunged his thumbs into the lidded pits above her eyeballs and threw his weight upon them. A high, sickened cry broke from Nettie.

"Look like he tryin' to push her right on th'ough the bed," said the boy. He chuckled.

Mrs. Morse gave no sign under the pressure. Abruptly the doctor abandoned it, and with one quick movement swept the covers down to the foot of the bed. With another he flung her nightgown back and lifted the thick, white legs, cross-hatched with blocks of tiny, iris-colored veins. He pinched them repeatedly, with long, cruel nips, back of the knees. She did not awaken.

"What's she been drinking?" he asked Nettie, over his shoulder.

With the certain celerity of one who knows just where to lay hands on a thing, Nettie went into the bathroom, bound for the cupboard where Mrs. Morse kept her whisky. But she stopped at the sight of the two vials, with their red and white labels, lying before the mirror. She brought them to the doctor.

"Oh, for the Lord Almighty's sweet sake!" he said. He dropped Mrs. Morse's legs, and pushed them impatiently across the bed. "What did she want to go taking that tripe for? Rotten yellow trick, that's what a thing like that is. Now we'll have to pump her out, and all that stuff. Nuisance, a thing like that is; that's what it amounts to. Here, George, take me down in the elevator. You wait here, maid. She won't do anything."

"She won't die on me, will she?" cried Nettie.

"No," said the doctor. "God, no. You couldn't kill her with an ax."

After two days, Mrs. Morse came back to consciousness, dazed at first, then with a comprehension that brought with it the slow, saturating wretchedness.

"Oh, Lord, oh, Lord!" she moaned, and tears for herself and for life striped her cheeks.

Nettie came in at the sound. For two days she had done the ugly, incessant tasks in the nursing of the unconscious; for two nights she had caught broken bits of sleep on the living-room couch. She looked coldly at the big, blown woman in the bed.

"What you been tryin' to do, Mis' Morse?" she said. "What kin' o' work is that, takin' all that stuff?"

"Oh, Lord," moaned Mrs. Morse again, and she tried to cover her eyes with her arms. But the joints felt stiff and brittle, and she cried out at their ache.

"Tha's no way to ack, takin' them pills," said Nettie. "You can thank yo' stars you heah at all. How you feel now?"

"Oh, I feel great," said Mrs. Morse. "Swell, I feel."

Her hot, painful tears fell as if they would never stop.

"Tha's no way to take on, cryin' like that," Nettie said. "After what people done for you. Here I ain' had no sleep at all for two nights, an' I had to give up goin' out to my other ladies!"

"Oh, I'm sorry, Nettie," she said. "You're a peach. I'm sorry I've given you so much trouble. I couldn't help it. I just got sunk. Didn't you ever feel like doing it? When everything looks just lousy to you?"

"I wouldn' think o' no such thing," declared Nettie. "You got to cheer up. Tha's what you got to do. Everybody's got their troubles."

"Yeah," said Mrs. Morse, "I know."

"Come a pretty picture-card for you," Nettie said. "Maybe that will cheer you up."

She handed Mrs. Morse a post-card. Mrs. Morse had to cover one eye with her hand, in order to read the message; her eyes were not yet focusing correctly.

IT was from Art. On the back of a view of Detroit he had written: *"Greeting and salutations. Hope you have lost that gloom. Cheer up and don't take any rubber nickels. See you on Thursday."*

She dropped the card to the floor. Misery crushed her as if she were between great smooth stones. There passed before her a slow, interminable pageant of days spent lying in her flat, of evenings being a good sport, making herself laugh and coo at Art and other Arts; she saw a long parade of weary horses and shivering beggars and all beaten, driven, stumbling things. Her feet throbbed as if she had crammed them into the stubby champagne-colored slippers. Her heart seemed to swell and harden.

"Nettie," she cried, "for heaven's sake pour me a drink, will you?"

The maid looked doubtful.

"Now, you know, Mis' Morse," she said, "you been near daid. I don't know if the doctor he let you drink nothin' yet."

"Oh, never mind him," she said. "You get me one, and bring in the bottle. Take one yourself."

"Well," said Nettie.

She poured them each a drink, deferentially leaving hers in the bathroom to be taken in solitude, and brought Mrs. Morse's glass in to her.

Mrs. Morse looked into the liquor and shuddered back from its odor. Maybe it would help. Maybe, when you had been knocked cold for a few days, your very first drink would give you a lift. Maybe whisky would be her friend again. She prayed without addressing a God, without knowing a God. Oh, please, please, let her be able to get drunk, please keep her always drunk.

She lifted her glass.

"Thanks, Nettie," she said. "Here's mud in your eye."

The maid giggled.

"Tha's the way, Mis' Morse," she said. "You cheer up, now."

"Yeah," said Mrs. Morse. "Sure."

PRESIDENT MCCRACKEN of Vassar College is credited with this statement: "As the big-school curriculum is not planned with the view to preparation for the privately endowed college of the highest rank, it is sometimes difficult for a student from the public high school to gain admission to the privately endowed college of the highest rank." (Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, Smith, Vassar, etc.)

We offer to you, our reader, the fund of information about college preparatory schools which we have gained by visiting these schools year after year. This service is without charge, and we will welcome the opportunity of assisting you. Be certain in writing to us that you outline fully your requirements—*i.e.*, the location, tuition rate, age of child, present grade in school, etc. Address: The Director, Department of Education, Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York City.

A ONE-WOMAN MAN

(Continued from page 37)

"Why doesn't the roof come down?"

"Sometimes it does."

They retreated while the men prepared to shoot: waited in the entry, waited inside the earth, while a man twenty yards away would challenge the hill with powder.

The charge went off, a muffled quake. The men went back in. Jane told Harry she wanted to see it all. They crept through the coal-dust thick as black fog. They kept their torches upon the ground, followed the narrow steel rails, climbed over the fallen coal. The hill was mutilated. The men were putting up posts to hold the roof.

There were crackles in the roof.

The men stopped for a moment, then went on.

Jane felt close to death, to potential death, and yet was not afraid. There was a tingling aliveness about her.

The machine came in. It had what looked like a big shovel on the end of long steel arms. In action it resembled a prehistoric monster. The machine began to roar, the arms to lift and fall, the shovel to attack the coal, to lift and dump it on a moving platform that went back to the cars. The noise was terrific. The loose coal was picked up and carried away. The arms went up and down, with crunching noise, relentless hurry. When it seemed to have reached the solid face, it attacked with increasing fury. Jane felt herself in the very arena, almost a part of this battle of machine and nature, her head full of noise, her eyes full of wonder.

She told him, at dinner that night, that she could better understand now why he could pass up a profitable practice, telling neurotic women what they wanted to hear, for this sort of work.

"You get close to things down there," she said, "and it makes you think. It's good for the perspective, isn't it, Doctor McCroy?"

"I was proud of you, Jane. There aren't many men who go into a mine for the first time who want to crawl back through that dust after they shoot."

"Is that really the dangerous time?"

"Any time you're in is the dangerous time, but that is when the most falls come. The roof is stone and is supposed to hold, but you never can tell when a weak spot will show up. It's like having a tooth out or tonsils clipped—a simple operation; but every so often a fatal one."

"I thought the men working in there looked as if they didn't want me—"

"You were a curiosity."

"Mrs. Plunkett said it was because miners don't like women to go inside."

He smiled. "There used to be an old superstition about it. Some of the old ones may still go for it."

Four nights later Harry was called to the mine. There had been a bad fall after a room was shot. Two men had been critically hurt.

The next day one of them died.

Chapter Six

THE gloom of the fatality depressed their house. Harry seemed to regard it as a personal failure. It was part of his job to prevent accidents, and one had come. It was, he said, just one of those things he had told her about—an unexpected weak spot in the roof. The engineers could not account for it.

They gave the victim a big funeral, with a band and a slow parade. He had been a young man, with two children and a young wife. The mournful music of the band came to Jane, affected her with a peculiar pessimism. Hundreds of people died in New York every day, and nobody seemed to notice. She had never seen a funeral procession there. Here this death of a miner became a personal tragedy, even to her, who did not know the man. The requiem lingered in her brain long after the band had gone.

She went downstairs. Mrs. Plunkett looked at her and said nothing. Jane thought of the superstition. "Mrs. Plunkett—they don't think my going there—"

"It was the first fall in almost a year."

"But that's silly to connect it with me—"

"He was one of the men who rode inside in the car with you."

"There were other men in the car."

Mrs. Plunkett shrugged her ample shoulders.

When Harry came home from the funeral, she told him. He was furious with Mrs. Plunkett, and reduced that poor woman to tears which Jane finally had to soothe.

The second man died.

Harry was worn out when he came home from the hospital. Mrs. Plunkett would say nothing now, would not tell Jane what people were thinking.

There was another band, and another parade. Jane, walking the floor, trying to shut out the accusing notes, felt a cable being drawn through her brain. It bore heavily on the front of her head.

Harry found her and tried to calm her. "Nobody's blaming you. How could they? That's foolish, Jane. You know it."

She looked at him. "Certainly, I know it; but they blame me. And they blame you for taking me there."

"Has Mrs. Plunkett been talking again?"

"No—but I can see it in their eyes. That's why you've been so depressed. You believe it too."

"Jane—please! Nobody but the dumbest people in town pays any attention to that stuff any more." His voice lowered. "Business is better, and they've been pushing ahead too fast. This was the first room in a new section. Grove has given orders to take more precaution. Now, there's the truth. So rest your mind, please."

There was another fall in the new section, but because of the precautions taken, nobody was caught.

Harry was worried. "The men get careless. They get greedy for tonnage, and take too many chances." He looked at her. "In fact, you and I went in too soon after the shooting that day. Now we set a time limit and make it drastic. The men are cooperating. They are just a little afraid of this new section. For that matter, so am I."

So was Jane. Her mind was never at rest, thereafter. . . .

Phyllis Penner's wedding was to be in the spring. Harry urged Jane to go on ahead. "It's what you need," he said, "and will do you good. Stay until you've had a good rest, until you're yourself again."

Phyl Penner was at the train. There was genuine warmth in her welcome, but there was also a frank curiosity.

"It hasn't hurt your figure," she admitted. "But your eyes are older."

Jane was gay as she sat back in the big car and stretched her toes to the foot-rest. "I will set your mind at rest, darling. I'm happy. I've been happy. It was quite a change, but I'm beginning to like it. And it's a pretty little town. I have a house that looks out on the river—"

"That will be enough," Phyl cut her off. "I'll judge for myself as we go along. Will your lord and master honor us with his presence?"

"He said he would try to come. He likes Russ."

"So he likes Russ, does he?"

IT was to be a big wedding, and Phyl was supervising every detail with cold efficiency. Jane got a vicarious pleasure out of the routine of appointments. This was what she had missed in her own wedding; but she knew that Phyl would not experience the wild indecision, the tumultuous disturbances that Jane had known. In her heart she treasured those days, the surges within her that the thought of Harry McCroy still produced.

Still, she reveled in this return to her old life, and there were times when she seemed never to have left it. Her investments had prospered, and she spent some of the paper profits for fine things which were foreign to the atmosphere of Etruria, which she could not expose to the dust that could not be kept out of her own home.

She was conscious of a peculiarly satisfying distinction among Phyl's friends. Here, as in Etruria, people looked upon her as a curiosity. Here she found it stimulating rather than annoying. She was the girl who had sacrificed a brilliant social career and financial security for love. They could not understand her, but they respected her—particularly younger girls, who had not yet abandoned romantic ideals for expediency.

When Clay came on, a week before the ceremony, she knew they were watching her. Phyllis watched her most of all.

Clay looked upon her with a fond smile. He was more handsome, more confident than ever. He said: "Well, heartless woman, I am waiting."

"For what?"

"Have you no sympathy for your victims?"

"You seem to have stood up well."

"I suffer inwardly."

"There are many pretty girls here who might do something about it."

"There is only one pretty girl here. There is only one pretty girl anywhere."

Clay was in constant attendance, but only as the defeated lover still paying court to a lost love; and these were sophisticated people.

Harry did not come. He called her and said that something had come up to keep him there. No, there had been no more fatalities. He asked that he be excused —asked particularly that she explain to Russ. Jane was disappointed. She had been long enough away from Harry to begin to miss him. She wanted these people to see him, to see him with Clay.

JANE left from the same station as the honeymooners, one hour later. Clay was with her. It had been a pleasant interlude for both of them.

"It's been nice, Clay."

He was looking at her steadily. There was no mockery, no levity in his eyes. They were hungry; she could see now that he had not escaped without some hurt. She knew that, to the limit of his capacity, Clay did love her. Now he said: "When you finish the experiment, I'll be waiting."

He wanted to kiss her good-by. She wanted to kiss him, for old time's sake; but she was still a bride. She could not forget that. She went home to Harry, as a bride, eager and anxious to see him again, refreshed in mind and spirit.

The sight of him, the touch of his lips, his arms about her, secured her feeling, made her more completely happy with him than she had ever been. She had come through a test. Harry knew it too. She saw relief in his eyes, knew that he had been worried about this.

Harry had sent her back to Clay. That was so like Harry. She told him of the wedding, its prelude and details. She told him just how she had spent her time, and how much of it she had given to Clay. She did not tell him what Clay had said. He was keenly attentive; but when she relapsed again to more prosaic things, he was only polite.

She asked him about the mine, what had kept him at home. She prodded until he told her. The officials were sweating blood. Business was improving, and they were pushing into new sections; but the trouble about the roof was increasing. There were frequent falls, but so far, no major accidents.

Jane began to take her place in the town. She became identified with the women's group at the country club, joined the right Sunday-school class, and was taken into Dolly Grove's bridge-club. She went to the movies and dropped in at the accepted restaurant, where people sat around in groups and talked—where, if you wanted a drink, you could get it in a "coke," so that people wouldn't talk.

Jane felt herself constantly on parade, under inspection. She must be careful not to talk about things too far removed from their sphere; she must avoid words not in common circulation; she must not wear clothes which would make her stand too far apart. They were expecting her to be high-hat, so she must show them that she was not high-hat; that she did not consider herself above them. She must continually try to prove that she was some other person than Jane Howarth.

She felt them always ready to pick her up on small things. If she talked too much, she read in their eyes that she was saying the wrong things; if she talked too little, she was snooting them. They would not, or could not, forget that she was an alien, that she didn't belong. Even Dolly Grove seemed to have certain reservations. Jane hesitated to talk to Harry about it. She was quite certain that he would not quite understand; that he also would think she considered herself too good for the town.

Summer came, and the sun beat down upon the tin roof of the house. There was no rain to cool it, and even the river breezes seemed shut out by the hills.

Jane's house was stuffy as her mind. She tried to cool both by riding the hills at night. When Harry was free from the hospital, he rode with her. They found a knoll on the country-club lawn, the highest spot in the country, where the breezes were sometimes cool. Refreshed, they would return to the town, find it as hot as ever, and the house too humid for sleep. Jane got to roaming until early morning, sitting on the screened porch in the thinnest of negligees, until the sun came up red for another day. She began to feel that her life was getting to be like that—moments of refreshment and hours of stuffy boredom.

Chapter Seven

WHEN Harry McCroy first began to notice changes in his wife, he put it down to the heat. Jane was wilting under it, getting thin and drawn. Her temper began to show cut edges. She grew irritable and sharp, critical of their friends and of the town. Harry did his best to calm her, and he was usually successful. He told her that soon it would begin to cool off; that often, as early as mid-August, autumn would begin to make itself felt. There would be Indian summer in September, but it was very pleasant, and gorgeous in its coloring.

Harry knew it was not just the heat. He knew that Jane had tried to fit herself into the pattern of the town. He knew that it hadn't been a good fit. He began to fear that it never would be a good fit. Harry was the one person in Etruria who could see the situation clearly enough. He knew and understood his wife and his people; he saw the viewpoint of each, and began to see how far apart they really were. He understood, but he could not prescribe; he did not, however, make the mistake of trying to force Jane upon the town or the town upon her. He could only hope that they would eventually work out some sort of compromise.

And Harry had troubles of his own. Business was improving, and they were opening new sections; both the men and the company were happy about this, anxious to tear into the hills for the tonnage and money which had been denied them during the long years of idleness. This was fine, except that the fault which had first appeared in the roof of the new section was still present. The danger of a bad fall was constant. It was Harry's job to act as a brake upon the eagerness of the men and of the company.

Dr. Harry was made to feel more and more like a wet blanket. Sometimes he thought that the intensity of his boyhood feeling was out of line with the facts; but he could not quite bring himself to relax. A life was a life. It was precious to its owner and his family, even if the owner sometimes seemed to forget the fact. A weaker man would have prepared his alibi and washed his hands of results. Harry McCroy was not that kind of a man.

There was another fall after a shooting. One man, who had rushed into the room too soon, was painfully but not fatally crushed. His buddy, who obeyed the safety time-limit, escaped. It was a clearly drawn issue of safety and recklessness. Driving home that night, Harley Grove said soberly: "You're right, Harry, and the rest of us have been wrong. I think the men are convinced."

Harry was skeptical. "For the time being; but they forget very quickly."

"We mustn't let them forget this time. And I'll have to get it across to the owners that we can't push production. They've been after me, you know."

"They can't get tonnage until they find out about that roof."

Grove was worried. "This mine has always been very safe—it's very rich—it's been their best investment. That's why they can't understand why it has suddenly become unsafe, why we have to slow down production. We run into these things—nobody knows why. And the worst feature of it is that when you run into a cracking roof, it might spread into sections which have been previously safe. That means we'll have to watch this thing closer than ever. You and I and the engineer will go over the whole layout, starting tomorrow."

Jane was waiting on the porch, that day, slim and white in a summery dress. She ran to the gate to meet him. Her eyes were bright, her voice happy.

"Phyl is here," she cried. "Came in this afternoon. She's going to visit awhile. Isn't it all just lovely?"

Phyl was waiting at the door. Her dark eyes met Harry's. She was, he knew, an enemy. But he could not be unfriendly to any person who could produce such a remarkable change in his wife.

He smiled, took Phyl's hand. His voice was genuine. "Glad to have you, Phyl. She needs somebody like you right now."

PHYL looked quickly at Jane, received a warning shake of the head. Harry turned to Jane: "We had another fall today—"

"Oh—anybody hurt?"

"One man, but not seriously. Grove and I are beginning an inspection of the entire property. I'll be gone quite a lot."

Jane squeezed his arm. "That'll be all right, darling. It will give you a rest from me—I've been mean, I know—"

"You wouldn't know how to be mean—"

"Anyhow, you'll have me off your hands. Phyl and I can find plenty of things to do and talk about, can't we, Phyl?"

"I wouldn't doubt it." Phyl smiled at Harry.

"How's Russ?"

"He's out with Dad on this tour of the company properties. He may pick me up."

"Fine. Maybe he can stop over for a day of golf. I can get Grove to take a day off by that time. Tell him I'll be duck soup—I have a tough time breaking eighty-five."

Phyl's eyes sparkled. "Maybe I can beat you now."

"One of these days we'll give it a try." Their eyes met. They were smiling eyes, but hard in their depths.

Phyl moved into the big room which had twin beds, and Harry was banished to the guest chamber. He was gone early and back late, and was supposed to be dead tired and asleep when he went to his room. But sometimes he was wide-eyed in the dark.

They found much to do, to talk about and laugh about, these two. Harry was shut out. He didn't mind, really, told himself that he was glad that Jane was happy again. She was like a beautiful bird released from a depressing cage. She was vibrant; her plumage was spread to the winds, and she sang. She was reliving a life of which Harry was not a part. She was happier than in the life he had made for her. He could not replace that.

THEY were to play golf on Sunday morning. Jane awoke with a headache and could not go; but she pleaded with Harry to take Phyl out for the morning round, said that the exercise in the open would do him so much good after a hard week inside. Phyl was more than willing, so the two of them set off.

They talked little.

Harry was out of practice; his mind was not on the game. At the twelfth tee, three down, he knew that he was back in competition again, that he was in a match he could not lose. This girl was an adversary, and she made no attempt to disguise it. His mood and manner changed. His jaw hardened; his eyes grew sharp.

They went along in silence. He caught her on the seventeenth, only because her tee shot went out of bounds as she daringly tried for the shortcut across the road which only long drivers attempted. He had all the advantage on the long eighteenth, up a steep hill; but her approach gave her a chance to tie. Her fifteen-foot putt rolled inches by the cup, and he dropped his four-footer. She made a small motion with her brows, gave him a slight smile of respect.

Her voice was dry. "You're a tough fellow, McCroy."

"I was lucky."

"Don't be gallant. Look here. Maybe I'm wrong. You must love her—"

"I do."

"You know she isn't well."

"I thought she'd picked up a lot since you came."

"And you're supposed to be a doctor!"

"She can't stand the heat. And she's still strange. I know she hasn't been used to this life—"

"Then why do you make her stay here—especially now?"

"Why—especially now?"

Phyl looked at him, turned away in annoyance. "You know she isn't happy here, that she never will be—"

"She never will be if you can help it!"

To people on the clubhouse porch, these two might have stopped to compare scores and settle their bets. They spoke quietly, so that the caddies ahead might not hear. Dark eyes glittered against dark eyes.

"You may as well know, McCroy, that I'll do everything I can to get her away."

"You always have, haven't you?"

"Because I know she doesn't belong here."

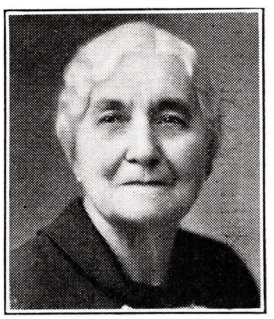
"Don't you suppose I know it too?"

"Then why do you hold her?"

Life Begins At 40

Born in 1852—and Never Husky as a Girl and Young Woman

She Was Near Middle Life Before She Gained the Health and Vigor that She Still Keeps at 85



MRS. HALLOCK
(Picture taken this year)

Mrs. Emogine Hallock of Yonkers, N. Y., started out with a none-too-good constitution. For half of her life she was considered delicate. Her principal trouble was poor digestion.

She learned in early years to be careful of her diet. Less strong than others, she guarded what health she had.

Gradually her health improved—and she looks back on her forties as the years that first saw her really well.

Now in her middle 80's, "I have wonderfully good health," she says. She helps with the housework and likes to travel. "If you protect your health," she says, "when you get to be my age, you will be well and strong and healthy, too."

Health Is Worth TAKING CARE OF—Particularly After 40. Some physical weakness often forces people to protect their health and make it last longer. Around 40, many people *for the first time* meet this necessity.

A slight adjustment often keeps them splendidly well—into old age.

THEY OVERCAME ILL HEALTH—SO CAN YOU

Successful in New Work at 44

WILLIAM P. SHAW
Regains Health

Dear Life Begins:

After 28 years with one concern, I lost my job. The shock was so great my health went to pieces.

I went up in the country and chopped trees, but my health got worse.

I remembered a doctor had prescribed yeast cakes for my mother. I decided to try Fleischmann's Yeast for my own case.

I ate it regularly—and my appetite began to return. As my health improved, the nervous feeling left me. I felt so good I came back to the city and started as a lecturer on subjects allied with my former job.

I still eat Fleischmann's Yeast to help me keep in perfect condition physically—and therefore mentally—for my new work.

WILLIAM P. SHAW

Still Strong and Teaching—over 60

MISS STEVENS
Once Delicate

Dear Life Begins:

My health needed careful watching when I was very much younger. You would not think it to look at me today! I am over 60 and beginning my forty-fourth year of teaching.

Fortunately for me, long before the general public was familiar with the health value of Fleischmann's Yeast, it was well known in our family.

I first learned of it as a child. Later, as a young woman, I used to drive many miles over a rough road to get it.

Having been delicate, I have eaten Fleischmann's Yeast as a preventive rather than a corrective and have forestalled trouble. Yes, I still eat it regularly. Years ago I learned it was vital to my health.

LILLIAN STEVENS

Slower Digestion Frequent Cause of Too-Early Aging

That "letdown at 40" is frequently due to slowing up of digestion—a thing that can often be *checked.*

Around 40, it is quite common for the gastric flow to become scantier and feebler in digestive power. By *quickening* and *strengthening* the gastric juices, Fleischmann's Yeast *tones up* digestion—gives just the help so many people over 40 especially need.

It gives you, besides, the tonic action of 4 vitamins—each one an essential for good health.

Eat Fleischmann's Yeast regularly 3 times every day—one cake about ½ hour before each meal—plain or in a little water.

$25 WILL BE PAID FOR LETTERS of success after 40—so helpful to others we wish to print them. If you can truly credit to Fleischmann's Yeast some part of the health that made your success possible—write us—enclosing your picture. (Letters and pictures cannot be returned.) Life Begins, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York.

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"I'm not holding her."

"She'll stay as long as you do—you know that—or she'll try. But I just want to tell you that you'll be responsible for whatever happens to that girl—"

"You don't have to tell me that."

"Then why—"

"I'll get her away from here."—he hesitated—"as soon as I honestly can."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do."

She gave him her hand. "All right, McCroy—that's good enough for me."

Jane played with them in the afternoon.

On the next Thursday afternoon, Harry McCroy and Harley Grove entered an abandoned sector of the mine. It was part of the very early working, and had been solid as Gibraltar. They were pleased to find that the crack had not spread this far. It was the most promising development of their tour. It seemed logical that they might find a solid roof by opening a section as near to the old working as possible. That might solve the difficulty for the immediate future, at least.

A messenger came with the information that Dr. McCroy was to call his home. They went to the junction point within the mine, and Harry made the call.

Harrison Penner had come with his party to take Phyllis home. Jane was having them to dinner that evening. Would he ask Mr. Grove? Dolly had already promised.

Harley Grove was pleased. "I feel like a celebration tonight."

People were on Harry's porch. Boys of the neighborhood were gathered about the long, expensive car, in which a chauffeur sat stiffly.

Clay was talking to Jane. They came down to the gate together. Jane kissed Harry. Her eyes were troubled. "You remember Clay?"

"Glad to see you, Anford." Harry tried to make the welcome sound more hearty than he felt.

Clay's hand and his mocking eyes informed Harry that nothing had changed between them.

MRS. PLUNKETT, impressed by the company and the car, came up to the occasion magnificently. Dinner for eight was nothing at all to one who had to cook for the church banquets. In honor of the occasion she wore her special serving dress, and insisted upon handling every detail personally, leaving the madam for her guests. Mrs. Plunkett had never acted or talked quite like this before, Jane whispered, adding that she must have acquired her company manners from the movies.

Mrs. Plunkett's surpassing moment came when the handsome Mr. Anford made a flowery speech, in which he compared her most flatteringly with the finest chefs in all the capitals of the world.

Clay dominated the group with his assurance. He made it quite plain to everybody, including the observant Mrs. Plunkett, that his feeling for the beautiful bride had not been lessened merely because he had been defeated once. He served fair warning on Harry McCroy that he, Clay Anford, was not to be trusted. Russ Duncan sat back, and his eyelid dropped significantly.

"How's your golf, Harry?" Russ asked.

"Why bring that up?" Clay objected.

Harry chuckled. "I had a tough time holding Phyllis even last Sunday."

"Swell," Clay laughed. "Why don't you locate in Cleveland, McCroy? I'd like to beat you at something once."

Russ said laconically: "Harry's not so tough—if you don't make him mad. I found that out early. That's why we've always been friends. Phyl probably got under his skin—"

"We got along beautifully," Phyllis answered evenly. "It would be nice to have Harry and Jane in Cleveland, though—don't you think so, Dad?"

Harrison Penner agreed. "It seems practically unanimous, so why should I dissent?"

JANE was looking at her cup. Harry's eyes swept the table. Grove said: "But it isn't unanimous, Mr. Penner. A lot of people in Etruria want Harry and Jane to stay right here. In fact, it's quite important that they do. This boy is doing a job for us that nobody has ever done before."

"What kind of a job, Grove?"

"A human job. You can read about him in the *Bulletin* next month. I finished the paper last night. Sorry if I've embarrassed you, Doctor—" Grove was smiling.

"Who started this?" Harry asked.

"I suppose I did," Clay said regretfully. "I always seem to be starting things that make you look good. It won't happen again, McCroy."

Phyllis persisted: "What is it that Harry does so well, Mr. Grove? I'm sure Father will be interested."

Harrison Penner was looking with approval upon Dr. McCroy. So was Jane. So, in fact, was Mrs. Plunkett, whose serving dress was partly visible in the crack of the swinging door that led to the kitchen, the better to recount all of this to the town.

Harley Grove explained the work that Harry was doing. Clay's eyes went calculatingly about the table, stopped for a moment with Phyllis.

Harrison Penner was impressed. Clay's voice broke a significant silence in a frankly significant manner. "I've done a lot of loose talking here this evening, but I mean what I say now. Mr. Penner—it occurs to me that if McCroy can make himself so valuable to this one mine, why couldn't he do the same kind of job on a bigger scale?" He hesitated. "I mean—why couldn't we bring him to Cleveland and turn him loose with his ideas on all of our properties?"

The table was quiet. Harry flushed, looked quickly at Jane, saw her eyes drop from his to the cloth.

Harrison Penner considered for a moment. "There might be something in that, Clay." He turned to look at Harry.

They were all looking at Harry. In Phyl's black eyes were points of silver.

"Suppose," Harrison Penner said slowly, "that, for the moment, we assume that it might be done, that you could have an office in the same corridor with Clay and Russell—and you young fellows could sneak away occasionally, not too often, understand, for some of that golf?"

Harry's face was flushed. "It's very flattering, Mr. Penner, and very kind. It's very attractive—and sometime in the future I'd like to do it; but I've got a job to finish here first."

Penner lifted his hands. He had made his offer. Harry saw Jane frown, caught a gleam of anger from Phyl's black eyes. Harley Grove was looking at Harry. Russ was smiling.

Clay persisted. "I'm sure Mr. Grove wouldn't stand in your way."

Grove replied: "No, I wouldn't; but in fairness to Dr. McCroy, I think you ought to know what he means."

Harley Grove explained the situation at the mine, its rich resources, the fault which had developed in the roof, Harry's lone fight against the men and the company. Harrison Penner and Clay Anford, listening intently, exchanged a quick glance during the recital. When Grove had finished, Penner said: "I admire your attitude, young man. It makes me all the more certain that we have a place for you. The offer will be open. When you're ready, let us know."

"Thank you, Mr. Penner."

Clay said: "Don't make it too long, McCroy. After all, you can be too idealistic. I'm all for making things as safe as we can for the men—but you've got to expect an occasional accident, you know."

Harry flared. "It was one of those occasional accidents that killed my father."

"But you can't eliminate all danger—"

"That's where we differ again, Anford. My idea of running a mine is to leave nothing to chance, and as little as possible to owners who will gamble human life for the sake of tonnage." His chin was out and his voice firm. "You might as well know that, Mr. Penner, in case you offer me that job again."

A dish dropped in the kitchen.

WHEN the guests had gone, Phyllis with them, to their hotel for an early-morning start, Jane left Harry at the door and went to her room. He followed her there, found her crying bitterly.

"Jane, please—"

"Don't touch me. You needn't have disgraced me by being rude to my friends in my home—"

"I was only telling them the truth—"

She faced him, furiously angry. "If you didn't want to rise above this muck, why did you ever leave it in the first place?"

"I do want to, Jane, but I can't just yet—"

"That's foolish. This mine will get along without you very well, and you know it. If you expect me to live in this hole—"

"Well, if you want to quit, Jane, if the fun has worn off for you—"

Her face was distraught, her voice enraged: "You're the one who is quitting. You haven't the courage to go through with what you started. I gave up my life, my friends, for you; I've hated it here, because I thought you certainly would take advantage of your opportunities; I had a right to expect that—"

His voice was cold. "If you think I'm going to run after any bones thrown my way by Clay Anford, you're mistaken. If you think I'm going to take any opportunities manufactured by your rich friends—"

"Oh, you're impossible—"

"Am I? Well, wait a minute. You know this whole thing is a deliberate

scheme to get you back. It was all rehearsed—"

"Clay—"

"I'm not so dumb as you all thought. This is something you all cooked up in Cleveland. Phyllis sprung it on me when we played golf—and don't say you weren't in on it, because you played sick so she could get me alone—"

"I played sick! Oh, you're so stupid—"

"Maybe I am; but not stupid enough to fall for that play they put on here. All that talk of Anford's about me putting my ideas to work on a big scale! You know what I'd be in Cleveland? I'd have an office, and that's all. I'd draw a salary and be a figurehead. They'd have you back, and you'd have them. Well, you can have them if you want them; but I'll stay here where I can be of some use to my own people—"

"Your own people! God, I'm sick of them and their narrow, stupid gossip. If you prefer them to me—"

"How about you and your rich friends?"

"I tell you they were only trying to help you."

"They're not interested in me, and you know it. I'll work for what I get. I don't want any of their influence—particularly anything that comes from Clay Anford or Phyllis. You might as well get that straight."

They were glaring at each other.

"You'll never get out of here on your own, Harry McCroy!"

"Then I'll never get out."

"If you think I'm going to stay here all my life—and bring up a family—" She hesitated, then dropped to the bed.

"Go on and say it, Jane. You want to, don't you?"

She lay sobbing, did not answer.

"Then I'll say it for you. It's what's been on your mind all along, anyhow, from the beginning. I've known it. If you want to go back with them, if you want a divorce—"

She sat up. "Is that the way you feel?"

"That's the way you want me to feel, isn't it? You still have time to go back with them in the morning—"

He left the room. She heard the door slam below, and the motor of his car roar away.

Jane went to the phone and called Phyllis. After she had packed, she went to the hotel. In the morning she went with them to Cleveland.

To keep his wife, to cling fast to his ideals, to hold his job—can Dr. Harry solve that problem? Don't fail to read the climax of this fine novel in the next (the February) issue.

MORNING SMILE

(Continued from page 33)

of him. She loved him without change, had no petty deceptions, knew when to be silent. In a word, she was tender. And for her, Peter's smile had a quality of heaven—a man's heaven, something difficult to have attained; he smiled as if he meant it, because he did mean it. That part of life which he might have missed,

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or might have taken—with a smile brave or pitiful or resigned—that part of life he had *not* missed. He could keep his morning smile, on that score. And when, in time, a little Peter looked up at them, there, dim and blurred on blurry, sketchy features, was the faint light of his father's smile, beginning again.

THAT year was 1950, when men permitted and even invited a great war. Peter Mann was twenty-six years old. And regardless of his defense of wife and minor son, Peter went to this war, in a manner of terrible routine. He didn't believe in it, either in its alleged "causes," or in its quite arbitrary alignments. He endured it as he would have endured a volcano or an earthquake, entered upon it without thinking through to find whether this cataclysm were not less unavoidable. He was an average man, fed for fodder into the maw of the savage Twentieth Century. His father and mother were living, and they and his wife and the little Peter were there to see him go away. He had no grand last word for them. He was in a sucking whirlpool, and there was no rope. As the train pulled out, he shouldered to a window, lifted his cap high and smiled. His mother said: "Oh, my God! He looked the way he used to look when he was a little boy!" His father said nothing, trying not to feel anything. But Peter's wife, clinging to their baby, ground out: "I can't forgive them—the ones that let it happen. They know perfectly well what they're doing! And they don't care."

Peter's smile was still with them—brave, trusting, expectant, and beautiful.

They never saw it again. The rest they heard from a neighbor's son, who came home wounded. Before that one died, he told them about Peter:

"I don't know what happened. Who does know such things? It wasn't the way we thought it would be, you understand. Nor for the reasons they'd said. Peter and I used to talk about that. I don't know what happened, that last day he was there beside me—in the hell. Then he wasn't there any more. I looked—he was down. I got down somehow beside him. All he said was: There's a mistake somewhere. Tell them— Then he looked hard at me, and beyond me, and he smiled. Oh, a grand smile—as if he saw something he'd always known was there, and that he'd found at last. Looked up and smiled so nice—kind of like a little fellow. And then he died. He would have liked it if things had been better. We all would, of course."

DOCTOR DOGBODY'S LEG

(Continued from page 25)

The hour had gone six before Mr. Tunn again appeared in the taproom, entering from the kitchen, while he picked his teeth with the air of a man who had dined well and was deeply content with the world. Two patrons of the house came in at this moment, and with a nod to the landlord, went to their customary corner at the left of the fireplace. The first, Ned Balthus, was a burly man of middle size, dressed in a worn and weather-stained coat, with anchor buttons of silver, and wearing a wig of the kind called "Grizzle Major." There was not a better old fellow in Portsmouth, nor one with a kinder heart; but his face was marred with the scar of a cutlass-slash that gave him a most forbidding frown. He had been a Navy gunner for nearly half a century; and now, at the age of retirement, some small employment had been found for him at the Portsmouth Arsenal. His companion, Mr. Ostiff, an engraver of charts to the Admiralty, was a tall spare man in middle life, whose small mouth, sharp nose and long upper lip gave him a look of somewhat priggish solemnity, belied by a pair of nearsighted gray eyes with a twinkle of mischief in them. They had no sooner seated themselves when the drawer came up with a pint-pot of beer which he set down before Balthus. The gunner nodded appreciatively.

"Aye, Tom; malt first," he remarked, as he never failed to do on these occasions. "Spirits, yes, but only on a firm foundation of beer."

"And yours, Mr. Ostiff?"

"Purl Royal, Tom," he said after some deliberation. "And mind you! The right dash of wormwood—not too much!"

A MOMENT later the landlord joined his two old friends.

"Gad, Tunn!" Ostiff remarked dryly. "You look as though you'd come into a fortune."

"And so I have, Mr. Ostiff," said Tunn, taking a seat at the end of the table with a comfortable sigh. "I do believe it! A landlord's fortune are the guests who choose his house. I've had the luck to add one today, a rare gentleman, if ever I saw one. If ye'll allow me to say so, he'd make a companion to those of ye who favor this corner."

"We'd best decide that for ourselves," said Ostiff, still more dryly.

"I'd be far from wishing to foist him amongst ye, Mr. Ostiff," Tunn replied; "and he'd be the last to permit it. But he's to lodge close by, and he's done me the honor to say the Tortoise will suit him well for his evenings."

"What's his name?"

"Doctor Dogbody."

Mr. Balthus set down his pot with a bang.

"Dogbody!" he exclaimed. "Not F. Dogbody?"

"There could be only the one, surely," said Ostiff. "You mean to say it's the man's name?"

"Tunn, is it F. Dogbody?" Balthus repeated eagerly.

"I'll not be sure as to that," said the landlord.

"One leg?"

"Aye. His left one's off just above the knee."

The gunner brought his hand down upon his thigh with a resounding smack. "Damn my eyes!" he exclaimed. "He's here? In Portsmouth?"

"Aye," said Tunn. "He was directed to me by a friend of mine in London. The Doctor was on a hunt for lodgings, in Portsmouth here, and I took him to Mrs. Quigg's. . . . Ye know him, then, do ye, Ned?"

"Know him!" said Balthus. "God's rabbit! Where's the old seaman that don't know Doctor Dogbody? I'm astonished at the pair of ye who've not heard of him till this day. But there's this to be said: he's none of your half-pay surgeons. I'll warrant he's not spent six weeks ashore in a quarter of a century. A better-loved man never trod a ship's deck."

"How did he lose his leg?" asked Tunn.

Balthus sat back in his seat with a look of pleased recollection on his face. "Well may ye ask, Tunn! I've heard him tell the tale a dozen times, if I've heard it once—and never twice the same."

"The man must be the very king of liars," said Ostiff testily.

The gunner smiled. "Say ye so! I'll say naught. Damn my eyes if I don't believe *all* his tales are true! And mark ye! If ever a man lost his leg in some strange way and survived the loss miracle-fashion, as ye might say, that man is Dr. F. Dogbody. There's nothing humdrum about him. If he no more than spits to leeward, he does it with an air of his own."

THE door opened at this moment and another friend of the Tortoise entered. Captain Thankful Runyon was a retired seaman from Boston, in America, who now owned two Nantucket whaling vessels operated by his sons. He was also half-owner of a small merchant vessel which plied chiefly between Boston and Portsmouth with sperm-oil, for which the British Admiralty was an excellent customer. Captain Runyon, whose business it was to dispose of the oil, spent a part of each year in Portsmouth, and despite his being a Yankee, was well liked at the Tortoise. He was in his early sixties, spare, wiry, with a sunburnt, leathery face and neck. Although he had spent much of his life at sea, he was a man of excellent education, which he had acquired himself.

"Here's one will bear me out, I'll warrant," said Balthus, as Captain Runyon took his place amongst them. "Captain, ye must have heard of one of our old Navy surgeons, Dr. F. Dogbody?"

"Never, Balthus, never," Runyon replied in his curt manner. "Hot pot for me, Tom," he added to the drawer who stood at his side. He turned again to the gunner. "Peabodys, yes; ye can raise three or four in a ten-minute walk anywhere in New England. I know a Fairbody or two, and one Angelbody in the West India trade. But a Dogbody or a Catbody it's not been my fortune to meet. Friend of yours, Balthus?"

"I'd wish him to think me one," the gunner replied gravely, and the reproach implied by his manner was obvious.

"No offense, Balthus," the Captain replied. "We've names on our side of the water as odd as any of yours. The best friend I had in the world, in my younger days, was George Pigwart. Lost at sea, off Cape Horn, poor fellow! But what did ye wish to say of Surgeon Dogbody?"

"He's here, gentlemen!" Tunn put in in a low voice. The street door swung open, admitting the Doctor himself, and

a gust of wet air that made the lamps flicker for a moment. Balthus half rose from his seat, thought better of it, and dropped back again.

"Wait!" he cautioned the landlord. "Say naught!"

After a sweeping glance around the room, Dr. Dogbody was about to take a seat at a vacant table on the other side of the fireplace when Balthus called out: "Clean sponges, damn your eyes! And be quick about it!" The surgeon stopped short, spun round on his wooden peg, and brought down his bushy white eyebrows as he peered through the dimly-lighted room. Then he stumped across to the table, his blue eyes twinkling.

"Not Ned Balthus?" he exclaimed. "Not that corny-faced gunner of the old *Minerva?* Gentlemen, does the man call himself Balthus?"

"Aye, that he does!" said the gunner heartily. The surgeon took him by the shoulders and held him at arm's-length. "By God, Ned! I've supposed you dead these five years gone! D'ye mind Captain Farshingle, of the *Trent?* 'Twas him that told me. You were back on the West India station, he said, and went off with yellow fever."

"He might well have heard it, Doctor," Balthus replied. "'Twas a near thing. But I worried through, though a good half of the *Ceres'* men left their bones in the cursed place. But let me make ye known to these gentlemen."

IN the gunner's eyes there was a gleam of honest triumph as he noted the reception accorded the Doctor. That they approved of him was plain; and it was Ostiff himself, hard to please in company, who invited him to take his place amongst them. The Doctor, sensing the sincerity of these overtures, needed no further urging.

"So ye've come ashore at last, Doctor?" Balthus asked, when the drawer had attended to the wants of the rest of the company.

"Ashore? Damn my eyes! Who says it?" the surgeon replied with a snort.

"I understood as much from the landlord here."

"Begging your pardon, sir, if I took your meaning wrong," Mr. Tunn put in hastily. "I was telling these gentlemen ye'd honored the Tortoise with a call this afternoon, and I'd the notion ye'd retired from the service."

"Temporarily, sir. No, no! There's a good score of years' use in me yet. But I won't say I'm not pleased with a bit of a holiday, now that old Boney is safely caged."

"And well ye might be, Doctor," said Balthus. "Ye've not been ashore long, then?"

"Six weeks come next Thursday. I was paid off out of the old *Bedford.* She's to be broken up."

Mr. Ostiff shook his head. "Many's the good ship will go that way, now," he said. "I wish we may not live to regret them."

"As to that, sir, I'm the same mind as yourself," said the Doctor. "It tears my heart to see it. But since go they must, the Admiralty might better have scuttled them all, off soundings. The least of them deserved a better fate than the breaking-yard."

"Your Admiralty Board had fewer for that end at the close of the American War," said Runyon with a sly grin.

"Pay no heed to this Pompkinshire Yankee, Doctor," said Ostiff. "By God's grace, the Americans managed to raise up one seaman amongst them—Paul Jones; and even he was born on this side. But Runyon will boast of him, in season and out. To hear him, you'd think Paul Jones had destroyed the entire British fleet."

"I'll do them the honor to say they'd more than one of his mettle," the Doctor remarked.

"Handsomely admitted, sir!" said Runyon warmly. "I've never had such an acknowledgment from Ostiff. You've met them at sea, I take it?"

"Aye; both to my pleasure and sorrow."

Captain Runyon turned to Ostiff with a triumphant smile. "There, sir! The best of testimony for the defense!"

"What mean ye, fellow-citizens of Athens, that ye turn every stone to scrape wealth together, and take so little care of your children, to whom one day you must relinquish it all?"
—Socrates.

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"For the defense?" said Ostiff. "Gad, sir, I like the way you put it! I'll leave it to friend Balthus, here, if you've ever taken a defensive position."

"He'll not acknowledge, Doctor Dogbody," said Runyon, "that an American ship-of-war ever came off best, in a battle against odds. There was the old *Protector,* now. You may have heard of her?"

"The *Protector?* Captain John Foster Williams?"

"The very same, sir!" said Runyon delightedly. "You knew her, then?"

"From truck to keelson," the Doctor replied quietly. "Oddly enough, it was the *Protector* that cost me my leg."

"You don't tell me!" said Runyon, an expression of keen interest on his face. "Would you—would you be willing to favor us with the circumstances?"

"Quite, if these other gentlemen are of the same mind as yourself."

"We'd count it a privilege, Doctor Dogbody," said Ostiff, with a slight bow. Ned Balthus stole a cautious glance at the surgeon's face, but he was gazing past him, with a grave, musing, abstracted expression.

"Tom!" the landlord called.

"Coming, sir," said the drawer.

"YOU'LL mind, Ned," the Doctor began, with a glance at Balthus, "the first time we were on the West India station together, and *I* came so near to a taking-off with the cursed yellow-jack?"

"Aye, sir, well!" said Balthus with an emphatic nod. "And how grieved we was at thought of leaving ye behind."

"I need say nothing of the two months that followed. I took what comfort the place afforded in the way of convalescence, and was then appointed surgeon for the homeward voyage to a Company ship, the *Admiral Duff,* returning to England with a cargo of sugar and tobacco which we'd taken on at St. Kitts. The *Duff* was a well-found ship, though nothing to boast of in the way of speed. We had a crew of two hundred and fifty, and for the weight of armament, thirty-six twelve-pounders on the gun-deck. Her captain was Richard Strange—'Mad Dick,' he was called behind his back, and well he deserved the name! But mind you, he was mad in the way of genius. His men worshiped him; it was a happy ship, and we'd not been a week at sea when I was perfectly recovered, and as content as an old Navy surgeon could be on a merchantman.

"Well sir, Dick Strange thought no more of the valuable cargo he was taking to London than did his men. It was so much ballast, and his owners, in London, could whistle for it. The man was a born fighter, and I saw how matters stood before we'd lost the land. We were for prizes, so I spent my time with my lob-lolly boys, preparing dressings, sponges, tourniquets and the like, certain that we'd have use for a plenty before Dick Strange would consent to sail home.

"We took two Yankee brigs in the first week, and a third the week after, and sent all to St. Kitts; then, b'gad, you'd have said the seas had been swept clean. Not a sail did we spy, though we were in the direct track of all shipping up and down the Atlantic seaboard. We had five weeks of dirty easterly weather and could scarce see a mile; even so, we'd expected better luck than that.

"We got well north, and crept to within ten leagues of the American coast. On the morning of the ninth of June, after a thick fog had cleared away—this was in 1780—a sail was sighted to the eastward not six miles off. We made sure he was a Yankee by the cut of his royals and were ready to eat him up. Damme, I had my share of the prize-money already spent! But we had to reach him first, and there was not wind enough to lift a feather.

"We'd four boats out, towing, within ten minutes. The men put their backs into it, but you'll know what headway they made with a thousand-ton ship. Nevertheless, we moved. Captain Strange was halfway up the mizzen ratlines, egging them on. I can see him at this moment, clear against the blue sky, one minute with his eye to his spying-glass, the next taking off his wig to mop his face with. Then he made out that the Yankee was towing as well, and in our di-

rection, so we felt easier. It was clear they wanted to engage.

"So it went for an hour, but the breeze came at last. The Yankee had it first, and as soon as we spied their boats at the falls, in came ours. Being to windward, they edged down toward us, and it was a near thing but they'd have caught us without so much as steerage-way, the breeze was that light. But the old *Duff* felt it at last. Long before this we had the hammocks up and stuffed into the nettings, decks wet and sanded, matches lighted and the bulkheads hooked up. They flew the English ensign, but Strange was not deceived by that. As we passed him, not fifty yards to leeward, Strange called out: 'What ship is that?' The only reply was from their sailing-master bawling out orders to the seamen. They steered to cross our stern and hauled up under our quarter; and at that moment, up went their true colors, and their captain replied: 'Continental ship *Protector!* Come on! We're ready for you!'

"And b'gad, they were, gentlemen; but no more ready than ourselves. We'd caught a Tartar, as we learned, directly we were abreast of him once more. He let go every gun on his starboard side, and every shot hulled us, I'll take my oath! The *Duff* was a higher ship, and our gunners were hard put to it to bring their guns to bear where they would do most damage. But the noble fellows performed prodigies, and for all their advantage, our fire was near as murderous as their own. The action began within easy pistol-shot, and it was yardarm to yardarm from then on. We were fairly matched, as to armament, but they had seventy marines amongst them, whilst we had none; and British seamen are no match for marines when it comes to the use of small-arms. They killed our topmen as fast as we could replace them. And they'd not forgotten, the rascals, that there were fair targets aft. But Dick Strange's quizzing-glass never dropped from his eye, save for an instant when the ribbon to it was cut by a musket-ball. He caught the eyepiece before it could fall, twirled it carelessly by its bit of frayed ribbon, and replaced it just as our lads let go a broadside that might have taught them better manners.

"Aye, it was warm work; but the end of it was that, owing partly to good fortune and partly to our greater height, they made a sieve of us from wind to water. Down came our foremast, then the main; and b'gad, the mizzen followed! There was nothing left a yard high to hoist our colors on. The Yankee thought we'd struck and ceased firing. Little he knew Dick Strange! D'ye know what he did, sir?"

DOCTOR DOGBODY paused and took up his glass. Finding it empty, he turned to the drawer who was standing near by, forgetful of his duties while he listened. "Here, Tom, you rascal! Damn my eyes! I might positively die of thirst with you looking on!"

Tapleke, galvanized into action by the abrupt summons, was away to the bar and back in an instant. The Doctor, after a generous refreshment, resumed:

"Well, sir, Strange was fairly beside himself, though you wouldn't have guessed it by his manner. To have been thought to have struck, was an insult so rank that he could scarce bear it. He glanced coolly around the quarter-deck—the place was a shambles of the dead and dying—and his eye fell on a lad who was standing near by. 'Fetch me a boat-flag,' said Strange, 'and be quick about it!' The lad was back with one in ten seconds. Strange made it fast to his cane, for he fancied his little stick even on shipboard. With this he sprang onto the poop and roared out to Williams: 'I've not struck, sir! Tell your bloody bang-straws to try and hit my stick!' And gentlemen, I give you my word: he stood there holding that small flag aloft for a full ten minutes. But in the end, hit it they did. An eighteen-pound shot clipped off the stick within an inch of Strange's hand.

"Our sick-bay was on the orlop, and there I was at work with my two assistants and the dressers. But with the best will in the world we could not keep pace with the stream of shattered bleeding fellows that were carried or came crawling down to us. Aye, it was raw-meat day, one of the worst in my experience; the tubs were heaped high with arms and legs. Busy as we were, we'd no time then to know what was taking place above us, and you can imagine my astonishment when one of the lieutenants came to me, with orders from Captain Strange to move with all my wounded to the gun-deck. We were sinking. It was the first intimation which I'd had of the seriousness of our situation.

"Serious, do I say? Damme, it was hopeless, as I saw a moment after—but Dick Strange would not call it so. If ever an English seaman knew happiness, it was Mad Dick in the last half-hour of his life. And there was that in his spirit to have made a ravening lion out of the veriest sheep in his ship's company, had there been any such, which there were not. By God, they fought like devils, even the lads of fourteen. The Yankee was right alongside, and we'd not carried a dozen of our wounded up from the orlop when, even above the uproar overhead, we heard Strange bellow out: 'All hands on deck to repel boarders!'

"There was no more thought of the wounded then; nor would they have wished us to think of them. Every man of us was on deck in an instant. My cutlass and pistols were in my cabin, and I seized the first weapon that came to hand, a tomahawk, and rallied with the others at the larboard bulwarks. There were not above a score of us left; but with Dick Strange to lead us, we felt equal to a gross of Yankees. He'd a pistol in one hand and a cutlass in the other, and his quizzing-glass with its broken ribbon was still at his eye. I was pleased that he should have a word for me at such a moment, with the Yankee closing in, not a dozen yards off. 'Dogbody,' said he coolly, with a nod toward the *Protector,* 'we'll have a noggin of rum, directly, in my cabin yonder.' And I haven't the least doubt that he was perfectly convinced we should.

"There had been no time to get out our nettings, and the Yankees swarmed into us the moment they grappled. They were five to one, and the *Duff* had settled to such an extent that our bulwarks were now lower than their own, which made it an easy matter for them to board. Two stout fellows were upon me at once, to their cost, if I may be permitted to say so. The third I did not see until it was too late, else I might have lost both legs in place of one. I had my right foot raised and resting on a casing by the bulwark, when I felt a most peculiar numbing sensation in my left leg, and immediately I fell back on my buttocks. As I did so, I beheld my severed leg lying beside me; and a gigantic Indian—he looked all of eight feet high, although I found later he was but six feet six—who by this time had rushed by me, drawing back his cutlass for a swing at the man beyond. Him he cut fairly in two, at one ferocious blow.

"I WILL spare you the details. It is enough to say we were taken, and fairly taken; but the Americans had little good of their prize. There was no surrender. We sank under their very feet not five minutes after they had boarded. Captain Strange went down with his ship, by a miracle unwounded; but he was not one to suffer the humiliation of capture. Not having his delicacy of feeling in this respect, I seized the first floating object I could get my hands upon in the swirl of waters that closed over the *Duff.* Fortunately, I had had the presence of mind, after my leg was off, to tie up the femoral artery with a bit of marlin, and had then plunged the stump into a bucket of tar, else I should have died before I could be taken up. As it was, I'd lost a deal of blood by the time I was laid amongst the wounded, both ours and theirs, aboard the *Protector.*

"Their surgeons were working at top speed; but with so many to be served, they were forced to choose those most likely to live. Two of the dressers were about to take up a fellow, one of their own men, lying next me, but the surgeon said: 'Let Little lie. Attend to the others first. He will die.' And indeed he might well have thought so, for the poor fellow had been horribly wounded in the face by a charge of grape. I rose on my elbow and turned to look at him. The man was perfectly sensible, and I saw that in his eye which gave me a most vivid impression of indomitable courage. It was curious, more than curious! As our glances met, something passed between us: complete sympathy, mutual respect; and I was convinced, not only that the man would not die, but that I could learn to love him as a brother.

"My professional interest in his case was immediately aroused. In my capacity as surgeon I have a brusque, compelling way with me; and in an instant I had one of their dressers fetching for me. He brought a basin of water, sponges and lint; and managing to raise myself to a sitting position, I proceeded to dress Little's wounds. Curiously enough, I felt not the least sensation of pain in my severed leg, nor, at the time, any great inconvenience from it. Little had been wounded by three balls: one between the neck-bone and windpipe, one through the jaw, lodging in the roof of his mouth and taking off a piece of his tongue, and the third through the lip, which had destroyed nearly all of his upper teeth. I worked over him for a full hour, removed the lodged ball, cleansed the wounds, sewed up his lip, and stanched the flow of blood. The event of it was that he perfectly recovered."

Doctor Dogbody rose abruptly. "I ask your leave for one moment, gentlemen," he said; then, turning to Tapleke: "Tom, your necessary-house." "This way, sir," said the drawer, leading him toward the passageway to the left, and the Doctor followed him out with much dignity.

Mr. Ostiff looked after him with a faint smile, in which puzzlement and admiration were mingled.

"Balthus," said he, "I can scarce believe our friend to be the liar you have pictured him."

"A liar?" Captain Runyon exclaimed indignantly. "The tale has the very stamp of truth upon it. A few details may be inexact, for the *Duff* was no doubt the stronger ship as to armament; but I've often heard, at home, of the battle, and I'll take my oath the *Protector* conquered her exactly as the Doctor has related the circumstances. What's this, Balthus?"

"I said naught of his being a liar," Balthus replied warmly. "What I did say was that I'd heard him tell of his lost leg a dozen times, and never twice—" He broke off, for the Doctor was again approaching.

Captain Runyon waited with impatience for him to be seated.

"Sir," he said, "the man whose wounds you dressed could have been no other than Captain Luther Little."

"So it was, sir," said Dogbody, "though he was not a captain at this time. He was a young man on the *Protector*, and served in her as a midshipman and prizemaster. An older brother, George Little, was a lieutenant on the same vessel. They belonged to a family, little in name only, from the town of Marshfield, in the colony of Massachusetts."

"I've no doubt that you became excellent friends, after such a meeting?" said Runyon.

"The very best, sir. Mr. Luther Little was my junior by ten years, but the small service I was able to render him, whilst wounded, combined, as I have said, with something compatible in our natures, served to draw us together upon terms of sincere liking and complete understanding. His elder brother, George, was no less my friend. For the next eight months I was a guest in the Little home. I was, to be sure, a prisoner of war, but never was the least restraint put upon my liberty, nor upon my sentiments as a loyal Englishman. And I came to understand the sentiments of our late colonists better, perhaps, than many an Englishman who has never had occasion to live amongst them. They are an admirable nation, and I have little doubt will be a great one in the course of time. It could scarcely be otherwise when one considers the stock from which they sprung."

THE Doctor paused to give a keen glance from under his eyebrows at Captain Runyon.

"You are acquainted with the Littles, sir?" he asked.

"I have not that honor," Runyon replied, "although I have more than once passed through the town of Marshfield. The place was as famous at one time for a gigantic Indian follower of the Little boys as for the family itself."

"Of the name of Powana?" Dr. Dogbody asked.

"Bless my soul, the very same!" said Captain Runyon; then: "Jehosaphat! Could it have been—"

"Yes sir. It could have been, and was, Powana who deprived me of my leg; and a straighter, cleaner blow was never given with a cutlass. I could not have made a better amputation at leisure, with my saws and razors, than was done by the Indian. His name '*Powana*' signifies *whale* in the Natick tongue, and a whale he was in stature. He carried me about like an infant at Marshfield, whilst my stump was healing; and when it had healed, made me a very serviceable wooden leg to replace that I had lost."

"Is it the one you are wearing, Doctor?" Will Tunn asked.

"No, Mr. Tunn, it is not. Curiously enough, Powana's leg was to serve me but a short time, as I shall explain in a moment. . . . Nine months, almost to a day from the time of our first meeting, Little and I were again at sea, although not, to be sure, as companions-in-arms. He was now in virtual command of a formidable little vessel, the letter-of-marque brig *Jupiter*, carrying twenty guns and one hundred and fifty men. I say in virtual command, for the owner and nominal captain was a merchant of the town of Salem, in Massachusetts, a man of the name of Gorme.

"My status was still that of prisoner of war. Little had gone bail for me to the American authorities; and whilst he would have liked nothing better than to release me, that he was in honor bound not to do

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until I could be exchanged in the usual way, for an American prisoner of war.

"We cruised for a full three weeks, in a southerly direction, without particulars worthy of mention; but I am obliged to say that this result was due to the excessive timidity of Captain Gorme. We often sighted vessels; whereupon Gorme would examine them through his spying-glass with the fluttery apprehension of an old woman, and would not allow Little to approach nearer than five miles.

"One morning whilst crossing the Gulf Stream not far off the American coast, we sighted an object a mile or so to leeward which Gorme, for once, was willing to approach for a nearer view. There was a light breeze from the northeast, and a curious popple, due perhaps to the action of the Gulf Stream itself. We bore away and soon made out the object to be a floating log of considerable size, and clinging to it were three men whom we first took to be Indians. They were dressed in skins resembling that of the raccoon, though there were but three rings on the tail instead of five. Their hair was long, straight and black, like that of the Iroquois; but strangely enough, their eyes were of the deepest blue, and their skins almost as light as those of Englishmen. They were nearly dead when picked up; and in spite of all I could do, with the able assistance of my Yankee colleague, they lived but a few days. Powana, who was, of course, on board, was unable to exchange a word with them. To the great loss of science, they died before he was able to learn whence they came.

"BUT I was about to say that we took on board the log as well as the Indians, if such they were, who had clung to it, for Captain Gorme believed it might be useful for spars. We found it to be of a nature as strange as the mysterious castaways. Not a man on board was able to identify the wood. The outer bark was of a salmon color, as light and porous as cork-wood. It extended inward to a depth of a good eight inches, whence it was succeeded by a heartwood almost as hard as iron, and yet it could be worked. When sawn, its peculiar fragrance attracted clouds of butterflies from the main; they appeared in countless thousands, so that, for some days, the ship could scarce be navigated. I learned, somewhat later, that this heartwood sank like lead in the water; and strangest of all, perhaps, it was impervious to the attacks of the teredo worm, the ruination of our ships in warm seas."

"Good God, sir!" Mr. Ostiff exclaimed. "How could you be certain of that?"

"Quite simply, as I shall explain in a moment. The log, though useless for spars, was none the less a valuable find, and Captain Gorme was beside himself with vexation that he had not been able to learn, from the Indians, whence it came. The outer part was cut up for corks, and served the purpose better than the bark of the Spanish cork-oak. From a morsel of the heartwood, Mr. Colbarch, the ship's carpenter, who was my good friend, fashioned me a leg to replace the temporary one made by Powana; and a more comfortable, serviceable limb, once I was accustomed to it, I have never had the pleasure of wearing. It is the one I have on at the moment.

"We proceeded on our voyage, and as the days passed, my friend Little, together with the entire ship's company, became more and more resentful toward their faint-hearted captain. At last the Captain himself, finding that he was incapable of making a resolute decision, held a secret conference with Little and placed him in command. Thereafter, Gorme kept to his cabin. As the event proved, he had not long to keep it.

"THE next day, shortly after dawn, we sighted a large schooner which showed no colors, though Little was convinced, as was I, that she was English. 'Dogbody,' said he, 'I shall now fulfill my promise. If there are American prisoners aboard that ship, you shall be exchanged.' He then ran up the signal for a parley, and we bore away toward the schooner. It was a sad moment for the pair of us, though we said naught of it. As we approached, we made out the vessel to be a smart little privateer of eighteen guns. I then went to my cabin, which was next that of the Captain, to prepare for quitting the ship; and whilst there, I heard the parley which followed.

"'What ship is that?' Little roared, through his speaking-trumpet.

"'*Lyon*, of London,' came the reply, so clearly that, although I could not see the schooner, I knew she was right alongside. 'Who are you?'

"'*Jupiter*, of Salem,' Little replied. 'Have you prisoners to exchange?'

"'That's as may be,' answered the British captain. 'What d'ye offer?'

"'A one-legged surgeon,' said Little; 'and better with one than any you've got with two.'

"'A sawbones? What name?'

"'Dogbody.'

"'Dogbody?' came the reply. 'Damn your eyes! You don't mean F. Dogbody, late of the merchantman *Duff?*'

"'Aye, the same,' said Little.

"'You mean to say you've got him there, on board?'

"'Aye,' said Little once more; 'all but his larboard leg.'

"'By God, sir,' said the British captain, 'for Dogbody I'll give you two Yankee first lieutenants, a boatswain, a gunner and a gunner's mate, three quartermasters, and half a dozen reefers for a make-weight. Will ye trade?'

"'Send 'em across. He's yours,' said Little; and within the quarter-hour the boatload of Yankee prisoners was on board, the *Lyon's* captain with them. I knew him well. We had served together two years before in the *Lowestoffe*, frigate under Captain William Locker. His name was Irons, and he had been a lieutenant in the *Lowestoffe*.

"'Dogbody,' said he, clasping my hand warmly, 'I hate to buy ye home at so cheap a rate; but these,'—with a nod toward his prisoners,—'are all I had on hand at the moment. I sent three-score off not a fortnight since to Jamaica, on one of my prizes. Well, sir,' he added, turning to Little, 'for once I've beat a Yankee in a trade; but a bargain's a bargain, as your countrymen say.'

"He had a provoking way with him, did Irons. He was tough as an old lanyard knot, and fine seaman that he was, I regret to say that he had no delicacy of feeling. Inside, he had a deep respect for the seafaring American, but he took pleasure in showing the contrary.

"Little nodded, with a grim smile. 'I'm content,' said he. He clasped my hand. 'Good-by, Dogbody, and God bless you!'

"'Little,' said I, 'I would not have believed that a prisoner of war could leave the hands of his captors with any degree of reluctance. I respect you as a man, sir, and if you will permit me to say so, esteem you as a friend.'

"'Then why leave him, Dogbody?' said Irons. 'Shall we take the little ship with us?'

"Little's eyes blazed. 'By God, sir, will ye fight?' he asked.

"Irons, who was a short, thick-set man, bristled up like a bulldog. 'Have ye ever met an Englishman that wouldn't?' said he. 'Then get ye gone to your ship,' said Little; 'for ye've not long to command her.'

"Captain Gorme, who had come out from his cabin meanwhile, stood by pressing his hands together with an expression of perfect anguish on his face, but Little paid no heed to him. The *Jupiter* buzzed like a nest of hornets before we were down the side. 'Irons,' said I, as we were being rowed across to the *Lyon*, 'you've a wildcat by the tail this time.' 'Never fear, Dogbody,' said he. 'I'll have him by the throat directly.' He was silent for a moment; then he added: 'I must make him strike in the first half-hour, for I'm damned short of ball.'

"And b'gad, gentlemen, we did! It was a miracle, no less, for we deserved to have been taken. Irons had told the plain truth: he'd powder aplenty, but only sufficient ball for six charges each for his eighteen guns. But the man was a veritable firebrand and would have used his own head for ammunition had it been necessary. We were undermatched, both as to men and guns, but the *Lyon* had a picked crew and was a worthy foe for a ship twice her size. I've never seen a vessel better handled; every shot from our guns went home. The *Jupiter's* mainmast went over the side within ten minutes, and the mizzen followed shortly; and whilst the *Lyon* had received her share of punishment, she'd lost nothing in her sails. Little performed prodigies with his disabled ship. He was tearing to board, but we kept clear. Damme, I was more than glad, for I could see Powana's towering figure above the *Jupiter's* bulwarks, and I knew that he would as soon cut off my other leg as look at me.

"I'D removed my wooden leg upon boarding the *Lyon*, for the stump of the limb was still tender. I could not bear the leg for long at a time, but would wrap cloths around the stump and make shift, for an hour or so, with a crutch. Fortunate it was that I did so on this occasion, for it was the indirect means of victory. The *Lyon's* gunners had fired their last broadside, and a murderous one it was, but we'd not a ball left. One shot had all but shattered their foremast, and Irons was dancing round our quarterdeck like a madman, shouting: 'Fall, blast you, fall!' At this moment the gunner came aft; he was dripping with sweat and breathing heavily. 'Sir,' said he to Irons, 'we're fired our last shot.' 'What's that to me?' Irons bellowed at him. 'Get ye back to your guns! Use marlin-spikes! Get ye

back to your guns, damn your blood! Use dead-eyes, chain-plates! Use reefer's nuts!'

"And b'gad, gentlemen, he did! All the rusty raffle in the ship went into the guns and on to the *Jupiter*—and with it, my new leg, which might well be classed as hardware. One of the gunners, seeing it resting by the bulwarks, seized upon it and rammed it down the muzzle of his piece amongst iron spoons, bolts, nuts and fragments of brick prized up from the galley floor. I was told afterward, upon unimpeachable authority—for I was, of course, at my own task below—that it was my leg which cost the Yankees the day. It caromed off the *Jupiter's* tottering foremast and then struck my friend Little a glancing blow on the head—which, thank God, only knocked him unconscious. The other oddments of the charge worked great havoc as well amongst the ship's company; and Gorme, who was then forced to take command, immediately struck his colors."

Doctor Dogbody broke off, refreshed himself at his glass and wiped his lips with a richly colored silk bandana.

"And what then, sir?" Mr. Tunn inquired, when it seemed apparent that the Doctor had no intention of proceeding.

"What then, Will Tunn? Why, nothing then. What more could there be, save that, when we had made temporary repairs to the two vessels, we carried our prize to the West Indies? It was a sad blow for Luther Little, but he took it like the man that he was. He refused to give his parole, and despite my strong protestations, insisted on being put aboard the *Regulus*, a dismantled seventy-four, moored in the harbor at St. Kitts, and used for prisoners of war. 'Never fear, Dogbody,' said he; 'I shall not remain long aboard of her, and I refuse that you should be compromised by my escape.' Two days later, when I went aboard the *Regulus* to pay him my daily visit and to bring him some delicacies from shore, he was gone, and Powana with him. I have never heard of either of them from that day to this."

"It is my pleasure, sir," said Runyon, "to tell you that he is alive and well, and still an honored citizen of the town of Marshfield."

"I am profoundly glad to hear it, sir," the Doctor replied.

"You have yet to say, sir," said Ostiff, "how you learned that the wood of which your leg was made, was impervious to the teredo worm."

"So I have, Mr. Ostiff," replied Dogbody. "It was a piece of rare fortune for me that the leg was not lost when fired into the *Jupiter*. After wounding Little, it struck the larboard bulwark and penetrated four inches into the oak. Captain Irons recovered it for me when he went on board to receive the ship. Some months later, whilst we were lying at Port Royal, in Jamaica, I lost the leg overboard, having unstrapped it, as was then my custom of an evening, to rest my stump. I offered a hogshead of the finest rum the island produced to the man who could fetch it up. During the next fortnight scores of the negroes risked their lives to win the reward, and one poor fellow was taken by the sharks.

"I immediately withdrew the reward and ordered that no further search should be made. But imagine my surprise, six months later, upon returning from Barbados, to find that one splendid persevering fellow had dived it up. He was a veritable sea-otter, else he could never have reached bottom at such a depth. Needless to say, I rewarded him handsomely. The leg was as good as the day I lost it; not a mark of a worm was to be seen upon it. It was like meeting an old friend to strap it on once more; and my stump being perfectly hardened by that time, I never again exposed myself to the risk of losing . . . . Bless me, Tunn! What's this?"

A great commotion was heard in the kitchen, and a few seconds later a huge black rat came running into the taproom, followed by Hodge the waiter and Bilges the kitchen-boy, in mad chase after the rodent. Doctor Dogbody, who had already donned his hat and coat in preparation for leaving, skipped across the taproom with the agility of a boy, and with a dexterous side-blow with his wooden leg, caught the rat fairly in the middle and sent it hurtling through the air against the tavern wall, where it fell lifeless. Then, with a slight bow, "Gentlemen," he said, "I bid you good evening."

But Dr. Dogbody has an even more gaudily embroidered story to tell about that leg of his. Be sure to read it in our forthcoming February issue.

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MOTHER'S HELP

(Continued from page 32)

"Isn't it? Then what is she getting at now?"

"Oh, that's all camouflage. Just to make us think it wasn't a disappointment. She's just flaunting the fact that she doesn't care."

"She flaunts very convincingly. You know he's taken that cottage over on West Cliff, with the studio?"

"Yes. And he and Kirstie were down in Fore Street yesterday buying extra saucepans."

"I should have thought his wife would prefer to buy her own saucepans."

"So should I. I wonder what will happen when his wife comes."

"Oh, yes! I'm longing for his wife to come."

"YOU mustn't," sighed Kirstie. "We mustn't. I thought—we'd promised to forget."

"I know. I know. But I can't help it."

All in the middle of hanging the new studio curtains, Bart had lost his head again. All that he had missed became too much for him.

"Besides," he added, "you love me."

She made no attempt to deny it. For she was still in her dream, her bubble world. That terrible walk back from the cove had threatened but not shattered it. Only the hue and texture of the dream had changed: it had become tragic. Nothing mattered now, except herself and Bart.

He leaned against the window and stared out at the gray flurry of waves on West Beach. Rain sluiced down the windows.

"You know what I want," he said, not looking at her.

She knew. She had gone a long way in less than three weeks. Through the long nights, tossing in her bed and listening to the wind howling across the cliffs, she had thought of little else. The dream swung between bliss and anguish.

"I don't care for anybody or anything in the world but you," she said steadily. "I'm willing to give up everything for you. Only—it must be quite open. We must go off together openly. I can't bear deception."

"I'm tied," he said. "There's Dora and the children."

But he did not say it as if he meant it, and she was quick to catch at the lack of conviction in his voice.

"An artist," she said, "oughtn't to be tied. You must be true to yourself, before everything, or how can you be true to your art? Think of Gaugin."

"Why must I think of Gaugin?" asked Bart rather crossly.

"He was an absolutely single-minded man."

"If you think," he said, interrupting her, "that I should paint better pictures if I went off with you, you're wrong. I don't think it would make any difference to my painting."

He said this quite firmly, but Kirstie was sure that he was mistaken. When you take a man away from his wife and his five children, you do it for his own good, so that he shall become an absolutely single-minded person like Gaugin. Otherwise the thing becomes just sordid, the sort of thing you hear about and condemn when it is done by people who are not you. . . .

Bart's wife came at last, through the wind and the rain, in the little train that puffed round the coast from St. Bard. The long journey from London, with five small children all just recovering from whooping-cough, had been no picnic. Dora Anderson had no nurse to help her. She could not afford one, and never had been able to afford one. Bart had no money at all: a fact which nobody would have guessed on meeting him, and which anybody would have guessed on meeting his wife and children. Their existence was a hand-to-mouth affair, but Dora had learned to scramble through it very well. She was a large, lazy thing with brown eyes and an expression of great good humor. She was growing too fat, but she still had a certain style and poise which gave an effect of elegance to the most shabby, threadbare clothes. She seldom raised her voice, and she was never in a hurry.

The burden of this day had been borne by two very energetic girls called Helen and Jackie, who had nobly helped her to nurse the children through the whooping-cough and were now coming to settle her into Cliff Cottage. They kept the children amused, dealt with attacks of train sickness, quelled crying fits, wiped little noses and cleaned toffee-stains from little mouths; they did it so well that Dora was able to sit back and read three-quarters of a detective novel.

IF the day had been fine, a good many people would have found occasion to be at the station and witness their arrival. But the torrents of rain kept everyone at home except Mary Carter, who, insatiably curious, lurked in the booking office and peeped through the window. Bart stood alone on the platform, his handsome head bared to the inclement weather. He saw his wife before the train stopped, and waved. She waved back. When he had got the carriage door open, an avalanche of women, children and luggage tumbled out onto the platform, looking, as Mary Carter said afterward, like refugees escaping from a sacked town. Bart dealt with them briskly and impartially, as if he had been some competent official from a relief committee. It was impossible to be sure which of the women was his wife, for he kissed them all; but Mary supposed it must be Jackie, who hung onto his arm rather ostentatiously as they went out of the station. He rounded them up and herded them out to a waiting car into which he packed Dora, the children, most of the luggage, and himself. Helen and Jackie, for whom there was no room, were told how to find Cliff Cottage. They were to walk up, carrying the remainder of the luggage.

"And how is everything?" asked Dora, as they drove off through the town.

He said that everything was all right. But she could see that he was depressed. She had seen that even before the train stopped.

"What did you want to bring Helen and Jackie for?" he asked.

"You knew they were coming. It was settled ages ago."

He had quite forgotten about it. He said. "I do think we might occasionally have our house to ourselves."

"Oh," promised Dora, "I'll send them home later on, when the worst of the work is over."

It was not easy to talk, for they were smothered under children, who squirmed about on their knees and interrupted.

"Have you begun painting yet?" asked Dora, through the scrimmage.

"Oh, yes. It's a good studio, down at the end of the garden, right on the cliff. A good north light. I've done a bit of painting."

"What? Those illustrations?"

"No. I can't really settle down to work till things are straight. No—I've just been painting for my own amusement—a portrait."

"Who of?" asked Dora negligently.

"Oh, for goodness sake! Must you start this catechism the moment you arrive? Have I to account for every hour of every day in the last three weeks?"

"Dear me," she murmured, and said no more.

He was not a bit like his usual self. Bad temper was not one of his besetting sins. Whatever his faults, and they were many, he was as a rule kind and affectionate in his manner to her. He never snapped her head off like this unless—unless—her tranquil heart paused for a moment and then resumed its normal beat. This momentary wince was all that remained, now, of the frightful pangs she had once suffered over Bart's inconstancy.

She winced because it was all such a nuisance, and she had hoped to get settled into the new house before anything of this sort happened to them. She had relied upon Ben Myers to keep him out of mischief. It can't have gone very far, she thought, remembering that this depression and ill temper always marked an early stage in his affairs. Later on would come a period when he would be extraordinarily happy and high-spirited. And after that a great burst of work. "I wonder who it is?" she thought. "Married—a girl—a portrait—probably. . . . I rather hope it isn't another girl. Though if she's married, it will go on longer. But these poor girls—I do think it is so hard on them. I can't help being sorry for them. Poor Helen—poor Jackie."

HELEN and Jackie, who did not much like one another, plodded through the rain in silence. Helen despised Jackie for her manner to Bart at the station. Jackie was sure Bart had meant her to ride in the car, and suspected Helen and Dora of plotting to keep her away from him. The hill up to Cliff Cottage was very steep; their parcels were very heavy; and they were getting very wet.

When at last they arrived, they found everything in frightful confusion. No fires were lit; no beds were made; nothing was unpacked; the children were crying; and there wasn't a morsel of food in the house, not even a spoonful of tea. Bart, who had stayed in comfort at the Myers house till that morning had forgotten to order anything. He helped the car driver to carry in all the luggage, and then

when he saw how wet and awful it all was, and how unpleasant the next few hours were likely to be, he said:

"I expect you women would sooner have me out of the way while you get things straight. I'll clear out, shall I?"

WITHOUT waiting for an answer, he cleared out. Dora sat down upon one of the trunks until the girls came.

"Food is the first thing," she said when she saw them. "Somebody must go and buy some at once."

"Where do we buy it?" asked Helen, who saw that this meant going out into the rain again.

"Down in the town. Whoever goes must take a large basket, for we want a lot of things: bread, and butter and milk and tea and soap and matches and—"

"*Down* that hill again!" exclaimed Helen and Jackie.

"There aren't any shops up here," said Dora. "And whoever doesn't go shopping can help me make up the beds. We'll unpack the linen right away—yes, and oil for the stove is another thing we must get."

"Where's Bart?" interrupted Jackie.

"Gone round the houses. There's not enough beds. Somebody will have to sleep in the studio."

"I can!" cried Jackie, her black eyes sparkling. "I'd love to sleep in the studio. Really I would."

A number of improbable but agreeable situations, arising out of this plan, darted into her mind.

"You and Helen will both have to sleep in the studio," said Dora smoothly. "Is that O.K. by you, Helen?"

"O.K. by me," said Helen with a grin.

Helen had resumed her mackintosh and was looking for a large basket, for she saw that she was going to be the person who went shopping.

"What about money?" she asked. "Suppose they want cash?"

"Oh," said Dora doubtfully, "I expect they will. I mean, I expect they get a good many people like us in these parts. Has anybody got any money?"

Nobody had except Jackie, who handed over seven shillings and nine-pence with a very bad grace, knowing that she would never get any supper if she did not.

Helen found a basket and went off, and Dora kept poor Jackie unpacking linen and making up beds until her back ached. Through the windows she could see the rain-smudged garden and the studio down at the end of it. She had convinced herself that Bart was down there waiting to see if she would come to him. She kept asking if she should not take the rugs and things down to the studio, and Dora kept saying that they must get the house straight first. It was more than an hour before she made her escape.

The rain had stopped and the clouds were rolling back from the sea. As she ran out into the garden, the setting sun broke through and the rain-drops on the tamarisk hedges glittered like diamonds in the fiery light. Jackie flew down the brick path. He would be there. He would be waiting for her. All these ghastly weeks were over, these weeks of whooping-cough and hard labor and being bullied by Helen and Dora; now this awful journey was over, and they were together again.

She pushed open the studio door. Bart was not there. Nobody was there. Only his brushes and palette were lying about as if he had been working there recently. And on the easel was a half-finished portrait of a very lovely young girl.

Jackie looked at it with her mouth open. She sat down and stared at it, then began to cry. She was hungry and cold and discouraged. She sat there with the tears rolling down her cheeks until the sound of footsteps outside startled her. She looked round; and there, standing in the doorway, was the original of the portrait. . . .

Kirstie had not meant to go near Cliff Cottage that day. She had been tramping about alone on the cliffs in the rain. "Now he is down at the station," she kept thinking. "Now the train is coming in. They will be up at the cottage by now." She began to feel that she could not possibly wait till tomorrow to see him.

So she came along by the cliff path to the wall of Cliff Cottage garden; she could get to the studio without going through the house by jumping over the wall. She hoped that he would be there. If he was not, she must just go away again.

AFTER the dazzle of sunset the studio seemed dark, and she could not see well. But she heard a movement, and then out of the shadows came a little dark gypsyish person, with a face all swollen and blubbered with tears. They looked at one another and were instantly enemies.

"Oh!" cried Kirstie, starting back. "I beg your pardon. I—"

"What do you want?" asked Jackie truculently.

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86 PROOF

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Kirstie had never allowed herself to form a very clear picture of Bart's wife, but she had not expected to see anyone so rough and childish. This girl did not look much more than twenty. She was considerably taken aback, and could only stammer:

"I—I didn't know anybody was here."

"That's no reason," said Jackie, "for coming barging into other people's studios. Who are you?"

"I'm Christina Fortescue," said Kirstie haughtily. "Mr. Anderson is painting my portrait."

"Not at this time of night, surely?"

"No. But I wanted to speak to him."

"What about?"

"I left a—a scarf last time I was here," said Kirstie, disliking the excuse but driven to it.

"Oh," said Jackie.

"Are you—are you Mrs. Anderson?"

There was a slight pause while Jackie seemed to be considering whether she was or not. Then she said sourly:

"No. She's over at the house. Bart isn't in."

"Oh," said Kirstie, perfectly alive to the possessive note in Jackie's voice.

"I'll tell him about the scarf. I'll tell him you called."

"Oh, thank you. Don't bother; I'll be seeing him tomorrow."

"Didn't you see Dora at the house? Did she tell you you could come down here?"

"I didn't come by the house," explained Kirstie. "I climbed over the wall."

"Oh? Did you?"

"I always do."

"How strange!"

Jackie followed Kirstie out of the studio and stood waiting to see her climb back over the wall. From the garden side it was rather a scramble, and Kirstie had never done it without Bart to help her over, though she had often jumped in from the higher level of the cliff. How awful if she should fail to get over under the eyes of this odious girl! She dared not attempt it.

"I think," she said, "that I'd better go back through the house and explain to Mrs. Anderson."

"Do," said Jackie.

WHATEVER Dora was like, she could not be worse than this! Kirstie went up the garden path and into the living-room. A tall, slender blonde girl was there, taking packets of groceries out of a large basket. She turned when Kirstie appeared, and gave her a straight, inquiring look out of a pair of stern gray eyes.

"Oh, how do you do," said Kirstie. "I just came—"

A loud shriek from upstairs interrupted her.

"Excuse me!" said the blonde, and vanished.

All the doors were open, and Kirstie could hear what was going on upstairs.

"Jeremy kicked me."

"I didn't!"

"You did!"

"I didn't! I just acc'ently caught my feet in his stomach."

"You alliberately did it."

Kirstie was just wondering if she could not slip away, when a strong smell of burning filled the house, and a voice shouted down the stairs to her:

"I say—would you mind—the milk's burning! Do take it off!"

So she went into the kitchen, where a saucepan of milk was boiling over on the oil stove. She had just taken it off when the blonde reappeared, panting, and said:

"Oh, thank you!"

"Where shall I put it?" asked Kirstie, with the saucepan still in her hand.

"Oh, please, into those bowls on the table."

As Kirstie filled the four bowls of bread and milk, the blonde went to the door and shouted:

"Children! Supper!"

And there was a stampede of feet on the stairs.

"I—I just came to—" began Kirstie.

A little girl with pigtails came in who bobbed politely to Kirstie. She was followed by twin boys of about four, and a staggering two-year-old of indeterminate sex, with cropped hair and rompers. The blonde began to pull up chairs and tie on bibs.

"I ought to explain—" said Kirstie.

"I want some sugar!"

"There's no sugar."

"On the table in the other room," said the blonde to Kirstie. "Would you mind? In a blue bag."

Kirstie fetched it.

"Thank you so much. It's so awfully good of you. No, Tubby!" This to the neuter child. "Not yet. It's hot."

"I only came to get—"

"Aaa-ooooo!" cried Tubby, who had, despite warnings, burnt his or her mouth.

KIRSTIE gave it up and began once more to attempt to get away. But the blonde pursued her.

"I say, since you are here, it won't take a minute—it's putting the baby's cot together. It takes two people to do it. Do you mind? You've been so angelic."

Kirstie could not refuse, and they went up to the still worse confusion of the bedrooms. A young baby was sleeping there, very peacefully, in a clothes-basket. The blonde bent over it to pull the shawl higher; and at the sight of them, Kirstie felt a sudden breathlessness. "And this," she thought, "is his baby. And she is its mother. And I—"

"Do you know which of these things to screw on first?" asked the blonde. "I never can remember." She pointed to the scattered parts of one of those hammock cots which look so easy to put together, and are in fact so puzzling. Between them, with much tugging and arguing, they screwed it up. And there began to dawn that instinctive friendship which springs out of any successful collaboration.

"Thank you so very much," said the blonde earnestly. "You're a godsend. Who are you, by the way?"

"I'm Christina Fortescue," said Kirstie. "Your husband is painting my portrait. And I left a scarf—I think I left it in the studio yesterday. So I came to get it."

"Oh—you mean Bart?" said the blonde. "He's not my husband."

Kirstie could only gape at her.

"I'm Helen Hanson," explained the girl. "I've come to help Dora to settle in."

"Oh!"

"I don't just know where Dora's got to. She was here a few minutes ago."

She showed Kirstie out, and darted back to the kitchen.

Kirstie set off down the hill, trying to realize that she had not yet met Bart's wife. Twice over she thought that she had met her, but it was a mistake. She was glad that the brunette was not Dora, because she was so horrid. Also she was glad that the blonde was not, because she was so nice.

THE next day she met Bart at the smithy above the town, as they had arranged, and they went together for a walk along the cliffs. He seemed quite the same as usual, and assured her that he loved her as much as ever. But there was a cloud on his spirits, as she very soon saw, and at last he burst out:

"You've no idea what hell it is at the cottage. Dora has brought an awful lot of girls with her."

"I know. I saw them."

"Saw them? When?"

"Yesterday. I went round to ask for a scarf I thought I'd left at the studio. I didn't see your wife, but I saw the two girls."

Bart did not seem very pleased.

"Who are they—these girls?" she ventured.

"Oh, just friends of Dora's. We can't afford a servant, you know. So they come round in a crisis and act as sort of mother's helps."

This was really how Bart looked at it. He had a very short memory.

"What's the little dark one called?"

"Jackie."

"I didn't like her."

"Didn't you?"

"Do you? I thought she had the most appalling manners."

"Oh, she's—"

Short as Bart's memory was, it still supplied him with a reason for not speaking unkindly of Jackie.

"She's all right in her way," he ended sheepishly.

The wind on the cliffs was a little too cold for dalliance. They had to blow their noses very often and walk briskly. They did not stay there long.

"But the light is not bad," said Bart. "Let's go back to the studio, and I'll go on with the picture."

So they went along by the cliff to that place where they had always jumped over the wall. But the wall was now covered with broken bottles newly cemented into place. Jackie had pinched some mortar from a neighboring building site and brought the bottles from the rubbish-heap. She had spent a most enjoyable morning making the wall impassable.

This was too much. Bart had a blistering row with Jackie that evening, and next day she went back to London in floods of tears.

"So now we're short-handed," complained Dora to Helen. "And we aren't half straight."

"Oh, she was more trouble than she was worth," said Helen. "She didn't pull her weight. One had to be prodding her all the time to get any work out of her. She didn't know her place, Jackie didn't. We're well rid of her."

"Still, it's a lot for two to get through. And I don't feel at all well," sighed Dora. "I've got a stomachache; I shouldn't wonder if I'm going to have a gastric attack."

"You ate too many sweets in the train, my girl."

"I know I did. But if I get ill, how will you manage?"

"I wonder if anything can be done with Fortescue."

"With who?"

"You know. The girl I told you about. The one who said she'd left a scarf, and I made her help me with the cot. She'll be round here a lot, because Bart is painting her."

"That's an idea," agreed Dora, looking thoughtful. "If she lives down in the town, she could bring up our groceries in the morning, anyway. It would be a lot of help and save us having to go down. And not much trouble for her. She could just dump them on the kitchen table as she went through to the studio."

NEXT day Dora took to her bed and stayed there nearly a week. Kirstie began to feel that Bart's wife was a myth, that she would never meet her. Meanwhile her liking for Helen grew. There was something extraordinarily attractive in Helen's straight, grave look; and she had a kind of calm maturity which impressed Kirstie. If she had been Bart's wife they could not, obviously, have made friends; Kirstie would have felt that she was being a snake in the grass. But since Helen had turned out to be just an outsider, like Kirstie herself, they could meet on equal terms. There was no reason why she should not come up early in the morning to help Helen a little before it was time to go over to the studio and sit for her portrait, or to linger on in the evening for the same reason. The children were really rather sweet, and Helen was marvelous with them. She did all the work of the house—cooking, washing and scrubbing, without ever seeming to realize what a wonderful person she was; and she would have sat up till all hours of the night mending Bart's socks if Kirstie had not offered to take them home and mend them for her.

One day when Kirstie was busy in the kitchen, over the ironing-board, a woman she had not seen before came in and smiled at her.

"Miss Fortescue?" said Dora. "How do you do? I am so very grateful to you. You have been kind. I don't know what poor Helen would have done without you."

"N-not at all," murmured Kirstie, taking the hand which was offered to her. "I—I hope you're better."

"Oh, yes," said Dora. "Much better."

She sat down in an armchair and beamed at Kirstie. It was difficult to form any clear impression of her. She was not looking her best: people just recovering from a gastric attack seldom do. Her curly brown hair was lustreless and limp. Her skin was sallow. She looked about forty. Kirstie, after a moment of bewilderment, went on ironing.

"Bart's portrait of you is very good," said Dora, looking her up and down. "Don't you think so?"

Kirstie said that she was no judge. In her imaginary first meetings with Bart's wife this portrait had always played a significant part. Of course it would be mentioned, and a good deal would lie behind what Dora said, and what she said. It would establish her footing in the household. But then she had never imagined that she would be bent double, ironing Bart's shirts, while Bart's wife lounged at ease, looking on. Her footing in the household was not what she had expected it to be. Now that Dora was up and about, she must try to rectify this ambiguity. The help which she had given to Helen would not be so greatly needed.

But it was not as easy to withdraw it as she had supposed. Helen seemed to imagine that she came there to help Dora. Dora seemed to imagine that she came there to help Helen. Each was profuse in thanks for her kindness to the other, and neither was backward in employing her for the other's advantage. And the hours alone with Bart in the studio were less rewarding than they had been, because he had become so interested in the portrait that he spent all his time painting.

ONE evening when, after cooking the supper at Cliff Cottage, Kirstie got home, she found Colin waiting for her at Atlantic View. He was sitting by the fire, talking to her mother, who tactfully vanished when Kirstie came in.

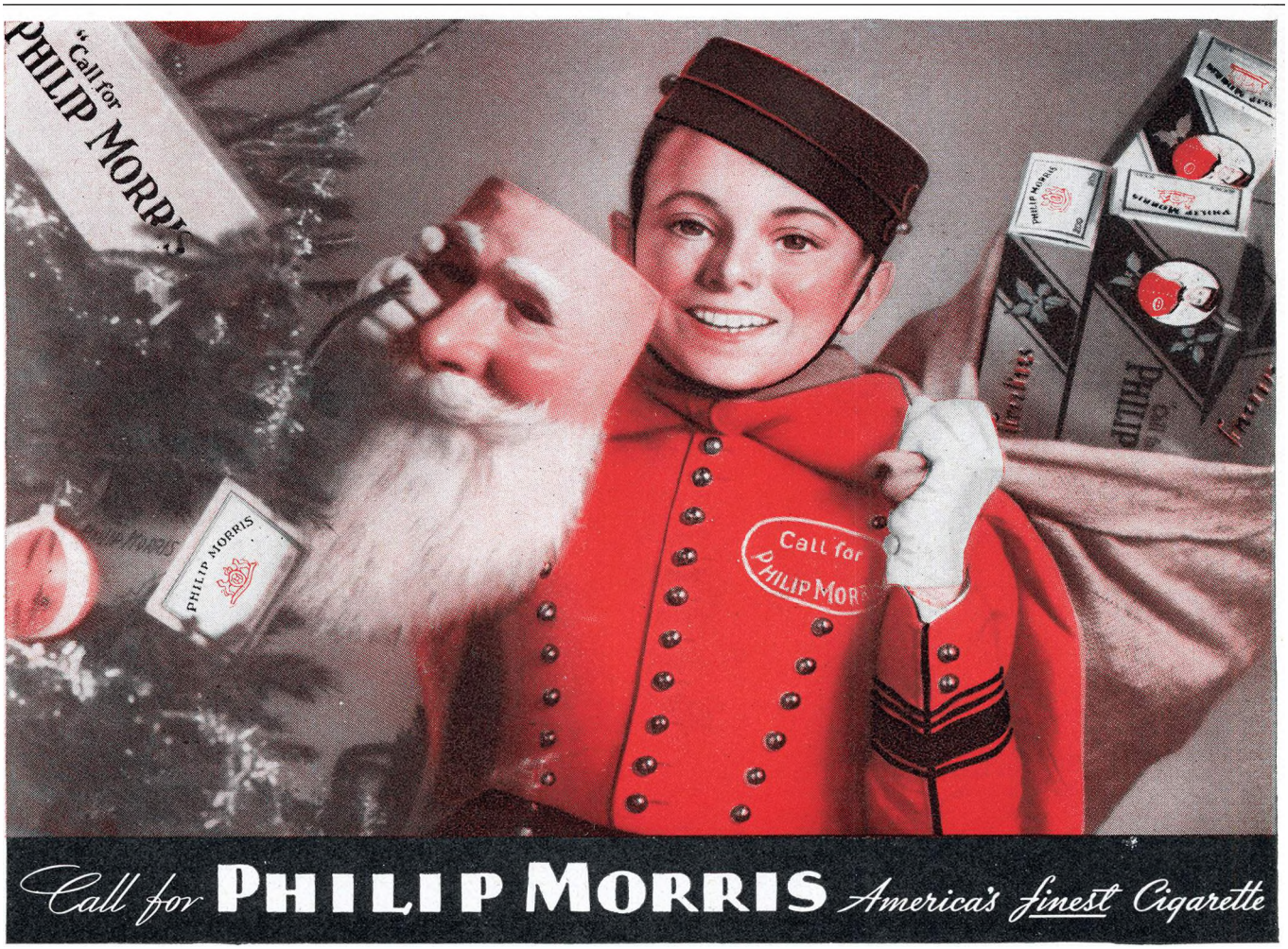
She had always known that he must be very unhappy, but she had refused to think about it. Now, when she saw how drawn and set his cheerful young face had grown, her heart smote her. There was a look about him—a look—well, Helen looked like that sometimes. It made you feel rather small.

"I came up to say good-by," he told her.

"Oh, Colin! Are you going away?"

"Yes. I'm going to London."

"For good?"



"For good. I just can't stick Porth Kermant any more, and I told my father so, and he's been very decent about it. We've got a cousin in London who is a solicitor too, and his son can't stick London. So we've arranged a swap: I'm to be my cousin's junior partner, and his son is coming to my father."

"But aren't your people terribly disappointed?"

"They are, rather."

"Oh, Colin! It's all my fault."

"No, it's not your fault, Kirstie. You couldn't help it. I hoped at first that what you evidently feel, about that man—would sort of pass off—when his wife came. But it evidently hasn't—so it was no use my going on hoping."

"Colin dear—I wish I hadn't made you so unhappy."

"You couldn't help it," he repeated. "I wish you were happier yourself."

"I'm quite happy," said Kirstie quickly.

They did not say much more. Before he went, he said:

"I've told my mother to give me news of you. I must know how you are."

"Your mother," said Kirstie, smiling wanly, "will be very glad to see you get out of my clutches. I'm sure she disapproves of me."

"Oh, no," said Colin, "you're quite mistaken. She's very fond of you and awfully sorry at the way things have turned out. She's a very sympathetic person, and she says you can't help these things happening. She quite understands. Only she says it's very sad to see such a sweet domesticated girl—wasting her life."

"Domesticated!" said Kirstie. "I'm not domesticated."

"Oh, well—I mean," said Colin, "look at all you do for Mrs. Anderson! I mean it's awfully pathetic. . . . That's what my mother feels. That it couldn't have been your own home."

She saw him to the front gate, and they said good-by. As he was turning away, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Colin! Forgive me!"

"There's nothing to forgive," he said in an unsteady voice. "I think you are a wonderful person. God bless you!"

He went off down the road without once looking back.

"AM I mistaken," asked Bart, "or did we agree you were to come at ten?" He looked at his watch. He had been waiting for three-quarters of an hour.

Kirstie pulled off her hat and flung it crossly down.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but the shops happened to be rather crowded today."

"The shops?"

"I did all your shopping this morning. I do it every morning. I've hauled several hundredweight of parcels up this hill. Another day, if you want me to be punctual, you'd better come and help me."

"Shopping? What shopping?"

"Your dinner. Meat and vegetables. Did you think it had legs and walked up the hill of its own accord?"

"I really didn't know. I thought the shops delivered."

"Then you thought wrong. They don't. Not till the afternoon. Dora or Helen or I have to go down and carry them up."

"That seems to be very bad management," observed Bart.

Kirstie exploded.

"You are the most inconsiderate—you're utterly selfish! You never do a hand's turn. You just sit and criticize and expect people to fetch and carry for you. Why should they?"

"Yes indeed," he agreed. "Why should they? I never asked anyone to bring my dinner up the hill."

"No. You expect these things to be done without even having to ask, much less be grateful. Hasn't it ever occurred to you that Dora has five children and no servants? Hasn't it ever occurred to you that she has a pretty hard time?"

"I don't think it worries her," said Bart.

"My goodness! If I were in Dora's shoes, I'd make you pull your weight a bit more."

"You're not in Dora's shoes. Dora's got a perfect right to tell me off if she wants to. But you haven't. If you like hauling parcels up a hill, well and good. If you don't, don't do it."

"Oh—you are the—most—"

Kirstie snatched up her hat and flung out of the studio.

Bart shrugged, and began to clean his palette. Scenes like this were not unknown in the harem of ministering women which always seemed to surround him. Every now and then one of them would rebel and break into violent reproaches.

Curiously enough, they all accused him of want of consideration for Dora. As far as he could see, Dora was very well able to look after herself.

HELEN was in the kitchen, chopping suet.

"What's the matter?" she asked, when she saw Kirstie's face.

"Oh—I've been having such a row with Bart. He's impossible. He's so frightfully inconsiderate."

"Yes," agreed Helen, "he is inconsiderate."

"Why do we all slave for him like this, when he—why do we, anyway?"

"That," said Helen, thoughtfully wiping the chopper, "is a question which each of us must answer for herself."

Kirstie crimsoned and said:

"You—you know about me and Bart?"

"I think I do."

"I suppose you—think badly of me."

"Oh, no," said Helen. "I couldn't, very well."

She put the chopper away and washed her hands. Then she said, with an obvious effort:

"It seems that you don't know about Bart and me."

"You?" cried Kirstie. "You and Bart?"

"Yes."

"What—when? I don't understand. I thought you were Dora's friend."

"I am now. I wasn't always."

"When—"

"About five years ago," said Helen slowly. "For—about three months. Then it was over for him. Somebody else came along."

"Helen! It can't be true. *You!*"

"It is true."

"Did Dora know?"

"Oh, yes. We've never talked about it. But she knew, all right. I mean—at one time I—wanted to take him away from her. But nobody can do that, you know, Kirstie."

"Helen, I don't believe it. Why do you tell me this?"

"Because," said Helen, "I think it's a pity you should make a mess of your life for him. You're nice. I like you. I hate to see you breaking your heart for nothing. You haven't got in so very deep. You could break away now quite easily. What is there in it for you except misery?"

DORA strolled into the kitchen. She looked at Kirstie and Helen, standing tensely on either side of the table, and smiled her indolent, indulgent smile.

"Who's doing what?" she asked.

"I'm cooking," said Helen, "and Kirstie is going home in a minute. And you're supposed to be cleaning the bath, aren't you, my child?"

"I've cleaned it," said Dora, who really did get through quite a lot of work in her own way. "I thought I'd take the children out, if you don't want help in here."

"No," said Helen. "We want no help."

Dora nodded and strolled out.

"But Helen," said Kirstie, "isn't it all just the same for you? Misery? Why do you do it? Why don't you go away?"

"Oh, no," said Helen. "It's quite different for me. When you've put all your eggs into one basket, you can't take them out again. I love Bart."

For a moment her stern face lit up with a startling radiance, a flash of the light that must have dwelt on it during those brief months before he broke her heart.

"I know all his faults, but that doesn't stop me from loving him. I can't help it. He's still everything to me, though I'm nothing to him. I can't have any sort of life apart from him. I suppose I'm one of those women who are born to be constant to one man all their lives. I've long ago given up any hope—any wild dreams of getting him back. It's not that that keeps me here. I went through an awful time before I could give them up, but I have now. If I hadn't, if I let myself start hoping again, it would ruin all that I've got—to be near him and see him every day, and care for his home, even if it isn't my home, and look after his children, even though they aren't my children. Dora knows that's why I do it, and she lets me. Because, you see, though she is the only woman who can keep him, she doesn't love him any more, and I do."

There was a serene humility in her voice as she said the last words. Kirstie felt that it was all quite true, and that she had got past wanting anything for herself. After all that she had gone through: the rapture, the shock of disillusionment, the bewildered agony, the struggles, the vain hopes and self-deceptions, had come the slow growth of wisdom, a stern self-discipline, and the final achievement of peace. Nothing that was warm or vital had been sacrificed in her love; she had kept it at the cost of happiness.

"I—I couldn't do that," said Kirstie, as though shrinking back from a way so grim and steep.

"No," agreed Helen, "you couldn't. So don't try. Forget Bart. That's easier."

She broke some eggs into a basin, and began to beat them up.

Kirstie stood gazing at her with an awe-struck expression.

"Did you—" began Kirstie.

But the noise of the egg-beater drowned her voice, and she could not shout a question like that. Besides, there had come a shut look on Helen's face. She had fin-

ished her confidences. It was only for Kirstie's sake that she had spoken, and Kirstie now knew quite as much as was good for her.

Over the din of the egg-beater Kirstie asked:

"But—if I don't come here any more—how will you and Dora get on?"

"Oh, very well. We're straight now. And Dora can do a lot more than she does if she has to. Good-by!"

Kirstie found herself walking away down the hill. She could not even remember if she had said good-by before she came away.

She was not unhappy. She was very, very sad. Until then she had not known that there was a difference between these two moods. It is a sad world, she felt: when you get to know about people, you find that most of them have a good deal to bear, and it makes no difference that their sufferings are generally self-sought. The only difference between one person and another is the way they bear these things. Some make a fuss about it, and some do not. She thought of Colin, walking away down the road, and of Helen's face, bending over the baby in the clothes-basket. She knew now why she had thought of Helen when he came to say good-by to her. But if only one can learn not to make a fuss, she thought, then one can make something respectable even out of one's mistakes.

She went out along the cliffs to the rocky headland which had been the setting for the final chapter of her novel. Here her heroine had stood thinking very noble thoughts. But she did not remember that now. She was not thinking of her own life at all, but of Helen and Colin, and how you can meet very brave people and know them quite well, and not see in the least what they really are. At least when you are young, you can. When you are young, you think that character is a sort of placard hung round people's necks for anyone to read. But when you grow up, you realize that it is not so.

"If I saw Colin again," she wondered, "would he look any different? It'll be ages before I see him again. I wonder if he'll come home for Christmas. I wonder if he still—but I couldn't ever marry him. It wouldn't be fair. I'm not nearly good enough."

MAKE MINE—

(Continued from page 49)

them slightly before mixing the cocktails. If you want to be really elegant, rinse them with a bit of lemon-juice, a juice that exterminates any possible by-taste. But in any event, begin your activities by washing and freezing as many cocktail glasses as there are people present at your party. What if they decide to have four rounds more? They really shouldn't, because two rounds of good cocktails is more than enough for the most jaded taste; but if they insist—well, it's just too bad, but you'll have to wash and freeze your glasses four times more.

Rule Number Five has to do with the fruit-juices. Don't squeeze your oranges and your lemons too far in advance. Yes, I know, I know, it's a terrible bother and a waste of time, but a juice that was kept in your electric ice-box for several hours

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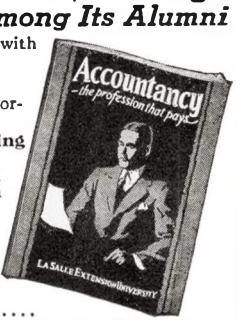

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FROM A MEDICAL JOURNAL: "The researches (of doctors) led them to believe that colds result from an acid condition. To overcome this, they prescribe various alkalies."

won't make a good cocktail. Something happens to it. I wouldn't know what—write a letter to your chemist and ask him; but do not spoil a Daiquiri or a whisky-sour by pouring a spoonful of "stale" juice into your bar-glass.

Rule Number Six was created for the sake of those people who serve their guests what they wouldn't drink themselves. Don't economize on your guests. Economize on yourselves. If you can't afford the money to serve drinks for twelve people, invite eight or six. Don't pretend that "all gins and all whiskies are alike, just booze." They are not. You'd be surprised how much difference there is between a good gin and a mediocre gin, between a well-blended whisky and a slapped-together whisky.

Rule Number Seven is a warning against overindulgence in appetizers. If your cocktails are good, a few olives, a few potato chips and a plate of salted nuts will do perfectly. If your cocktails are bad, they'll taste worse still if accompanied by rich appetizers.

Rule Number Eight—it's the old teetotaler in me, I'm sure: don't drink too much. You and you only know your quota. So stick to it. Drink to be merry, but do not drink to be sick. Two cocktails is a company. Three cocktails is a crowd. Four cocktails is a bill from your doctor.

DO not expect me to discuss fancy wines in this article. For better or for worse, ours is not a wine-drinking nation. We go for beer, or gin, for Scotch, Bourbon, or rye, for brandy, for champagne, for rum; but we do not go for the *noblesse* that was, is and will be the vintage wines. Much to the disgust of those great connoisseurs who write thick volumes glorifying the bouquet and the unsurpassed taste of the products of Burgundy and Bordeaux, the habit of swallowing a quick one is our national habit. Let's not quarrel with it or try to destroy it. Let's merely reform it. A quick one? Fine. But please, please, specify your brand.

Some day when you feel like spending an extra dollar, try the following recipe. It's known as the Elsa Maxwell champagne cocktail. It's served in a tall glass with a narrow rim. Here's how you make it: You take a small peach—not an overripe one—and a bunch of toothpicks. You stick the toothpicks in the peach, and place the fruit at the bottom of the glass. You wait a minute or two, and add a dash of a good brandy. Then you fill the glass with a very dry champagne. And then? And then you either talk about it as Frenchmen would, or you remember that you're an American, and drink it.

TOO LATE, MY LOVE!

(Continued from page 57)

Elissa got up abruptly and walked away from him.

"No," she admitted. "No, I don't suppose you have. But apparently you didn't find out the important things. Anyway, it doesn't matter now! Be a dear and scat, will you? I've got to finish packing and catch the eight-twenty for Chicago!"

"What are you going to Chicago for?"

"One: there's a man in Chicago wants his picture painted, God knows why. Two: Chicago's on the road to Reno."

TAR stretched his legs straight out in front of him and shoved his hands deep into the trouser pockets.

"Reno? You might as well stay in New York. I'm going to contest any divorce action you bring."

Elissa whirled on him. "Tar! You beast! You wouldn't!"

"I would. I don't believe in divorce. At least, not in our divorce!"

She started to argue with him and then shrugged listlessly.

"It doesn't matter. You'll change your mind when you want to marry again. I can wait a few months or a few years!"

Tar bent a knee and let a big foot fly at a hassock. The hassock shot across the room and knocked over a table loaded with empty glasses.

"I won't ever get married again!" he said.

"Oh, yes, you will!" Elissa told him confidently. "You'll meet some pretty bit of fluff like that Waversly child, and marry her and have an enormous family!"

She heard him gasp behind her, and knew that she had given herself away. "Oh, damn!" she thought. "Double damn! Now I've done it!"

"That's it!" he shouted. "I knew there was something! I knew there must be something!"

He stood up and came toward her, laughing triumphantly, and she shrank away in terror from the touch of his outstretched hands. But he caught her shoulders and held her where she was in front of him, making her face him while she tried desperately to keep her eyes from being afraid.

"What are you doing?" she asked in a chill voice.

"Looking at a fool!" he said, laughing down at her. "Looking at a damn' fool! We were at a party last week, weren't we? And you saw me in the garden, didn't you? And I was kissing that Waversly brat, wasn't I?"

She struggled against his hold, but she could not shake it off.

"Get out!" she cried furiously, weeping now. "Will you get out and leave me alone? You can kiss fifty Waverslys, for all I care!"

"There aren't fifty Waverslys," Tar said. "At least, not girls. She's an only daughter."

Desperately, Elissa tried to regain control of herself. She made her breath stop quivering in her throat, and she forced herself to be still under his hands.

"Listen!" she said. "Listen to me! I've tried to be civilized about this thing, but you won't take a hint. Now listen! I'm tired of you. I'm completely sick and tired of you. Every time you sing, I want to shriek. Every time you talk, you bore me! And when you make love to me, I'm likely as not thinking of another pretty boy I saw some place the day before. Now will you go?"

She knew he would, because she had deliberately said the three things that would hurt him most.

He left quietly, forgetting his topcoat; and when he was gone, Elissa sat down again and wept.

After a long time, she got up wearily and went to her bedroom to finish her packing. But her maid had already done it, and there was nothing to do but sit down and think. And she did not want to think.

"I'll get over it!" she said aloud furiously to her mirror. "Am I, or am I not, Elissa Jerdin? Of course I'll get over it! Heavens, when I think of all the things I've got over in my life!"

But not like this, she cried inside herself. They weren't things like this!

There was a knock at the bedroom door, and her maid came in carrying a huge armful of books.

"Just put them down there, will you, Annie? They belong to Mr. Edmonds."

Annie put them down carefully on a chair and went out, and after a while Elissa got up and leafed through them. Tar's press clippings. She had saved them and pasted them into scrapbooks ever since the first one had appeared, three days before their marriage, when a columnist had asked who was the young man he had seen so often with Elissa Jerdin. There it was still, a tiny lost item in a river of close print. And then the wild, hysterical splurge of their wedding. "Elissa Jerdin Elopes with College Boy. . . . Famous Woman Painter Marries Student." Even, in one paper, "Elissa Robs the Cradle." And then, for the few pages which covered the two years before Tar's debut in the opera, a lot of good-natured joshing from the papers. And after that, the books were all of Tar. He was no longer Elissa Jerdin's husband. He was Gregory Edmonds, whose voice and personality had effected what seemed to be a complete cure for a sick opera.

Elissa turned away from the scrapbooks, straightening her shoulders. After all, there was nothing to be bawling her head off about. She had done what she set out to do, given Tar his chance; and the return she had received had been a thousand times over and above what she expected. She had had five years of loving him and of being loved by him; and the memory of those years was sweet in her heart, sweeter than she had thought anything could ever be. Very well, then. She had called the tune and danced to its bewildering, lovely notes; why was she howling now about paying the piper?

ON the train, in her drawing-room, she sat quiet for a long time, thinking that perhaps if she made her body quite still, and sat with her hands folded tight in her lap, her mind would be still also. But the little room was oppressively empty, and she found herself remembering other goings-away, with flowers and candy and shouts of good-by and laughter, and Tar's excited face turning to her to make sure she was loving it as much as he was. Tar was like a child about journeys. He adored them.

She caught herself on the verge of tears again, and jumped to her feet. She was hungry; that was it. Of course! How on earth could a woman leave her husband on

an empty stomach and expect not to feel gloomy about it?

In the club car she ordered a sandwich and a whisky and soda; but the sandwich tasted stale and tasteless in her mouth, and the whisky did not warm the cold pit of her stomach.

In her room, after she went to bed, she cried for quite a little while silently, into her pillow before she realized that she was falling asleep. But that was absurd, she thought. People are not supposed to fall asleep when their hearts are broken. A woman is not supposed to leave her husband, and put in a good night's rest.

IT was still dark when she woke up. She lay for a long moment listening for the noise that had awakened her, and then she heard it again: A scratching at her door. She was not afraid, but her heart was racing in the base of her throat, and her knees were trembling as she got out of bed and slipped a robe over her shoulders.

"Who is it?" she demanded in a whisper.

"Let me in, will you?"

"Tar!"

"Stop talking and let me in!" he whispered back. "I'm freezing out here!"

She leaned against the door, trying to say something, but all she could do was open her mouth worldlessly.

"Let me in!" he commanded. His voice was louder now.

"Tar!" she gasped. "Go away! Please go away!"

"Let me in!" he roared at the top of his voice.

She shrank into a corner and clutched her hands over her ears, but she could not shut out the sounds of hysterical excitement that broke out in the corridor.

"I won't shut up!" Tar was bellowing. "Why should I shut up? Why should I go away? My wife's locked me out, and I shall stay here until she lets me in!" He banged his fist against the door. "Let me in, Elissa! Open the door!"

Finally, she opened it for him. She could not help it; the pressure of public opinion was too much against her. He dodged in quickly, but she had time to see that he was in pajamas and dressing-gown before he banged the door shut after him and locked it. Then, in the darkness, she could feel him turn toward her, could feel his eyes seeking her, and she cowered back into her corner

"Come into bed, will you?" he said. "It's freezing cold. Come on—you take the inside!"

"Tar! Will you get out? It's—it's not decent!"

"Well, maybe it'll be more fun that way! Come on! Where are you?"

His groping hands brushed against her face, lost her for a moment, and then came back to her. He lifted her off the ground and swung her into the bed. She saw him outlined against the window for a second as he slipped off his robe, and then he was lying beside her, pulling her cold body against his big warm chest. Abruptly, hopelessly, she began to cry.

"Now!" he whispered sternly. "Now let's have the whole tale! Out with it!"

"I told you!" she wailed. "I told—"

"You told me lots of things!" he interrupted. "You may be too clever for me in the daytime, but brains don't count now. Are you going to talk? Or do I have to beat it out of you?"

"I never wanted to marry you in the first place!"

"All right. I know that. I made you. But what's that got to do with your leaving me now?"

"Well—I promised myself that I'd end it in five years. I thought—I thought, if I didn't set an end for it, it would drag on and on till I was an old woman and you were still young, and then the end would be ugly and little and mean. So I said, 'Five years, and I'll end it!' "

He was silent for a moment, and then he said: "I get it. You thought you'd marry me and stick with me until you'd given me my chance to make something of my voice—until you'd paid for lessons and made me work and seen me in a job. Wasn't that it?"

She shook her head. "No. Not really. I said, five years no matter what happens. Maybe less, but five years is all. And it'll be five years in a couple of months. And then, last week, I—I—"

"Last week you saw me kissing that little Waversly thing!"

"Yes. And I thought, youth calls to youth, and—"

He smothered a wild whoop in the pillow. "And boys will be boys, and you're only young once, and May and December and—oh, all the old bromides!" he finished for her. "Lisa, I don't believe I ever heard you get trite before!"

"It's not trite! It's true! I wasn't jealous, Tar Edmonds, and you needn't think I was! I just thought—"

"You just thought I'd begun to chase the Kittys!" he said, half angrily. Then his voice grew tender. "Listen, Lisa—we've had a good five years, haven't we?"

"Yes."

"And listen—haven't I ever told you this? You should have known it, anyway! My love for you doesn't have anything to do with whether you're pretty or ugly—or whether you're young or old, or anything. I love you. You're my wife. And that's all there is to it. Won't you believe me?"

SHE did not answer for a long time, and then she nodded her head against his chest. "Yes," she said. "Yes, I'll believe you." Then, in a sudden, sharp voice: "Tar! I just thought! Who put you up to this? You never thought up this stunt by yourself!"

He chuckled. "I went around to see old lady Janesley, and she gave me some advice. So I got an upper on your train and organized a midnight raid. But look, Lisa—is it all right now? Will you come back? And forget this Five Year Plan?"

"Yes. Yes, I'll come back."

"And promise never to do such a thing again? Even if you catch me kissing another Kitty some day, will you take a good look and remember that I'm a good-natured slob, and was probably bullied into it? Just remember that I love you, and you only, and that I will always love you!"

"All right, Tar darling. I'll remember. Always."

Then she threw back her head to meet his kisses. "I don't care!" she thought proudly. "I'll take my chance, and maybe the gods will be kind and let me die before it is too late. Oh, Tar, dear Tar!"

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NIGHT PORTERS SEE LIFE

(Continued from page 53)

"Not so far as *I* know."

"No instructions about being wakened?"

"No sir."

"In that case—oh, well, just tell her that I'm at my club. Ask her to ring me there as soon as she wakes up. You're certain you've got the name right?—Sterndale, Richard Sterndale."

He walked back into the lounge. He picked up a magazine. The print blurred before his eyes. He took out a cigarette. It was hot and stifling. He flung it into the grate. He'd half an hour to wait yet, half an hour at least. The cigarette had made him thirsty.

He rang the bell.

"Yes, please," he said, "another."

HE sat up with a jerk, and blinked. His mouth was dry; he'd been a fool to go to sleep. One always felt like death when one woke up. He gulped quickly at his drink. How long had he been asleep? Barely twenty minutes. That should be all right. She couldn't have gone out yet. No, but suppose she was one of those people, like chauffeurs, who could trust themselves to wake up when they wanted. Suppose she really *had* an appointment of some kind that morning. If she once left the flat, he wouldn't know where to find her.

He hurried out into the hall.

The number was engaged. So he had been right, then: she *was* up. He waited anxiously. How long should he give her—a minute, two minutes? Surely a minute and a half would be enough.

Once again came the insistent buzz.

He walked back into the lounge. The first issues of the evening papers had arrived. The *Standard* was offering Falcon as a likely outsider for the Newbury Cup. "Falcon?" It seemed centuries since he had placed that bet, since he had boasted that the winning of this race would solve his problem. His problem! He had been set a new one now. He didn't know its structure yet: he wouldn't know till he had talked to her. "That number must be disengaged now," he thought.

It was. But again it was the maid's voice that answered.

"No, no," she said. "She's still asleep. I've told you that the moment she wakes, I'll tell her."

"Yes, yes, I know. But this is important, terribly important. She may have some appointment, even though she didn't mark it down, even though she didn't tell you. The point is, you see—" He started to explain. The maid did not seem to be following explanations.

"What's the use of talking to a fool like that," he thought.

He rang off abruptly. . . .

At ten minutes to one Stella Rauforth woke with a thin bar of sunlight across her face. She stretched her arms above her head. She was rested and refreshed with seven hours' sleep. She sighed contentedly. The sun was shining. The sky was blue. A casual day stretched lazily before her.

"Mary," she called, "my breakfast."

There was a yellow envelope, a telegram, beside her letters. She pounced on it.

"Mary," she was crying a moment later, "he's coming back!"

She tossed the cable to her maid. It was from Singapore. It was signed *"Arthur." "Plans changed,"* it read, *"returning Imperial Airways Monday."*

"The relief of it!" she cried.

The expression on her maid's face was one of relief mingled with disapproval.

"And high time, too. He shouldn't ever have gone away, work or no work, leaving you alone here. And that young gentleman, that Mr. Sterndale, he's been ringing up every twenty minutes. Very rude, too, he was."

"He? What did he want?"

"Wanted you to be sure and ring him up the moment you woke up. He's at his club."

"Oh." A frown creased her forehead. That boy again. He really was getting too much of a good thing. Last night! He had been impossible, but quite impossible, last night.

Through the open door she could hear the telephone.

"The young gentleman again," her maid informed her.

"Oh, very well then, put it through."

It was a blurred insistent voice that spoke.

"Listen. I've got to see you, right away. It's important, desperately."

She hesitated. Arthur's return meant the end of *him*, of course. It would mean a scene, probably an unpleasant one. Still, it was something that she had to settle.

"Very well," she said. "Come round in twenty minutes."

AT a first glance she could see that there was something wrong. His eyes were glazed. Tact would be needed, tact and sympathy.

She smiled in a friendly way.

"What fun we had last night! I did enjoy myself."

He made no answer. He stood swaying slightly in the center of the room. The skin of his face felt as if it had been stretched tight over the bones, and varnished. He was so tired that he could hardly hold his eyelids above his eyes. She was wearing a cream-pink dressing-gown, long-sleeved, padded at the shoulders. She looked very cool and calm. If only he could be lost, absorbed in that cool quiet.

"When are we going out again?" he asked.

"That's something I was rather wanting to talk to you about."

He made no answer, just stood there swaying.

"I've had a telegram today," she said.

He took no notice.

"When?" he repeated. "Today? Tomorrow? The day after?"

His voice had a thickened, angry tone, a note of obtuse persistence.

Impatiently she let her eyes travel over him, in stock-taking. What on earth could she have ever seen in him?

She handed him the cable. "There it is."

He read it, but its significance escaped him.

"That's ten days off," he said. "When are we going out? Today? Tomorrow?"

She shrugged. "You're very dense."

It was said coldly, on a note of exhausted patience, a note that startled him.

"You mean—"

But there was no need for her to explain. The look in her eyes, the tone of her voice told him. He stared at her, with dazed, uncomprehending eyes, as though even now he could not really believe what he had heard.

"You mean that you aren't going to see me any more?"

She hesitated. There was a strange, wild look in his eyes: part fear, part misery, part despair. It shocked her into a sense of responsibility. "I must let him down gently," she thought. She did not want to be unkind.

"It's not that, of course, it isn't that. But it'll be different, Dick; you must see that."

He shook his head.

"No, I don't see."

"But you must, darling. There'll be so many things I have to do. Entertain, give parties. We're busy people."

"Are you?"

"It isn't that I sha'n't want to see you; it isn't that we sha'n't see each other, sometimes, quite often really. It's just that—well, after all, we have been seeing one another nearly every day. We couldn't go on like that, I mean."

She paused, flustered.

The wild look in his eyes had become wilder, had changed not only in intensity but in its nature. There was despair there still, and misery: but the fear had been displaced by anger.

"Why don't you say what you really mean?"

"Darling—"

He made an impatient gesture.

"It's obvious what you mean. I was somebody to fill a gap. An interlude, that's all. No, no, don't say anything. I understand."

SUDDENLY his voice had grown savage. His eyes were lit with anger; they frightened her. He walked unsteadily across the room, toward the piano. He stood before a photograph of Arthur—a large framed photograph, in court dress. He tapped the glass.

"That's what you want, all that that photo typifies," he said: "security, order, respectability."

Yes, of course that was what she wanted, all she wanted, with her fear of scandal, her worship of appearances. That was what counted with her: social security, her good name. The world his father valued: the established world from which he was exiled now—along with Marshall. He had no doubt about the kind of life that waited him, jobless at twenty-five, a life like Marshall's. He reviewed its makeshift ignominy. "I can't face it," he thought. "I can't."

He turned and faced her. He knew her now for what she was; cold, calculating, selfish. In his eyes was a mad look of despair and hatred. It was her fault, all of it. None of it would have happened but for her. He took a step toward her.

"You're going to be sorry for this, sorrier than you've ever dreamed of being."

The tone of his voice, the look in his eyes were terrifying. He came two steps closer. She lifted her hands against her head. She opened her mouth. But she was too terrified to scream. "He's mad. He's going to kill me. What can I do?"

He was only a step away from her. His voice had lifted to a shout.

"You think you're going to get off scot free. You think I'm going to do all the paying. But that's where you're wrong: Your good name—that's the price for this, your good name! You can whistle for it, and it won't come back. Scandal, that's the one thing you're frightened of."

His voice was less a shout now than a screech. She cowered back. Never, not even on a film, had she seen such an expression of insane violence. His fists were clenched. He took a deep breath into his lungs. Then suddenly he turned away, took a quick stride across the room to the open window, jumped up on the sill.

"Scandal—you'll get your fill of it," he cried.

For one horrified moment she saw him in silhouette against the sky. She saw his face, contorted with drunken hatred. Then the framed expanse of sky was blank.

LATE that evening a bald, scrubby man with a drooping walrus mustache walked slowly in the declining sunlight, along the Battersea embankment. He was refreshed and rested after his day-long sleep. He had had his breakfast. He was taking his evening stroll before returning to his work at the hotel.

At the corner of the Embankment a man was selling papers. Across the front page was headlined "Mystery Suicide in Society Woman's Flat." There was a large photograph of a young woman in a floppy hat. Underneath it ran the caption: "*The Hon. Mrs. Arthur Rauforth last year at Ascot.*"

The night porter did not read on. He wasn't interested in the scandals of society women. In the course of his job he saw far too much of that side of life.

He turned to the third page, to the Stop Press column. There among the cricket scores and the Wall Street prices was the result of the Newbury Cup. At the top of the list stood Falcon.

The night porter chuckled to himself. He remembered the young man in the café whose fate was to be written in that column. "I bet he's feeling pretty good right now," he thought.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

(Continued from page 6)

Century compare most favorably with our own times. Of course the peasant revolutions in Germany in the Sixteenth Century and the French revolution were brutal to an extent which few of us now appreciate. But in a way, all the men of blood and iron of those episodes were mere beginners—sheer amateurs! Even as short a time ago as the 'eighties of the last century, the instigator of the terrible Bulgarian atrocities complained that after he had "with his own hands" cut the throats of four hundred men, women and children, he felt obliged to "call it a day." Sheer fatigue forced him to leave the others until the next day, and in the night a few

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of his victims at least had been able to escape!

Meanwhile, "progress" has made such enormous strides that now we can by means of a single bomb, dropped out of a single flying-machine and in one single second, kill twice as many people as the poor assassin of the Balkans had been able to dispatch in an entire day.

And there is something else which caused a considerable change in the moral landscape of the Year of Grace 1937.

There were murderers fifty years ago, as there were murderers five hundred years ago and five thousand years ago. But there also was a world-conscience—there were men who not only had hearts but who also obeyed the still small voice that came to them from their hearts. One ambitious prime minister like Benjamin Disraeli (why have we ever clothed him in the garb of a hero?) might dismiss the cruelties of the Turks as "the coffee-house twaddle of a few excited newspaper scribblers," but those same newspaper scribblers (and ours, well in the vanguard, I am proud to assert) obeyed the dictates of their consciences until an aroused public sentiment had pushed the Turks out of the Balkans; whereupon the men of reason (who never bothered about their hearts except as part of their inner organism), the Disraelis and the Bismarcks, allowed them to come back and perpetrate those intolerable conditions which finally led up to the disaster of the Great War.

What am I trying to prove? Nothing very much. No mortal man can ever hope to prove very much unless aided and abetted by circumstances. But there seems to run a slender thread of logic through all history. And when conditions brought about by reasons of state (usually the most unreasonable reasons of all time) and by the machinations of false prophets who have grown drunk on their own misguided eloquence and who have stared themselves blind upon their own imaginary perfections—when those conditions have finally reached a point where they are no longer bearable, then invariably a man has arisen who spoke straight from the heart. And in every case, the world has listened. . . .

All great thoughts come from the heart. Today it will have to be a stout heart indeed which dares to speak words which all of us want to hear, amidst the outcries of an outraged humanity. Such a heart, however, may beat somewhere, and such a voice is therefore bound to speak.

It is up to us to listen; for upon that voice, and upon our willingness to listen, depend the future of our sorely stricken world.

It is up to us to listen; or simpler still, we can turn our thoughts backward. For these selfsame words for which we are once more waiting were first uttered when Caius Julius Cæsar Octavius Augustus ruled over the far-flung domains of ancient Rome. They were spoken among the barren hills of a distant colony, and only a few shepherds, watching their flocks, heard them:

"On earth, peace and good-will toward men."

A pleasant Christmas to you!

THE DUCHESS OF BROOKLYN

(Continued from page 41)

minute to spare—and we're sure of another half-hour, quite to ourselves." They were crossing a wharf toward what looked like a respectable gondola under its gay sunshade. She knew she would be insane to get in—and permitted him to hand her among the cushions, without a word. She even lay back, gingerly, as he tossed his coat to her and leaned on the punt-pole. In the willowy sunshine, he might have been the Rupert Brooke on her study-table.

"Oh, there the chestnuts . . . . make for you
A tunnel of green gloom—"

she said, out of a half trance.

"The stream mysterious glides beneath
Green as a dream, and deep as death"

he finished, pushing through clinging lily-pads.

"How did you know that, Alan?"

"Grantchester? I've always known it."

She closed her eyes, hearing the water whisper under her trailing hand. She had let Owen, the past, slip gently through her fingers into the heart of this green dream, losing the both of them forever. The future might still be blank—but even that was thrilling. The punt stopped with a bump, and Mary sat up abruptly. They were deep in willow-branches, close up to the bank and the tow-path that led to Trevistane Spa. He stood above her, no longer smiling.

"It's too grim, Mary—putting you on that London train. I must know where you're going."

"So badly you can't steer straight?"

"Refuse to continue until I have an address."

"In that case, I'm staying at the Thackeray."

"Say no more. I've an aunt who swears by it. To think of you going back there alone!" He came down into the wabbly cockpit of the punt. "In fact, I sha'n't permit it. I'm coming to get you."

"In London?"

"Now, also." His face, this close to hers in the pale leafy gloom, was shockingly handsome; she heard his words through a fog of divided purpose. "Because I can't put you on that train without kissing you."

"No," said Mary soberly, "I suppose it would be too much to expect."

"Far too much. When I've wanted to kiss you, since we were both in pinafores."

"You've known me just three hours."

"Knew you when the Romans camped on this river-bank, and Trevistane was a druid shrine. Surely you believe in reincarnation?" He had kissed her firmly on the last syllable of that; now he kissed her again, in a way no girl of Mary's background could ever be kissed—and not hit back. Her resistance at this moment was instinctive enough to speak well for Mary, and violent enough to set the punt wabbling badly. She seized a tree branch as she rose; had swung herself up to the tow-path before she heard the splash.

"I hope you can swim," she said, looking down upon the result of shocked virtue.

"I hope you can forgive me."

"Forgive you? I can never thank you enough," said Mary—not at all the thing she had meant to say. Perhaps that is why she began to run toward Trevistane station—fast, before he could clamber out after her.

HER ribs ached as she rolled frugally back in the Underground to her hotel. Her farmer-shepherd—who had laughed at her from beneath his crown of lily-pads—had strong arms; his kiss had been like a kiss in a dream; she had firmly drowned his kiss, and would never see him again. She felt extremely virtuous and a little melancholy as she emerged into the gray London twilight, and surveyed her face for the twentieth time in her vanity. Surely—when memory alone set her heart pounding—her face should look different. . . . But when she entered her hotel lobby and saw a shortish young man with an owl's face rise like doom from an armchair, she was glad it didn't.

"Hello, Owen," said Mary faintly. "This is a pleasant surprise."

"May I come up to your room?"

"Not here, I'm afraid."

"May I kiss you?"

"Why not?"

He did, chastely; they sat down like two owls, in facing armchairs.

"How did you arrive, Owen? Your wire said—"

"I reconsidered—an hour after sending it—and came by plane."

"Do you realize I've nearly gone mad with loneliness?"

"You look far from lonely at this moment. In fact, you look gay as a rose. Were my specialty psychology instead of lithosphere, I'd say you had found consolation. Who is he?"

"Owen, you'd better stick to your rocks."

"Your hotel clerk said you spent the day in Middlesex. Were you with this man?"

"Yes, constantly." She felt she might say anything now.

Owen slowly removed his spectacles, and pushed his jaw out as far as it would go. "His name, please."

"Suppose I told you he was the next Earl of Trevistane?"

"I would laugh in your face—not too heartily."

"Well, he is. Sir Alan Trevistane, baronet," she cried, madly improvising. "I lunched with him at the Spa; he took me to the station in his boat; he's driving into London now to take me to supper."

"You are dining with me, and taking me to Croydon afterward. There's a night plane at one—"

"Sorry—I'm afraid we won't be through supper."

"Mary, are you still my fiancée?"

"I wonder, Owen."

"You will please make up your mind as to that—in half an hour. I'll return for you promptly. We're dining at the Claridge. I shall wear a white tie. Be dressed appropriately." He was on his feet, bowing formally. "You'll find gardenias in your room. I may be a mere geologist, but I understand women—to a point." With nightmarish quickness, he was gone.

And, once more without conscious transition, she found she was seated before her mirror upstairs, a towel over bare shoulders, half her make-up on, undecided if she was dressing for past or future. Owen's flowers still stood unopened on the dresser—so she could scarcely be putting on bouffante organdie for Owen; and as for Alan—well, no lady dresses for a man she will never see again. She got up defiantly, stamping into her slippers: she had dressed tonight to please herself, because her boat-train left tomorrow, because she was spending her last four pounds on supper at the Savoy. Yes, she would drink a whole magnum of champagne by herself,—alone at a small table in a corner,—sipping slowly, mysteriously, noticing no one. Then she could go back to high school, teach physical culture, be an old maid forever. The phone buzzed at her elbow: just twenty minutes. Owen had made good time. Mary snatched the receiver. "It's your Nemesis—do you mind?" asked Alan's voice from the house-booth downstairs.

"You can't have got dry so soon."

"Didn't. Drove in just as I was, and changed at a friend's flat. How soon can you be dressed?"

"I am now."

"Splendid. You knew I'd come?"

"Of course," said Mary, quite naturally.

"I shall await you in my chariot—if you'll lean out at your casement, you can hear my horses neighing."

The lobby was empty as Mary swept through. Well, whatever scene Owen might have managed could be well dispensed with. Gay in her silver shoes, she went out to Great Russell Street. The Morris roadster stood at the curb; Alan in an opera hat loomed under the wheel, white-starched bosom shining in the early moonlight. Mary got in wordlessly; they glided out from the curb, roared into Oxford Street. "You rescued me just in time," she said at length. "Wild Indians were on my trail."

"Why didn't you say so? I'd have enjoyed fighting the whole tribe."

"There was really only one, and I almost married him."

They entered St. Giles' Circus. "Please tell me more," he said, carefully not looking at her.

"I couldn't now. But I never want to see his sad owl's face again. Do take me to supper. Anywhere but the Claridge."

"Would the Savoy do?"

"But you can't afford the Savoy."

"I can afford anything tonight."

"Why do you always say the right thing? It's very confusing to an honest girl who's going home tomorrow."

"But you're not. I sha'n't permit it."

MARY let her head rest on the upholstery of the roadster, watching the London night—a pale, amorphous night, like no other city-night in this world—flow by above the roar of Trafalgar Square. The National Gallery, with its memory of aching arches, squatted on their right; the Strand, as Alan entered it on a wide-open throttle, bore no resemblance to Brooklyn tonight. Nor did the *porte-cochère* of the hotel, the white gloves that sprang to open the roadster door. "Put this thing anywhere, Michael," said Alan to the page. "We sha'n't be needing it for hours."

Mary blinked a little at the depth of the man's bow. "Are you that well known here?"

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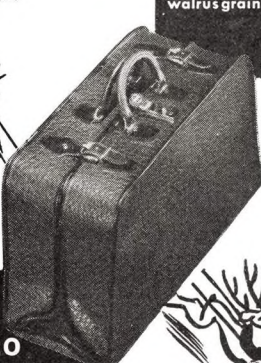

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"Notorious. Do you mind?"

"On whose money?"

"My own—once. They still remember. It was quite a life while it lasted. But farming is a lark too." They came into the supper-room behind an adoring captain. "Champagne first of all," said Alan.

THE big white room spilled over with decorous gayety—three boat-loads of America being very English in brand-new tails; but the table to which the captain led them, far down the floor from the sweet gold horns, was intimate and alone. "So glad you agreed to this place, Mary. I've always loved it. Everyone on that dance-floor wishing he were something he could never be. All your compatriots trying so hard to sound like sons of Albion. I'm the only one who enjoys doing the trick backward."

"Do you really, Alan?"

"Only I wish it weren't just a trick. Wish I'd been born in Brooklyn, and were worthy of you. Then I'd have a real excuse for stopping you at the boat-train tomorrow."

"I wish some one could stop me." The pop of a cork stopped them both. They watched the champagne smoke coldly from the bottle held in the waiter's reverent hands.

"You must drink it all," said Alan. "There's a great deal to say; I must make sure it is I who speak, not the wine."

"Dance with me. We can always talk."

"No, talk comes first tonight. I pray you'll feel like dancing after."

"Better have a sip. I'm afraid you're getting serious."

"So I am, Mary. Frightful, is it not?" Thoughtfully he watched her drink, steadfastly ignoring his own glass. "Do you think me quite mad?"

"Not quite."

"Be patient. You soon will."

"Good. That'll make us even."

"D'you realize I've loved you from the moment you pushed me overboard?"

"Love is a big word, Alan."

"Yes; it frightens me too. But we really can't avoid it, can we now? Look how fast it killed off your fiancé."

"Don't boast about that. He's been dead for some time. His name is Owen—maybe that's why."

"Excellent reason, I should think. Wager he uses glasses and big words."

"He studies rocks, too."

"Great heavens, how did it happen?"

"Our back-yards were together in Brooklyn."

"My back-yard is across half a world from yours. But I'd like you to play in it always."

"Are you asking what I think you're asking?"

"Precisely."

"But you don't know who I am." Her voice sounded quite far off in her ears.

"I know I'll never be happy if you go back to that strange place without me. You're the only completely alive person I've known since Cambridge. Come back with me to Trevistane, and I'll stop being a turnip tomorrow. Heaven helping me, I'll even get a job." He waited for her to speak; when she didn't, he went on slowly: "I warned you I'd sound quite mad—aside from my outrageous cheek. I suppose you think I'm after your money—"

Mary opened her bag on the table; four pound-notes and a shilling tumbled forlornly out. "There it is, Alan. Everything I own in this world, besides my boat-ticket."

"Splendid. We can both start from scratch."

"Now I'll tell you what I do in Brooklyn. I teach physical culture in a public school. I've grubbed for everything I ever had—washed dishes and minded babies to get through college. This dress is the only thing I own that cost more than eighteen dollars."

"Mary, you are a miracle."

"This summer I made up my mind I'd rather see the world third-class than not at all. Even that was a mistake—until this morning."

"Should I rise and bow?"

"Yes, today has been the only real fun I've ever had. And I still think I'm dreaming it."

"Ditto, Mary."

"It's been so perfect, I had to make it more so. I had to surround you with an embroidery of hearts and flowers."

"Once again, please?"

"Yes, Alan, you've been beautifully embroidered. Not an hour ago, I told my ex-fiancé that you were the next earl of Trevistane."

"But I am."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Will be, rather, when old John dies. Remember old John, don't you? The white-haired ruffian with the shotgun. He's my unrepentant father."

MARY gave him an extremely level look. She said tautly: "I've already embroidered you enough."

"Marvelous, that you should work for your living. Means you'll drive me to a job at last. Never worked in my life, outside the Castle." He smiled his most brilliant smile. "Perhaps we could both teach physical training. I rowed for my college. Can lift twenty-five stone with my shoulders."

The wine bubbled unseen before her. "Just because I'm a hopeless romantic, you needn't rub it in." Her voice was like ice, now.

"Every word I said is true."

"Very well. If you insist on prolonging a bad joke—"

"I asked you to be the next Countess of Trevistane, barring starvation. Yes or no?"

"I suppose I brought it on myself," said Mary soberly. She gathered her wrap about her, and got up. "But that doesn't make it any easier to laugh off." She plunged across the jammed dance-floor.

He followed her, his napkin trailing. "Mary, you've got to believe me." He dropped the napkin to take her wrist. "Is it my fault I have to be an earl some day? I didn't invent the peerage."

An outraged young man can be strong; a physical-training instructress with dander up can be stronger. Alan found himself sprawled on the Savoy's finest stairway, with Mary free on the step above. "Don't get up," she said calmly. "Enough people are looking now. Just give back that borrowed tail-coat, and go quietly home to your turnips."

"Don't leave me, Mary," he begged, with the ghost of his old smile. "London at night is no fit place for an unprotected girl to be."

"You needn't worry—Cinderella can find her way alone. Thanks for spoiling her dream, long before twelve." For the second time that day she left him quickly, through a gathering phalanx of waiters....

CROYDON AIRPORT
GOOD-BY MARY YOU NEVER LOVED ME YOUR LOSS IS MY GAIN OWEN

HOTEL THACKERAY
CHECK MISTER KISS DR. BELKNAP FOR ME I HATE YOU AND EVERY MAN IN THE WORLD

ZERMATT SWITZERLAND
PLEASE RETURN MY RING I MAY SOON HAVE OTHER USES FOR IT OWEN

Mary stood on the pier at Southampton, soberly watching the lights of her boat disappear down the long bottle-neck harbor and into the smoking dark. She had never felt more alone—or, for that matter, more tired and hungry. These sensations, however, had no separate existence in her consciousness—any more than she could believe in the reality of a girl named Mary Bardall, a sensible girl who wore flat-heeled shoes to work, and had never missed a train in her life.

After a while she returned to the hotel where she had that afternoon dropped her bags; and for want of a better occupation, sat down before a blotter in the writing-room. But in a moment she found herself writing madly; and as she wrote, the furrow vanished from her brow, and for the first time in days there was a light of purpose in her face:

Dear Owen:

Enc. please find your ring; your wire was handed to me at the boat-train by our hotel porter.

As you see, I am writing you from Southampton—where I purposely neglected to board the boat that was to take me back to America.

In those circumstances it is fortunate your wire reached me on time. I might have been tempted to pawn your ring. I hardly expect to go on eating my clothes forever.

But I can hear you asking—your eyes round with virtuous wonder—how could a respectable schoolmarm neglect to get aboard her boat, especially when she took the train from London with every intention of doing just that?

Perhaps you aren't even curious any more—but you're going to hear why, anyhow. This particular schoolmarm even got as far as the gangplank—where she tripped in the skein of her own embroidery, and bumped her nose, hard. She's sitting up now, thank you, and counting the stars. Unravel that *if you can, you master mind.*

Sincere hopes that the "other uses" to which this ring is to be put will bear saner fruit than I.

The Girl Who Bit Your Hand.

Dear Alan:

This is going to the Guide Room of Trevistane Castle, the nearest address I have.

I hope it reaches you—I also hope you can still walk. I'm sure I threw you rather hard; sometimes, I'm afraid I scarcely know my own strength.

If you are back on your feet, please don't use them to run away. Because I am coming to get you.

Don't ask when. I'm touring up from the South Coast by car. By several cars, in fact.

Save your tips, we're going to need them. And please believe me when I say I love turnips.

The Duchess of Brooklyn.

The polite couple with the caravan car —her second hitch out of Aldershot since morning—dropped Mary at the gatehouse. She put down her bag—it was no longer very heavy—and paid her one and only half-crown at the turnstile.

She knew Old Whiskers who sold the postcards was watching her curiously as she set out across the deer-park; she didn't mind in the slightest. She hadn't even asked for Alan Gibbons. Somehow she wanted to put off that truth as long as possible.

A *char-à-banc* was parked by the postern gate; that meant he was probably conducting a party at this moment. Chuckling over her letter, perhaps. Perhaps even singling out another prey. But her topsy-turvy mind, faint from no breakfast, refused to picture that. She cut across the lawn, running a little—unwisely, for not even a physical training instructress may subsist on tea and scones throughout three whole days of hitch-hiking.

Another hundred yards to the postern. She reeled a bit, almost pitching into the hawthorn. The spines ripped her sleeve, and she paused, breathing hard. A gunshot cracked out from the heart of the thicket. Mary tumbled gently forward, down into darkness.

She opened her eyes to a claret-colored face, framed in white hair. Old John held a rabbit by the ears; his blue eyes regarded her gravely. "Don't shoot," she whimpered. "I've come all the way from Southampton to tell him I'm sorry."

"So you're the lady?" She was amazed to discover he had the kindest smile in the world. "Get up, my girl; you aren't dead yet."

Intact but shaky, Mary slowly rose. "So you know who I am?"

"Do I not! Heard nothing else, since that young idiot got your letter."

"So he's discussed me—even with you?"

"Why shouldn't he? After all, I'm his father. Or hadn't you heard? He doesn't tell many people—not that I blame him; it's not much to be proud of."

Mary stumbled along beside him; they were climbing toward the postern now, toward the wine-colored light of a Norman dream. Toward a guide's voice, far down the dim flagstones:

"If we are very quiet indeed, we may hear the ghost of Henry walking."

"Ghost be blowed, Alan! Here's your bride."

Forty sheep turned in unison at the spectacle of a guide gone mad. Forty sheep witnessed an embrace that would have done credit to any one of eight Henrys.

GLORIOUS NERVE

(Continued from page 61)

as a phone message received an hour before, asking him to call a familiar number. He called it. For he had wired Marie that he was coming back today, and she now said on the telephone that she would be free that evening.

"If you want to come to see me," she added.

"Marie, please don't say things like that. Of course I want to come."

When he went into the living-room he found her alone and dressed in a plain dark woolen dress. There was a general sweetness of freesia, and a great bowl of jonquils set in blue glass.

He took her hand, kissed it and saw that she wore a new ring, a huge square ruby. That must have been Michael's Christmas present to her; and somehow the sight of it changed his mood. It was as if he pulled himself back.

"Been having a good time?" he inquired.

"Not very. It's so much easier to be gay than happy, isn't it?"

"Sure you never fool yourself and take one for the other?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Nothing. I'm a dummy."

"Was it a lot of fun?"

"Oh, good enough."

"How was the party—your sister's party?"

"It was all right."

She lifted her face to scan his.

"What's happened to you, Carl?"

"We've been a little worried about Jocelyn. Mother's taking her South to buck her up."

"I'm so sorry. But don't worry about it," said Marie. "She'll be all right, won't she?"

"I think so. After a while, anyway."

"You don't seem awfully glad to get back."

"I am. But I've been doing a lot of thinking. About us."

"Don't think now," she said softly. "It's so nice just to be here and together. I adored my clock."

It seemed insignificant beside that ring. But Carl couldn't give her a ring.

"Yes, but we mustn't relax on that. We can start that all over. I want to stand right up to Michael and tell him how we feel. Tell him the works."

"Carl, you can't. He'd go crazy, and he's got some terribly important engagements. He's composing some things too. You mustn't do it now."

"That was what you said six months ago."

"I know. But it's especially true now."

"I've looked Michael over," said Carl, "and I don't think he's going to be all broken up. He looks pretty shatterproof to me. And he's got to know. Sooner or later. You tell him, if you won't let me do it. Or leave him a note. Put on your hat and coat and walk out with me now. That would fix it. Will you do that?"

"You know I can't."

"Why can't you?" he asked doggedly.

"He's tried to be so kind. He's never been kinder."

"Yes," said Carl coldly; "I noticed the ring—first thing. . . . Well, Marie, I guess

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that's all there is to it. You've got to decide whether you stay with him or come with me."

"Why do you try to make it so hard? What if I can't decide?"

"Then I'll decide for the two of us."

"This isn't because of me," she said with sudden vehemence. "You've changed. I suppose some girl has been making love to you again."

"Nobody has been making love to me. And I don't know what you mean by 'again.'"

"Was the girl who wanted you to marry her last time you went home trying it again?"

He had quite forgotten that he had told Marie that. He stared at her.

"No, she wasn't trying it. She doesn't think I'm much of anything."

"But you want her."

"Leave her out of this," Carl said determinedly. "I want to settle this between us. She hasn't anything to do with it." But as he said that, it didn't sound like the truth even to himself. "All you have to do is to come with me now. Or come tomorrow. Or let me tell Michael."

"No—no!" she said desperately, and her hands went to her ears in the old cowardly gesture that was so very graceful. But he took them down firmly.

"There's no peace in this. There's no fun in it," he said.

That last sentence stung more than the others.

"I suppose you can have fun with that girl, though."

Carl stood there for a minute watching her hands. They were beautiful—no doubt of it: beautiful, tempting and useless. Then he let them go.

"Maybe it's nerves," he said. "Maybe I've managed you badly, and maybe you can't do it in front of the crowd. But you can't take the hurdle I want you to take. That's all there's to it. You get right up to it, and then you refuse again. I'm sorry, dear. We got off to a beautiful start. But I have an idea that perhaps Michael understands you better than I ever have."

IT was just then, while she was on the edge of hysterics, that Michael was heard coming in. Carl watched Marie go quiet, manage to effect a control that she would have thought impossible if her husband hadn't appeared.

And Michael made an entrance, a little conscious as usual, and yet sure of himself.

"Hello, Hadleigh," he said. "Good to see you back. Did you enjoy yourself on Christmas?"

"Very much, thanks."

"So did we," said Michael. "It was a pleasant holiday. Marie liked the little clock you sent her very much. It will be useful if she decides to accompany me on my winter tour. I think she may, this year. . . . Tell me, Hadleigh, are you a judge of jewels? I've been wondering if I was right about this ring for Marie."

"I noticed it as soon as I came in," said Carl. "It's a beauty. And it looks just right on her hand. Just suits it. Well, I've got to be on my way."

He went quickly and finally. When he got to his club he said to the operator: "No matter who telephones, please say that I have not come in."

In the next few days he had to say that very often. At the office his secretary came to know just to whom to give the message. Two weeks later Carl saw in a rotogravure sheet a picture of a famous musician who was about to go on tour, accompanied by his wife. It was a remarkably good picture of Marie—wistful, provocative, promising.

THERE was much more talk about the fact that Carl had taken Lisa to the Hadleigh party than there was about Jocelyn's nervous breakdown. Perhaps a few people suspected that there was more to the girl's illness than appeared on the surface, but little was said about it. Lisa, however, was as usual fair gossip. Her stock, as she had prophesied to Carl, rose socially. She had interested Carl in spite of the fact that Mrs. Hadleigh didn't like her. But she hadn't married him yet.

Those few who remembered exactly what had happened on that autumn evening when Dorothy Giffert was married—and Joe Jones was one of them—enjoyed pointing out that Lisa had done much of what she had said she could do. She had proved that she could make money. She had her own car now, and men spoke of her with a certain respect due a woman who was reported to have made a big killing in the market.

But it was Mrs. Hadleigh's first dinner when she came back from the South that was Lisa's second triumph; and Joe heard about it even if he wasn't there. It was quite a big dinner, and yet not so big that it included any people except the intimate friends of the Hadleighs. There were some thirty guests. Some were older men and women, and there were a few young ones like Dorothy Giffert Clawson and the two Tufts. But there was a general astonishment in the dressing-room when Lisa came in, and more in the dining-room when it appeared that she was seated at Mr. Hadleigh's left hand, Mrs. Giffert having the place of honor opposite. Mrs. Giffert figured it all out quickly in her own mind. Though nothing was announced, there must be something between Lisa and Carl Hadleigh, and this was the family's first recognition of it. It was something that nobody could quarrel with or ignore if the Hadleigh family was satisfied, and apparently they were pleased with Lisa.

"This has always been one of my girls," she said, getting her cue and beaming at Lisa, "—one of my adopted daughters."

"You're always lucky," chuckled Mr. Hadleigh. "I'll tell you this about Lisa: She's as smart as she's pretty. She knows how to pick a good investment and hold on to it."

Felix Tufts, who was sitting on the other side of Lisa, tried to get her to talk to him. She did part of the time, when she wasn't charming Mr. Hadleigh. There was no use in bearing grudges.

As people so often said, there was nothing wrong with Felix. Lisa said it to herself now. There wasn't a time in the last six months when Felix had been rude to her. He hadn't, Lisa was quite sure, even been unkind in comment behind her back.

"It's a long time since I've had a decent chance to talk to you," Felix began now in a kind of apology.

"I know. I know exactly how long it's been, Felix."

"I hope that means you've missed me a little."

"Yes, I missed you."

"When?" he asked eagerly.

"Oh, lots of times. There were nights when I sat in my room with nothing to do and missed you. I missed you when I left the old house for the last time, and while I was waiting to hear if I had a chance in that advertising thing. Quite often, as a matter of fact."

"I wish I'd known that."

"You didn't come around to find out. It wasn't you alone I missed, Felix. I missed some one who would give me a pat on the shoulder and say that things would come out all right, and that if they didn't, he'd stand by me anyhow. I missed some one who would like me as much if I were a failure or a success, and who'd not hold my mistakes against me, and not listen to cruel criticism. But that person wasn't there. How grateful I'd have been if there were anyone like that."

"Lisa, you know that's the way I feel about you."

"Know it? How on earth could I even suspect it?"

Some one was asking: "When is Carl coming up here again, Mr. Hadleigh?"

Lisa listened for the answer, caught herself doing it.

"I don't really know," said Mr. Hadleigh. "He's gone to Mexico, and he hasn't been definite about his return. He usually makes us a short visit at least in the spring. But this year it may not work out."

"Will you please let me talk to you after dinner?" asked Felix.

"If you like," said Lisa.

"It's so nice to see Lisa Sylvester," said Mrs. Giffert, joining her hostess as they left the table. "Such a bright girl. And how lovely she is looking."

"Yes, I'm fond of her too," replied Mrs. Hadleigh, "and of course Jocelyn adores her."

"How is Jocelyn?"

"Oh, she's much better. She really is having a wonderful time. I was quite content to leave her down there where the weather is so much better than here, and there's a fine group of young people in that colony. She is staying with some very good friends of ours, and it's all very wholesome and delightful."

Nightly Mrs. Hadleigh said a thankful prayer about that.

"Felix Tufts seems much interested in Lisa, doesn't he?"

"Hasn't he always been?" asked Mrs. Hadleigh. "I can remember his hanging around her when he was a gangling boy."

She too had seen Felix corner Lisa so he could have his promised talk.

FELIX was trying desperately to say it all at once.

"I never have cared for anyone else. I never shall."

"Oh, yes, after a while. You have a way, Felix, of doing what's expected of you."

"But why don't you let me try to make you happy?"

"You couldn't, I'm afraid. You'd worry about it too much. And you see, Felix, things happen to people that they don't expect. People blunder. They make mistakes, and do things that are ridiculous or crazy. I'm that sort of person. I get in accidents and do the wrong thing. The only person who could marry me would be some one who wouldn't be all shot to pieces if I did the wrong thing. Don't you see, Felix, it's easy enough for you to be fond of me now, when there's no opposition. But that doesn't take any nerve. And if it had ever been the sort of feeling you couldn't resist, you wouldn't have scampered away with everyone else I knew when I made a mess of things and people were down on me, and said I was—well, you know what they said better than I do, I suppose."

"I never believed any of it."

"But it bothered you that other people believed it. And that's the trouble. Things would happen, and I'd be wondering if you'd stand up to them."

"What things would happen?" he asked.

"The correct answer was that it doesn't matter what happens."

"Well, it doesn't," he said. "It doesn't, as long as I could be sure you loved me."

"But you might not be sure. I might not be sure, even after I thought I did. Could you see that through?"

She was truly sorry for him just then, bewildered and more eager than he had ever been, and yet so afraid of letting go of caution completely, as if he couldn't walk alone without it. She had never liked him better.

"Anyway, I don't love you, Felix."

"You might have, if I'd done things differently."

"I might have fooled myself into thinking that I did. I might have fooled the two of us. Come, let's go back to the others now."

"There isn't a chance for me?"

"Lots of chances, but none for marrying me."

"Is it going to be Carl Hadleigh then?"

"Don't be silly. Why should it be Carl? Of course not."

She said it with a positiveness that was greater than she'd had in refusing Felix.

NEWS of the Hadleigh dinner, at which Lisa was present and almost featured, spread around and was variously interpreted, in spite of what she said to Felix. But people couldn't understand it as the weeks went on and Carl didn't appear.

"Well, Lisa gave herself a year," said Joe Jones, "and I'll keep my money on her. She has the Hadleighs eating out of her hand, certainly. But you can't get any news out of them about Carl."

No one got any news out of Lisa either. As a matter of fact, she didn't have any.

It was not that Carl did not want to come. But there were things to do first, months of work of one kind and another. He was needed in Mexico, where his firm was getting some new operations under way. Also he wanted to shed some things very completely and finally. There were memories to lose and desires to be rid of.

Then one day in his superintendent's office he picked up an old magazine that was lying there, and as he looked through it he saw an advertisement of a Victory car, the one the company had used on its billboards some months before.

He was still looking at it when the superintendent glanced over his shoulder.

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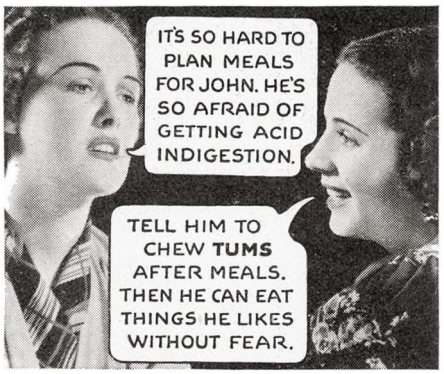

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"Isn't she a beaut? I'd like to meet that girl," said the superintendent.

"So would I," said Carl, and there it was in words. He stood up and said: "If you boys can get along without another mouth to feed, I think I'll go back and see what's happening in the Roosevelt country."

CARL arrived at his home one day in May. He might have been unannounced, but Joe Jones had come up on the same train from Chicago, so there was plenty of gossip by night. Joe said that Carl had asked about Lisa.

"How about putting any money up now?" asked Joe. "Does that girl always get what she goes after, or does she not?"

Carl dined with his parents. They talked of his work, of plans for Jocelyn, of all the things that had to be brought up to date. Afterward he said: "I think I'll give Lisa a ring and see if she's home."

His father remarked: "She was here for dinner one night. Very bright girl. Nice girl."

Mrs. Hadleigh said: "Give Lisa my love, Carl."

But it wasn't his mother's love that Carl wanted to give Lisa. When she opened her door, he saw that she was just as he had remembered, a girl who looked you in the eye and had her chin up.

"Advertisements don't lie," he said.

"And don't you, either," answered Lisa. "I'm terribly glad to see you."

"Multiply it by a few thousand, and find out how I feel."

"Have you been getting along all right?"

"I've been working hard."

"You look as if you had been working. You don't look quite as tired as you did. Would you like a drink?"

"Not this minute. Don't stir. I want to regard you peacefully."

"I'm not a meadow."

He laughed. It was such fun to be with her again, to find her ready to laugh and be gay. But he didn't want to wait.

"You know why I came back, don't you, Lisa?"

"Don't you always come down from the mountains in the spring?"

"I came back to tell you I'm in love with you. I want you to marry me."

"Oh," said Lisa, as if she'd never heard of such a thing. And when he tried to touch her, she backed against the wall.

"Lisa—"

"I couldn't," she told him. "I really couldn't. Don't you see how impossible it is?"

"Why?"

"You love that other woman so much."

"You mean the one I told you something about."

"Of course."

"But that's all over."

"It couldn't be. It mustn't be. Deep in your heart, no matter what has happened, you must feel that way still. I've thought about it a lot. I can remember when you talked to me that day, how wonderful it seemed to me that anyone could care that much."

"But Lisa, darling, *she* didn't care. You see, she was married. She didn't want to leave her husband. She wanted him more than me."

"Perhaps she'll change."

"She's not going to be given a chance to change," said Carl. "Not by me. I'm not in love with her. I'm not sure that I ever was. I'm in love with you."

"And how could I be sure of that?" asked Lisa.

"Because I'm telling you."

"But you told her the same thing."

It was true. Of course he had. He'd told Marie that he loved her. And now, when the words were dead in his own imaginings, they were blocking him, keeping him from the one woman he wanted. She looked so lovely. And she looked as if she couldn't be convinced.

"I came back purposely to marry you," he said.

"I knew you'd ask me. Joe Jones told me today you were in town. They're talking about us. And when you go away, you know what they'll say, don't you? That I couldn't put it over after all. For they all remember that I said I'd get you, and I won't get you. I haven't really wanted to get you since that Christmas afternoon. You know, ever since I found out about my mother and father, it seemed the worst thing in the world to me to tear up another person's love. I'd much rather have them say I couldn't get you, and have them laugh a little. They'll laugh. Some of them will lose their bets. Let them!"

"Lisa," he said, "I can see what I did to you. I didn't know then how I was going to feel about you, how I've felt ever since I saw you with Jocelyn in your arms and I wanted to take you in mine. I admit everything you say. I was torn to pieces. I wanted that woman. But you were talking once about obstacles: Are you going to let that obstacle of a dead love stand in the way of a living one?"

She said: "My father thought his love was dead, but it never was. People don't know about that."

"I know," said Carl, "I know definitely. And I know when I'm licked, too. I'm licked because you don't love me, and you won't marry a man unless you do love him. That's the answer. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I put you through this. Good night, Lisa, and bless you."

She didn't say a word as he closed the door—just stood there with her head up.

HE didn't go home. He couldn't bear to go home lest his mother might still be up. He fumed around the streets for a while, wondering what he could do with his life from now on, beginning to realize how he had built up, even before he admitted it, a hope of Lisa, remembering every gesture she had made tonight, and remembering every time he had seen her. He didn't think of Marie as a person; but when the thought of her crossed his mind, he told himself viciously that he deserved what he was getting.

Finally he went into the City Club to sit down and think it over some more. But to get into the library he had to go through the card-room, and there was a group at one table playing bridge. They hailed him, and he had to stop.

"When did you get here?"

"Just today."

"Going to be here long?"

"No."

"Come up just to see your family?"

Carl thought he heard something in that remark, more than a casual question, a slight innuendo. He remembered what

Lisa had said about what the comment would be, that she hadn't put it over.

"No," he said, "I came up to ask Lisa Sylvester to marry me. But she refused."

That was all. Before they thought of the next thing to say, he had gone into the next room and nobody followed him.

You don't keep a scene like that quiet in a small city, where it is not true that everyone knows everyone else, but enough people are acquainted with each other to make a long train of gossip. The big question was why she had turned Carl down. There were plenty of answers. She wanted somebody more important now; she was going to Hollywood; Carl had tuberculosis—so went the stories. But the people most concerned didn't hear them at all. Not until Joe Jones, meeting Lisa on the street, dared to say to her: "Well, you lost me money."

"Did I?"

"Why did you refuse him?"

"Refuse who?"

"Come on, Lisa," said Joe. "Carl Hadleigh told the men at the club last night that he'd come up here to ask you to marry him, and that you'd turned him down flat. So it isn't exactly a secret, though it may not be tactful to mention it."

"No, not exactly a secret," said Lisa.

All of a sudden that old horror of not knowing what people were saying came up again, and she heard herself putting up a front, making a joke that Joe could repeat.

"I wanted to fool Lloyds," she said.

Then she hated herself for saying it. It wasn't funny. They were talking behind Carl's back too; and men hated that sometimes more than women. They were making fun of him because he'd told the world he loved her and hadn't been able to get her. He'd told everyone. He wanted people to know. And that was to save her from ridicule and from slander.

She looked at her watch, for she knew the train schedules. Then she hurried. He couldn't have left the house yet.

"It's Lisa!" exclaimed Mrs. Hadleigh, when the maid let Lisa in.

She and Carl were sitting in the library, talking of almost anything else, and almost at random. She wished that he'd be frank about what was in his mind, and that he wouldn't look so wretched. It was impossible to ask him questions. But there was Lisa on the threshold, like a lovely answer to all the questions, chin up, determined, courageous.

"Carl," said Lisa, "I have an awful nerve to come here now. But I don't like the way people are talking. Why did you tell them I wouldn't marry you?"

"Because you wouldn't."

"Well, I will!" she declared.

His arms were on her, but not holding her close—not yet.

"Why will you?"

"Because you love me. No, that's not the reason. It's because I love you."

"You're sure?"

"I'm certain."

"And the obstacle?" he asked.

"There isn't any. You took it, for both of us, when you told them last night that you loved me."

Mrs. Hadleigh, standing there with tears in her eyes, watched Lisa's face. She wondered how anyone could ever have thought that girl was hard.

THE END

FRIENDLY ENEMIES

(Continued from page 27)

Whisky and soda every afternoon—all afternoon."

Saito did not want to be a diplomat. His ambition when he was on the staff of the *White Birch*, the student publication in the exclusive Peers School in Tokyo, was to be a writer. Then his father died, and as Saito puts it: "I had to turn diplomat in order to make a living."

Saito's English, even in his youth, was perfect. His father taught English, and his sister Etsuko, before she died at the age of twenty-two, translated Longfellow's "Evangeline" into Japanese. The Ambassador has had it published, with a foreword of his own, and it is still sold in Japan.

In some quarters in Washington, Saito's glibness and suavity are viewed with annoyance. He is considered a little too cheerio for real sincerity. His smooth wise-cracking, however, helps him to handle press interviews with all the pleasant though superficial frankness of a Senator.

Reporters who met him as he arrived in New York were immediately invited to the bar of the ship and told to fire their questions. Asked about Japan's alleged desire to seize Alaska, the Ambassador shot back:

"What for? What would we want with that frozen country?"

"What are the possibilities of war between this country and Japan, Mr. Ambassador?"

"That's poppycock."

"Do you expect many problems as Ambassador in Washington?"

"It's a great responsibility, but a cinch of a job."

Madam Saito mingles almost as much in Washington society as does her husband, and strangely enough, one of her closest friends is Madame Troyanovsky, wife of the Soviet Ambassador, whose country is the traditional rival of Japan. Another close friend is Mrs. Borah, wife of the Senator from Idaho, who can be seen at the Japanese Embassy almost once a week at tea-time—though not accompanied by her husband.

Madam Saito speaks English, though not with the cultivated fluency of her husband. She does not, however, speak French, which caused her some embarrassment in returning a call made by the wife of a certain Minister, whose legation is just across the street. The Minister's wife, she found, spoke only French and Spanish, while Madam Saito spoke only English and Japanese. So they sat in somewhat embarrassed silence, conversing in the sign language plus broken French and English. The story is that finally the hostess, desiring to express her appreciation of the beautiful Japanese Embassy just across the street, went to the window, and pointing to her guest's home, said:

"You home?"

(Please turn to page 115)

On Making Mistakes

by ANGELO PATRI

IDEALISM is strong in youth; and along with it goes a stiff intolerance of anything less than perfection. At this time behavior is either dead black or shining white. No in-between shades soften the youthful judgment, which is swift, sure and severe, even upon itself. A mistake takes on tragic finality; and life ends then and there. . . .

Peter was sent home from college because, one lovely evening, he had thrown discretion to the winds, taken a drink too much, and otherwise gone beyond himself. "You'd better go home and talk things over with your father and mother. Think through some of the ideas that are disturbing you, and come back when you feel better," said the Dean, a certain kindliness creeping into his usually cool tone. Peter was enough to melt a heart of stone as he stood there, pale, downcast, hopeless.

"It makes no difference where I go now," said he. "I'll never be able to hold my head up again. I can't go home. Everybody will be talking about me, calling me a no-good and a loafer; and my people will feel disgraced. I'll go to sea and never come back."

It is humiliating to make a mistake; and while an occasional humiliation is good for the soul, there is no need of making a complete diet of it. Youth is peculiarly susceptible to exaggeration in its ideas, and must be rescued every now and then, shown that there is no finality in this life. After a catastrophe there is always the third day when the glory of the resurrection morning breaks.

The world is set for beginnings. On that sixth day of creation night followed day, establishing a beginning with every rising sun. Night graciously covered the mistakes of the day, shadowed them with a merciful dimness sprinkled with stars, glints of light that hinted of the greater light to come with the dawn.

There is always hope for the young person who makes a mistake because he tried an experiment, ventured to test life at first hand. He is proving that in him there is life abounding, a promise of growth and the hope of fruition. For the one who sits in safety and stillness, winning praise for an effortless goodness, there is scant hope for a rich and useful life. Stillness is the expression of a spirit that sleeps; and for the slumbering soul there can be no growth until a fortunate accident jolts it into activity—and into mistakes, its certain accompaniment.

Fathers and mothers tremble lest their children make mistakes. They spend troubled days and nights trying to devise ways and means of keeping them safe. Far better to shove them out early, to allow time for experience to teach them the difference between the things that are good and those that are no good for their purpose: healthy, happy living. Push them out and teach them to welcome every happening of their day, to suffer and triumph over humiliation, to endure failure and the scorn of the ignorant, until success comes out of struggle.

To the boy or girl who has made, and will make, a mistake, the word is: "Don't sit by the willows to weep. Let it pass with the night. Let it fade into nothingness, which it is. Don't, if you happen to bark your shins against an immutable principle of life, fall upon your face in despair. Get up and go forward to discover the friendly companionship of the road. You will find that in error all men are brothers."

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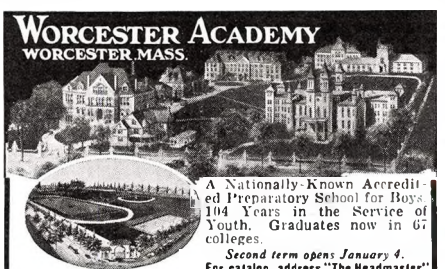

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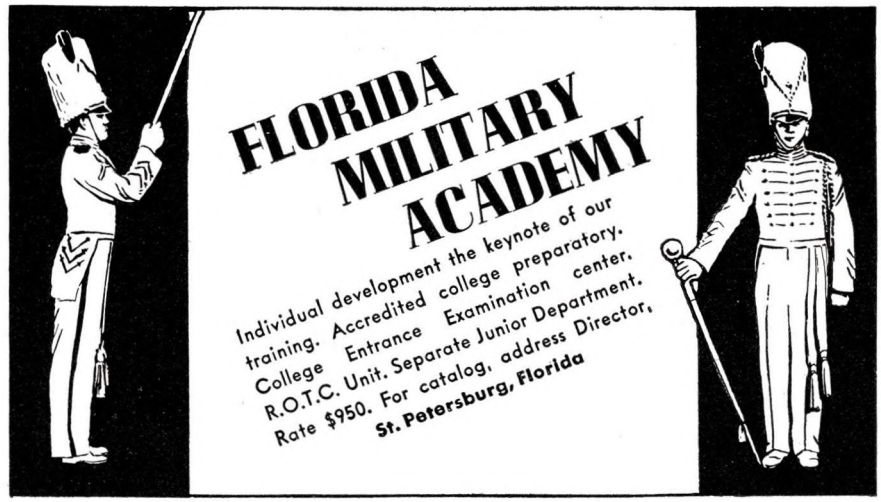

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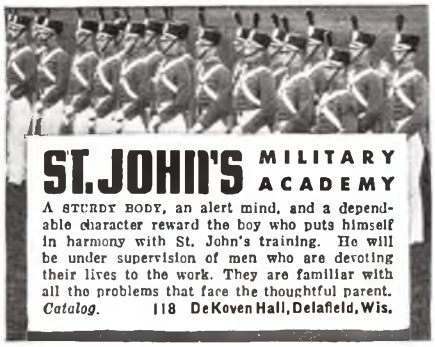

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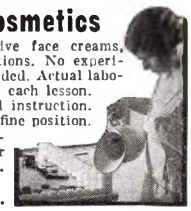

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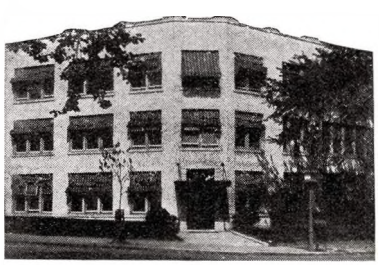

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(Continued from page 109)

According to Madam Saito's knowledge of English, there was no misunderstanding this. She rose, bowed gravely and did as she thought she was requested: She went home. . . .

Some months ago, following one of the political upheavals in Tokyo, it was reported that Saito had been offered the post of Foreign Minister, and had turned it down. Whether the offer actually was made is not known. But one thing is certain: if he had become Foreign Minister, the present course of Japan in China would not have been different.

Ambassador Saito is in complete accord with the Japanese militarists who are the real rulers of his country. In fact he owes his preferment over older colleagues in the diplomatic service to the influence of his militarist friends. He is a thorough believer in the policy that Japan must expand on the continent of Asia. And that is why, being a realist, he is not more disturbed at the tide of American public opinion. He would prefer Americans to think of Japan only in terms of cherry blossoms, but if they must surge with indignation, he is not the one to beat his breast in remorse.

For consolation he has always his rice paper, his brush and the lovely lines of Chinese poetry.

REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH

(Continued from page 12)

nosis spread quickly to all the inhabitants—they came to feel that it was destined to be the greatest city in the world and nothing could stop it. (The only thing at all comparable to such a civic spirit is that particular fungus which is said to have propagated very rapidly, a few years ago, among Los Angeles real-estate salesmen.) You can laugh all you wish; but after the fire, which wiped out the mushroom growth, that same boastful Chicagoan spirit dictated the foundations of a new modern city of stone and steel.

I see I've been rambling along without saying anything about the one feature which will stick in your memory longest, and that is the Fire itself. These scenes of frantic spectacle certainly advance the story; they give it a dramatic crescendo which is really something. Watch the stampede of cattle in the Chicago stockyard, and the opening of the crowded Michigan Avenue bridge to let a ship through.

I guess the only thing I can find fault with is that this show wasn't done in color. But that isn't going to bother you, nor you, nor you. Barring a general earthquake which would level all picture-houses in this country, nothing can stop "In Old Chicago." It's a beaut!

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"Run along home with that cold, Bill"

Wise parents, like wise teachers, know that the best place for a child with a fresh cold is home, resting in bed.

WHAT seems to be "just a cold" often turns out to be the beginning of measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough or some other contagious disease that may be epidemic. Keep your sick child away from other children. If the symptoms persist or there is fever, send for the doctor.

No person of any age should neglect a cold. In its early, acute stage the infection is easily spread, often sweeping through entire families, schools and factories.

By allowing a cold to drag on without proper treatment, you may let down the bars of resistance to pneumonia. If you take care of colds, and others do the same, everybody would be spared many serious illnesses.

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs. It comes on usually with a chill, followed by a high fever, accompanied by pain in the chest or side, and coughing. A doctor should be called without delay. With prompt medical treatment and competent nursing, pneumonia can usually be controlled.

There are more than 30 kinds of pneumonia. Each is caused by a different type of germ which can be identified. An increasing number of laboratories have facilities for rapid sputum "typing." The serums now available for certain types of pneumonia are highly effective, provided they are given in time.

Start a simple course of treatment at the first signs of a cold. Rest in bed, if possible, or at least indoors. Eat lightly. Drink plenty of water and plenty of broth and citrus fruit juices. With precautions it is unlikely that a cold will develop into serious illness.

Colds and pneumonia both may follow lowered bodily resistance. There is much that can be done to keep vitality high during the coming winter months. The Metropolitan's booklet "Colds, Influenza, Pneumonia" contains many practical suggestions on building resistance against such infections. Send today for your free copy. Address Booklet Department 133-R.

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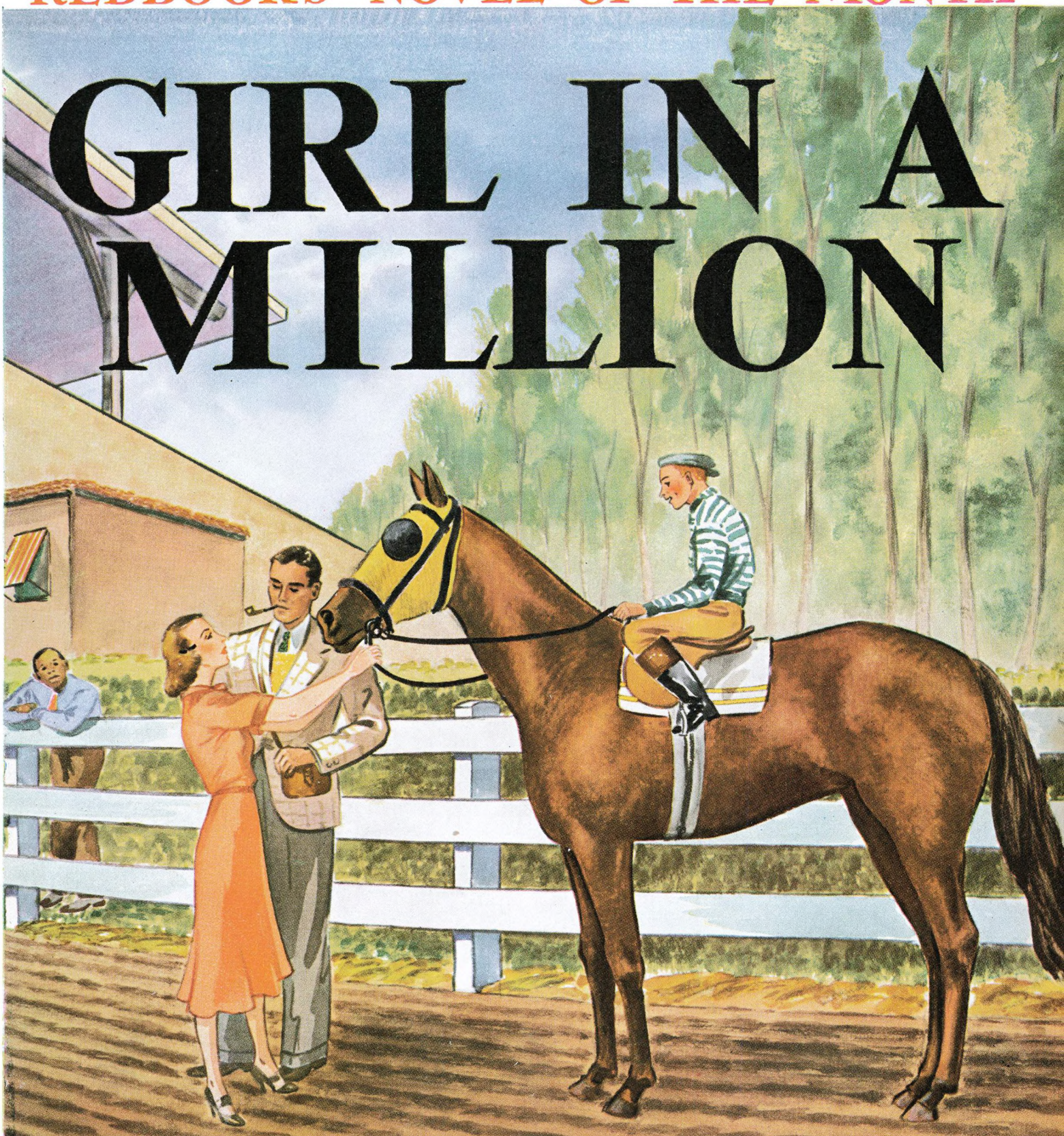
REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

GIRL IN A MILLION



BY

W. R. BURNETT

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE CAESAR"

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

J. O. N. COSGRAVE II

ONCE AGAIN . . . IT'S TIME TO MAKE A BOWL OF

Merry Christmas!

FOR A PERFECT EGG-NOG—Beat separately the yolks and whites of 6 fresh eggs. Add ½ cup of sugar to the yolks while beating, and ¼ cup of sugar to the whites after they have been beaten very stiff. Mix the egg whites with the yolks. Stir in 1 pint of rich cream and 1 pint of milk. Then add 1 pint of Four Roses Whiskey and 1 ounce of Jamaica Rum. Stir thoroughly, and serve very cold with grated nutmeg on each glass. (Makes 5 pints of Egg-nog.)

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Four Roses is a blend of straight whiskies—and that means ALL whiskey—90 proof. Frankfort Distilleries, Incorporated, Louisville and Baltimore.

REDBOOK'S NOVEL OF THE MONTH

GIRL IN A MILLION

by

W. R. BURNETT

author of "Little Caesar"

THEY were saddling the horses for the fifth race. Although it was a gray day, and dark clouds were hanging heavy and menacing over the Sierra Madres to the north, there was an enormous crowd at the track.

Pop Benedict pushed his soft hat back off his forehead and squinted his eyes expertly at his big bay gelding Prester John, which was the quietest horse of the seven, ambling along, paying no attention to the noisy crowd. Pop was about seventy years old. He was short, not over five feet five, and he had a shrunken look. But his eyes, a deep brown, almost black, snapped with vitality.

After a moment, Pop turned and spoke.

"He'll do, Jewel. Aint favoring that leg a bit. He's in with the kind he can beat today, and the odds ought to be right."

His granddaughter glanced at him, but said nothing. For almost as long as she could remember, she had stood skeptically on the sidelines watching Pop wait for his ship, which never came in.

"I heard the boys talking," she said finally. "They think Bay Magic will walk in."

Pop laughed. "They get the funniest notions. Jewel, how much money we got?"

"About eleven dollars."

Pop glanced up at the big odds-board above the saddling-barn.

"Twelve-to-one. That's perfect; that's just right. Can you imagine this mob letting old Johnny go to post at a price like that! Eleven dollars, eh? Well, that's as good as nothing. What can you do with eleven dollars? I wish there was somebody around I—"

Jewel took Pop by the arm.

"No more borrowing. You promised me, Pop. We owe everybody now."

Pop looked a little deflated, but said:

"But this is different. Johnny twelve-to-one in among a bunch of fifteen-hundred-dollar platers! Why, it's too easy. It's—"

"Now, Pop, if I was wise, I'd bet two dollars on Johnny and let it go at that. I think that's what I'll do."

Pop fumbled furiously with his hat.

"Wait, Jewel. All right. No borrowing. Bet five win and five place on the old boy. That's a good kid."

Jewel smiled slightly. She was a pretty, blonde girl, just past twenty. She was small and slender, and wore her cheap clothes with an air. She had a finely cut mouth, rather prominent cheek-bones, and heavy-lidded blue eyes. She did not smile readily, and there was often a cold light in her eyes; she was distant with strangers, and did not make friends easily; but the men around the track, who knew her, admired her very much. "There's a girl," they'd say. "A real nice girl. Not one of your race-track bums, chiseling every guy in sight. She knows the answers, buddy, and you might as well forget all about her, because you'd just be wasting your time. Old Pop don't have to carry no shotguns around with him no more, like he used to with his daughter."

"Well," she said, "I guess I might as well bet it that way. We might as well be real broke, Pop. But this is the worst ever. If Johnny gets beat, we'll have just one lone dollar."

Pop grinned, showing his too-perfect store teeth.

"Now, don't you worry, honey. You run along and bet that money. Every dog has his day, and this is ours."

Jewel turned away, waved, and joined the crowd which was hurrying to the betting-shed under the grandstand.

Pop turned and went into the paddock. His swipe, Red Crump, was walking beside the big bay gelding Prester John, talking to the little bush jockey, Slim Darrel, who looked frail and drawn and unable to cope with the powerful horse he was riding. Pop glanced at his silks with pride: white cap, maroon blouse with circles of white, gold sleeves. The gold sleeves had been the Old Lady's idea. Yes, yes; the Old Lady! Dying of pneumonia just when things were getting good. That must be twenty-four—twenty-five years ago. Pop shook his head as if to chase away dark thoughts. "No," he said to himself, "I won't think about it. No use. It'll just make me feel bad."

He walked over to Red, a powerful, broad-shouldered man with a tough freckled face.

"Looks good," said Red. "Aint going to have to take it out of him warming him up today. Aint a bit gimpy."

Slim glanced down.

"What's the word, Mr. Benedict?"

"Rate him, boy. Save him all you can, but don't let that Bay Magic horse pull a Bill Daly on you. That's his stunt, and I hear he's running for the coconuts today."

BEYOND the grandstand the bugle blew, calling the horses to the post.

Pop nodded to the jockey and turned away. A big man in a tan polo coat was grinning at him. It was Bay Magic's trainer, Ed Stroud.

"Hi, Pop! Sorry I got to run you back in the ruck again today. But a man's got to win a bet once in a while. I hope you didn't bet more than a thousand on that old crowbait of yours."

"I put a chunk on him," said Pop. "And he'll come in. As for that pelt of yours, he aint nothing. Just nothing."

"Yeah," said Ed; "I heard you put a chunk on yours. About six across, wasn't it?" He laughed, and punched Pop in the ribs.

Pop's face flushed, and his eyes gleamed with anger.

"Listen, Ed Stroud: I was racing better horses than you'll ever see, before you was born. I wouldn't have a no-account cart-horse like Bay Magic in my stable."

Ed smiled a little uncertainly.

"Now wait, Pop. No harm meant. Just a little kidding. I think that horse of yours has got a right good chance, and I'd feel a little easier if you'd scratched him."

Pop's anger immediately evaporated. He grinned, and was very friendly.

"All right, Ed," he said. "If I don't win, I hope you do."

When Pop turned away, Ed smiled to himself, then turned to a tall thin man who had been leaning against the paddock fence, looking on.

"Kind of peppery, the old boy is," Ed said.

The thin man yawned.

"Yeah. Always was. I been racing against Pop Benedict for fifteen years. Used to have a real stable of

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horses. But he's plumb out now, and no money to buy more. I've seen him whip men twice as big as himself. He used to be a sure enough fire-eater. Ed, you're new to the game. Don't bait that old guy too much. He's already killed one man."

Ed Stroud swallowed.

"No kidding?"

"He sure enough did. The old man had a daughter wasn't much good. She's the mother of that granddaughter of his. Well, seems like there was a big Texan named Bud Brown that was always hanging around. He got Pop's daughter in a jam of some kind, and wouldn't do nothing about it. Bud was a gun-toter and kind of bad. One day Pop braced him. Pop didn't have no gun, but he wasn't scared. They got to fighting somehow, and the gun went off; that's all. The boys give Bud a nice funeral."

"Well, I'll be—" said Ed.

"Yep. Pop's no man to fool with. Well, let's get going. I want to see how that horse of mine acts today."

AS Jewel was hurrying across the betting-shed toward the ramp in front of the grandstand, some one took her gently by the arm. She looked up quickly and resentfully. It was Tray McKinnel, a big lanky Kentuckian, who had a few horses of his own and trained other people's horses on the side. He had a lean, rather handsome face and pale blue eyes. His hands were big, bony and strong; he was sunburnt and looked very fit.

"Hello, Jewel, honey," he said. "I thought I saw you over there fighting the machines."

"Don't take hold of my arm like that, Tray," said Jewel sharply. "I don't like to be mauled."

He took his hand away hastily, grinning.

"Excuse me. But I was afraid you'd get past me and get lost in that crowd. How are you? How come I don't get to see you no more?"

"I'm all right, Tray. You haven't been around lately, have you?"

"Well, I aint been down to your place. Pop kind of bad-eyed me the last time. I'd had a couple, and I guess I talked too loud."

Jewel smiled. "Oh, don't mind Pop."

"You mean you want me to come down and see you?"

Jewel hesitated. She felt very much attracted to Tray, but she fought against it. He was just another no-good like Pop—like almost all these race-track men.

"You might sometime."

"That aint what I'd call definite."

"Well, can't you drop around? We're home almost any night. But don't take a couple too many next time, Tray. You did a lot of bragging, and Pop didn't like it."

"I'm sure mighty sorry," he said with a boyish grin. "I'll be on my best behavior next time."

Somebody yelled, "There they go!" and people began to run from the betting-shed out onto the ramp. Overhead, the grandstand shook with the tumult.

"Good-by, Tray," called Jewel, moving away hastily.

" 'By, honey. Hope you win."

Jewel pushed her way through the crowd. Above the roar, she could hear the announcer describing the race over the loud-speaker system. Bay Magic was in front going into the backstretch; Prester John hadn't got a call so far. Finally she managed to get to the fence. She saw Pop and Red, standing on tiptoe, craning their necks.

"Pop," she called, "where's Johnny?"

Pop turned.

"Lying about fifth, Jewel. He's all right. Stroud's horse is going to burn himself out, setting a pace like that."

Unable to see, Jewel turned to watch Pop, who was straining his ears to catch every word of the announcer. When the horses turned for home, Bay Magic was still in front; the roar from the stands was so tremendous now that the announcer was completely drowned out. "Oh, Johnny," muttered Jewel. "This is the time. We surely need it today, Johnny. Come home!"

Jewel heard the horses thunder past the finish line; the tumult died down. She glanced at Pop and Red. Pop snapped his fingers carelessly, then shrugged. He turned and saw Jewel looking at him.

"We got beat," he said.

"Where did we run?" Jewel asked.

"Fifth."

"Well," said Red, "we didn't run last, anyway. Dogged if I know what happened."

The winning jockey saluted the judges and tossed his whip to his valet. Pop and Red went out to talk to Slim. While Slim was taking off his saddle, Pop asked:

"What happened, son?"

"I rated him the first half," said Slim. "And he rated himself the rest of the way. He didn't have nothing, Mr. Benedict. Not a thing. Sorry. I done my best."

"Oh, well," said Pop. "That's just one race. . . . Matter, Johnny, old boy? Getting old?"

Prester John nickered softly and tossed his head. He was all lathered up.

"Just what you're sweating about, fellow," said Red, "I don't know."

Pop turned. Jewel was looking over the fence at them. Her expression worried Pop. He came over to her.

"Don't worry, Jewel," he said. "A man's bound to lose a race now and then. The old horse just didn't have it."

"Pop, we've got about a dollar and no prospects. What are you going to do about that feed-bill?"

"Let's worry about that later. We'll get along some how. We always have. Don't you worry. Go up and sit in Bill Everett's box. I'll be right up. I want to see that sixth race. It ought to be a real one."

Chapter Two

BILL EVERETT and a couple other of the poorer horsemen had a joint box up at the home-stretch end of the grandstand. When Jewel got to the box, it was empty. She sat down, smiled self-consciously at the uniformed usher, who grinned; then she began to read her program. She knew the races by heart, but she always felt a little nervous in the box; all around her in the other boxes were well-dressed, leisured people; sometimes she knew the women were looking at her, mentally assessing the value of her clothes, and wondering what she was doing in their midst; it helped a little to be able to keep her eyes on her program.

Pretty soon Bill Everett, a big, red-faced man, and Soapy Sanders, a little shriveled-up ex-jockey, joined her. Jewel smiled.

"Pop said for me to come up," she said.

"Sure, sure," said Bill, straddling across two chairs. "Glad to have your company, honey." Bill shook his big head dolefully. "Sure been a bad day, Jewel; a bad day. Whew! I'm sure picked cleaner than a darky's chicken today."

He sighed deeply and lighted a cigar. Soapy sat down and taking out a pencil, began to make cryptic little marks on his program. Jewel read through the sixth race for the tenth time; then she began to study the people in the boxes around her. Most of the men were dressed in expensive sport clothes; the women had on silver fox furs or mink coats; diamonds flashed on their fingers. Jewel glanced down at her cheap little suit with distaste.

Up by the clubhouse the bugle blew, calling the horses to post for the sixth race. Turning, Jewel saw Pop hurrying up the aisle toward them; his face was red, his eyes gleaming with excitement. She groaned to herself. She knew the signs. Pop had a hot one. He came up quickly and leaned confidentially on the railing of the box.

"I was just talking to Max Lyle's trainer, boys. They're shooting with Tawny Tim. I heard him give Johnny Antrim his instructions. All the big boys are down on him. I understand Max bet five thousand dollars with the bookies so he wouldn't knock the odds here." Pop turned to look at the odds-board. "Three-to-one. He's gone down. Why can't these suckers lay off him so a man could win a good bet!"

"That's good enough for me," said Soapy; then he turned to Bill. "We got about thirty bucks, Bill. How about it?"

Bill groaned, pushed his hat down over his eyes, but nodded slowly. Soapy jumped up.

When they had gone, Pop took some money out of his pocket.

"Jewel—" he began.

"Pop! Where did you get that money?"

"Remember Gorilla Johnson, that coon that used to work for us?"

"Yes. Vaguely."

"I just ran into him down at the paddock. He paid me twenty dollars he owed me."

Jewel looked closely at Pop. He avoided her eyes.

"Who did you touch this time, Pop?"

"All right, Jewel. But I couldn't pass a thing like this up. It's a cinch. Don't you think Max Lyle knows what he's doing? I told Tray McKinnel they was shooting with the horse, so he slipped me this twenty. I didn't ask him for it. You know I don't like him much."

Jewel bit her lip in annoyance. Tray McKinnel, of all people!

"Oh, well," she said. "Want me to bet it for you, Pop?"

"Yes, and say, Jewel, haven't you got a dollar left?"

"Yes. One lone dollar."

"Well, I dug up a dollar in change out of my pockets. That makes twenty-two dollars. Get eleven win tickets, honey."

"Hadn't we better hold out two dollars to eat on, Pop?"

"We'll eat big tonight, honey. I'll take you over to that hotel in Pasadena where you wanted to go, and we'll have a steak *that* thick,"—indicating,—"with mushrooms."

Jewel brightened. She'd wear that new black dress she'd picked up for six dollars and ninety-five cents at the sale. With the lights kind of dim, it would look like an expensive dress. Maybe Pop was right for once.

"All right, Pop."

She took the money and hurried out into the betting-shed on the mezzanine. The place was crowded with last-minute bettors; she got into one of the lines. A man who had been sitting in one of the boxes was in the next line. He was looking at her. Her mouth tightened slightly. Here he was all dressed up in his expensive clothes with plenty of money in his pocket, thinking he could have everything he wanted.

He smiled at her.

"I hope you've got the right one," he said. "Tawny Tim."

Jewel ignored him. When she had bought her tickets, she turned quickly and started across the mezzanine. She saw the man waiting for her.

"I hope I didn't offend you," said the man, walking beside her. "I didn't mean to."

"Don't bother," said Jewel, looking the other way.

"No, I mean it," the man insisted. "I was just trying to make conversation."

"You better hurry back to your wife," said Jewel. "Maybe she wonders where you are."

She hurried to the grandstand, her face red with annoyance. Pop, Bill and Soapy were sitting in the box, smoking and talking. Jewel handed Pop the tickets, then sat down.

The race was over the mile and one-sixteenth distance and the horses were in the starting-gate in front of the grandstand, waiting for the word. Tawny Tim, a big, light-brown horse with a wide white strip in his face, was restive, and kept leaping from the gate, delaying the start. "Come on!" shouted the starter at last and ten horses leaped off into a perfect start.

"He's taking him up," said Soapy. "What is this?"

"Don't worry," said Pop, drawing calmly on his cigar. "Johnny's going to rate him till they hit the far turn. He'll run over 'em from there."

Jewel's mouth got dry with excitement. She was thinking about going to Pasadena and wearing her new dress, and eating steak and mushrooms. "Please, *please!*" she kept saying to herself.

The crowd was roaring; but above the roar came the steady, businesslike voice of the announcer. "At the half! Likely Lady's in front by a length; Turnverein is second by a length; Poilu is third by two lengths; and Park Avenue is fourth."

Big Bill groaned.

"Come on with him, Johnny! My God, Johnny; ride him, boy!"

"He's waiting too long with him," said Pop, dropping his cigar in the excitement.

The announcer's voice droned: "Turning for home. It's Turnverein by a neck; Likely Lady is second by a length; Park Avenue is third by a length; and Poilu is fourth. And here comes Tawny Tim."

A tremendous tumult broke out in the grandstand. Tawny Tim was the favorite.

"Please, please," murmured Jewel, averting her eyes from the track.

Bill, Pop and Soapy jumped to their feet and tried to pull Tawny Tim home with violent movements of their arms and shoulders.

"Oh, Lord!" said Soapy. "He's took him inside. He's boxed in. What's the matter with Johnny! I thought he was such a cowboy."

The three men stared with wild eyes at the ten horses thundering home over the heavy track under the heavy gray sky. They heard nothing. The roof could fall on them and they wouldn't know it.

"Please, *please!*" Jewel said aloud.

"He took him through," cried Bill. "He's in, boys. He's *in.*"

The race was over. Tawny Tim had won. The three men sank limply into their seats and sat listening to the cheering of the crowd. Gradually the cheering died away. Pop glanced uneasily at the announcement-board.

"They aint hung the numbers up yet, boys."

"No," said Soapy; then, after a long hesitation, he went on: "I don't want to worry you fellows none, but if I aint mistaken, Johnny pinched that Turnverein horse a little on the rail."

"What's wrong?" asked Jewel, rousing herself from a happy trance.

"Foul, I think," said Soapy shortly.

Across the track "FOUL CLAIM" was flashed on in electric lights at the top of the announcement-board. Bill groaned.

Pop got up and began to walk up and down in the aisle. They saw Johnny Antrim go up into the glassed-in judges' stand; they could see the judges talking to him. Suddenly a loud mutter rose from the crowd. The winning numbers had been flashed on. Tawny Tim's number had not been put up.

The announcer said: "The foul claim has been allowed. Tawny Tim has been placed last for interference. Turnverein is the winner."

Nobody said anything. Jewel felt like crying, but powdered her nose instead. The crowd settled back and began to study their programs for the seventh race.

At the door of the jockeys' room, Maxon Lyle was talking with Johnny Antrim. Lyle was a big, quiet-looking man. His face was red, but he hadn't raised his voice.

"Took him inside to save a couple lengths when he was ten lengths the best at those weights. All right, cowboy. You know best. But you've had your last mount from me. You'll be set down for this, and you know it; probably for the meet."

Johnny Antrim's thin, tough face was white with anger.

"I was trying to win, Mr. Lyle. You know it."

Lyle turned on his heel and walked away.

Chapter Three

JEWEL and Pop sat down to baked beans, bread and butter, leftover hash and coffee. They ate silently for a while. Outside, it was dark now and the wind was blowing. The little house on a side street they had been able to rent wasn't very well built; and the wind whistled through the cracks, sending draughts along the floor. Jewel shivered and put on a coat-sweater.

"That air's damp," she said.

"Yep," said Pop. "Blowing up for rain."

There was a long pause. They went on eating. Finally Jewel said:

"What are you going to do about that feed-bill, Pop?"

Pop deftly rolled up the cigarette with one hand and licked it, all in one continuous motion. Jewel smiled slightly. Pop was proud of this accomplishment.

"I guess," said Pop, lighting his cigarette, "I'll run up and see if Bob Mayfield's at the restaurant. Maybe he can suggest something."

Outside, big drops of rain began to spatter on the pavement and far-away thunder rolled across the sky toward the north.

"Don't borrow, Pop. You know Bob's got all the boys after him."

"I know, I know," laughed Pop. "The boys really try to put the bite on poor Bob, and he's shelled out plenty. But not me. Why, I used to be handing him fives to bet with in the old days. I had a big stable then."

Jewel felt a sudden pang. Without a word, she walked over to him and kissed him on the cheek.

"Be careful, Pop," she said. "Don't get your feet wet."

Pop glanced at her, then turned away, smiling happily.

He put on an old, patched slicker and went out. Jewel stood looking after him. Beyond the rickety wooden porch the rain was falling dismally. She felt very depressed. Taking a little handkerchief out of her sleeve, she cried into it silently for a moment; then she wiped her eyes and started to wash the dishes.

There was a knock at the door; then it opened and Tray McKinnel stepped in. He was all dressed up and looked rather unnatural in a white shirt and a blue serge suit. He took off his hat and grinned.

"Hello, Jewel, honey," he said. "Just thought I'd save you the trouble of coming to the door. I saw Pop down the street a ways, so I figured I might be kind of welcome."

Jewel was not annoyed this time by Tray's familiarity. She needed somebody. All the same, she didn't smile.

"Tray," she said, "Pop said you gave him twenty dollars."

"I did, honey. That tip was worth it. I didn't know Max was trying with Tawny Tim today. What's wrong with that, Jewel?"

"You know Pop's no tout. I don't like it."

"Well, excuse me, honey. I wouldn't hurt your feelings for nothing in this world. I'm mighty soft on you, Jewel. I been thinking about you all afternoon."

Jewel couldn't keep from smiling.

"All right, Tray," she said. "Just don't make a habit of it. Now if you want to be useful, help me with these dishes."

Tray winced faintly.

"What's the matter?" Jewel asked.

"Nothing, honey. Only I got me on my new suit and I just thought—"

"I'll give you an apron."

When Red came in from the stable a few minutes later Tray was docilely wiping dishes at the sink. Red struggled to keep from laughing.

"Excuse me for busting in, Jewel," he said. "But I got to borrow a pan or something. We got a mean leak in the tackroom."

TRAY'S neck got very red. With an ill-tempered look on his handsome, lean face, he said:

"Well, Red, how's that old cast-off you got eating his head off in the barn? Still going to win the Handicap with him?"

Tray had made a mistake. As a rule Red was very respectful with owners, but nobody could kid him about his old pet, Arkansaw Traveler, and get away with it.

"He's right pert, Mr. McKinnel, right pert," said Red, turning to go. "Say, Mr. McKinnel," he tossed over his shoulder, "you sure do look mighty cute in that apron."

Red went out suddenly, whooping with delight.

Tray threw down the dish-cloth, tore off the apron, and started for the door.

"Why, that dirty monkey! I'll carve my initials on him, so he'll know better next time."

Jewel took him by the arm.

"Tray, don't be silly. You just can't say a word about the old horse to Red. He won't take it. And, anyway, you did look cute in that apron."

Tray's face was red with anger, but presently he began to smile. Jewel looked so young and sweet standing there before him smiling and showing her white teeth. He stepped up to her quickly, and put his arms around her.

"Jewel, honey," he said, "I'm plumb nuts about you. Plumb silly. Don't you love me a little bit, honey lamb?"

He kissed her. She turned her face away, but didn't struggle.

"Stop, Tray," she said after a moment. "You're wrong about me. Let me go."

He let her go reluctantly.

"What you mean, I'm wrong about you? I'm not doing nothing I shouldn't, am I? I'm just crazy about you, honey, that's all."

"I know," said Jewel. "You don't have to tell me. You think I'm easy just because Pop's down on his luck and we have to live like this. But I'm not like that, Tray; so you might as well forget it."

Tray stood thinking for a long time. He felt a little ashamed of himself. Everything she'd said was true.

"Excuse me, Jewel," he said. "It's just because you're so sweet. I got my feelings and my notions. Let's finish up these dishes and then step out and see us a movie. What do you say?"

"All right."

AS Pop went into the restaurant close to the track, where all the horsemen hung out, he saw Johnny Antrim, surrounded by a number of exercise boys and swipes, sullenly eating his dinner.

"Hello, Johnny," said Pop. "What did they hand you?"

"Set me down for a week and fined me a hundred bucks."

"That's tough."

"I'll say it's tough," said one of the exercise boys. "And all because Eddie Baugh put up a big squawk. The patrol judge never peeped."

"I may have a mount for you, Johnny," said Pop, "when you've done your time."

Johnny smiled a very superior smile and winked at his henchmen.

"Yeah? Going to run old Arkansaw Traveler in that thousand-dollar claimer next week, Mr. Benedict?"

Pop's face tightened. He'd canned jockeys in his day before things got so la-de-da around racetracks. He would never put up with any impudence from a jockey.

"I see you aint looking for mounts, sonny."

The "sonny" hurt. Johnny was twenty-eight years old, and "no punk," as he kept insisting. Nevertheless he knew Pop's reputation, and regretted having let his desire to show off get the best of him.

"Just kidding, Pop. I'll ride any horse you got any day. But maybe I won't be looking for mounts pretty soon. Mr. Van Senckle may sign me up."

"He's got more money than sense, all right," said Pop; "but I don't think he's that dumb."

Pop turned and walked into the bar.

Ed Stroud was standing at the bar and invited Pop to have a drink. Pop accepted, put his foot on the rail, and smacked his lips.

"Good whisky," he said.

"The best," said the bartender, smiling his professional smile; then he winked, and with a jerk of his thumb, indicated a man sitting alone at a table in the corner. "That guy over there sure thinks so. He's paid for thirteen straight whiskies in the last hour."

Ed and Pop turned and looked at the stranger.

"That guy!" said the bartender. "Why, that guy's the original man with the hollow legs. He's a tank. And never batted an eye, so far."

The stranger was young, certainly not over thirty. He didn't seem to have a hat; his hair was black, thick and curly. His face was a deep tan, but you couldn't tell whether that was his natural color or if he was sunburnt; his eyes were startlingly pale in his dark face. There was a pleasant set to his features; he looked rather lazy and good-natured. He was wearing an old navy-blue polo shirt, a wrinkled tweed coat, and a pair of corduroy pants. He was very hard to place, and Ed and Pop gave it up.

"Maybe he just got in from some place," said Pop, vaguely. "Looks kind of horsy, don't you think, Ed?"

"You got me. But any man that can drink thirteen straight shots like this and never bat an eye is worth wondering about."

They watched the man for a moment, then forgot about him. After a while, Pop asked:

"Seen Bob Mayfield around, Ed?"

"Yeah. He's in one of them side rooms eating by himself. Why?"

"Got business with him. I'll be back."

Pop nodded and went over to the room Ed had indicated. Peering in, he saw Bob Mayfield, the racing secretary, sitting at a table by himself, finishing his coffee.

"Well, if it isn't Pop! Come in—come in! Have something to eat?"

"No thanks, Bob, I've et." Pop sat down across the table from Mayfield, and tilted back his hat. "How's things?"

"Lots of grief at a meeting like this, but things could be worse. Say, what was the matter with old Prester John? Legs giving out?"

"He didn't have it. I don't know."

There was a long pause. Mayfield groaned inwardly. He was sure a big touch was coming.

"Want to see me about something, Pop?"

"Yes, Bob. I was thinking, I got my old router, Stoughton Bottle, in pretty good shape right now. Course you know what kind he is. Cheap kind. But he can sure run that two miles when he aint got no smoke to take care of. I was wondering if you'd have a race he might fit into coming up for the next book."

Mayfield stroked his chin.

"The book's about made up. I don't know, Pop. I'll give it a little thought."

"Thanks," said Pop, getting up. "I could stand to win a race. Well, I won't take up no more of your time."

"Don't worry about that. Say, Pop, I hate to mention it, but we're getting a lot of complaints at the office about some of these feed-bills. Know what I mean?"

"A lot of the cheap-horse boys are hitting it rough, Bob."

"They oughtn't to come here. We're going to cut down pretty stiff next year. It takes a good horse to win here. Pop, don't get sore, but if I was you, I'd pay that bill."

Before he thought, Pop asked: "What with?"

"Look, Pop; you won a race a couple of weeks ago. Seven hundred dollars. That should have kept you going for a while."

"Well," said Pop, "it's like this. I had a lot of bills to pay, and I owed Red back salary, and I had to pay a hundred dollars to nominate the Arkansaw Traveler for the Handicap."

Mayfield shook his head.

"Well, you could have saved yourself a hundred dollars. Arkansaw won't get much in among horses like Kubla Khan and Kioga and that kind."

"He beat better ones in '35."

"Yes, in '35; but this is '37, and Arkansaw Traveler is an unsound old rascal. If the old horse has got a race in him, stick him in a good claimer. I'll let him run. Win yourself a race."

"Him in a claimer! He never ran in one in his life. Why, Bob, that horse ran in the Kentucky Derby, and won a lot of big races. He's a horse!"

"He *was* a horse. But horses get old, like men. Pop, did you ever think about selling him?"

"No chance. When Colonel Moffat gave him to me, I told the old colonel I'd look after him till the day I died."

"Sure. You wouldn't want him in bad hands. But suppose a man like Mr. Westermark would take him? He could turn him out on his big stock-farm, and the old boy'd live in clover the rest of his life. And you might get a nice piece of change. Say about two or three thousand dollars, anyway."

"He aint for sale." Pop stood hanging his head, thinking of all the wonderful things he could buy for Jewel with three thousand dollars. It was a great temptation.

"No," he said. "Tell 'em no. Well, I'll be going."

Mayfield reached into his pocket and took out a five-dollar bill.

"Here, Pop," he said, smiling. "This may come in handy, Think nothing of it. I'm just handing you back one of the fives you handed me in the old days."

Pop hesitated, but took it.

"Thanks, Bob," he said. "I know how the boys keep putting the bite on you. You're a white man. Good night."

Pop went out into the bar. It was deserted except for the man in the corner, who was drinking another whisky. The bartender shrugged and raised his eyebrows. Pop shook his head, grinned, and went into the restaurant. He wanted a cup of good coffee and maybe a nice piece of lemon pie.

Chapter Four

WHEN Tray and Jewel got home from the movie they stood on the porch for a while talking.

"Thanks for taking me," said Jewel. "I certainly enjoyed it, even if you did have to make smart remarks all the time."

"Them people annoy me," said Tray with a laugh. "But it was a good-enough picture. Will you go again some night? Tomorrow night, maybe?"

"Can't say for sure. Pop wouldn't like it if I went out at night too much. He's funny that way."

Tray meditated.

"Well, can't say that I blame him. Pop's been around. He knows. You might get mixed up with the wrong kind, Jewel."

Tray took hold of her hands. Jewel laughed.

"I've got a feeling you're the wrong kind, Tray."

"Me! Oh, no, Jewel. I'm the right kind. I'm okay. Ask anybody."

"You can be nice and soft-spoken, can't you, Tray? All the same—"

Moving suddenly, Tray kissed her. She drew back.

"Be sensible!" she said. "I thought we had that all out."

"Can't shoot a man for trying," said Tray with a laugh.

Jewel turned and glanced into the window. Pop was asleep in the armchair, with newspapers scattered all around him and his head on his chest.

"I've got to go in," said Jewel. "Good night, Tray."

Jewel opened the door. Pop woke with a start.

"Good night," said Jewel, then shut the door behind her.

"Where you been?" Pop demanded. "What time is it?"

"It's a little after nine, Pop. I've been to the movies with Tray."

"Oh, have you? Have a nice time?"

"Yes. It's fun to get out once in a while."

POP looked slightly embarrassed. He avoided Jewel's eyes and yawned. Finally he said:

"I'm sorry about tonight, honey. Maybe I shouldn't have said nothing about going to Pasadena till I had the money in my pocket. I like to see you happy, Jewel."

"Don't worry, Pop. Some other time." She began to pick up the scattered papers. "I'm going back in my room and read awhile; then I'm going to bed. I got up pretty early this morning."

"So you did. Well, kiss me good night. I'm going to sit up for a while. I'm not sleepy now. I had my nap."

Jewel kissed Pop on the forehead, then went into her room and closed the door. Pop shook his head. Tough luck a sweet, good girl like Jewel had to be born into a life like this! It wasn't fair. She never had had a break yet. Not even a decent father or mother.

Pop winced faintly, thinking about his daughter. She never had been any good; always in some kind of trouble. Nearly drove her mother crazy. "Looked like me, too," Pop recalled ruefully. "Old Lady always did say she was the spitten image of me and just like me. No sense of responsibility, and all that. And then she had to run off with that cheap ham out of a carnival. Nice-looking scoundrel, he was, an Englishman. Jewel looks like him, too; although where she gets her ways I don't know. Why, she's as proper a girl as I ever saw."

The front door was flung open, and Red stepped in.

"Well?" said Pop sharply.

"I want to see you, Pop. Right away." Red was out of breath and seemed strangely excited.

Pop was relieved to see that Red wasn't drunk.

"All right. Set down and catch your breath. Somebody been chasing you?"

Red grinned feebly and sat down. "I hope not!"

"Red, what have you been up to?"

"It's about that feed-bill, Pop. After you left the stable tonight, that man came over."

"What man?"

"Oh, that guy Schultz that owns the feed-store. Pop, he's going to cause us trouble. He's a dumb cluck, and he don't know a horse from a mule, but somebody's been talking to him. Told him Arkansaw Traveler was a sure-enough horse. This squarehead says if we don't pay him by tomorrow, he's going to take the horse."

Pop leaped up. "Why, he can't do that. That's an outrage. Trying to take a man's best horse away from him! Why, I'll get out my gun and go 'tend to that damn' foreigner."

"Yeah," said Red; "that was too much for me. Anybody that takes the old horse'll have to whip me first. But you know how they are out in this country, Pop."

"How much do we owe?"

"About sixty dollars."

"Sixty dollars! Is that all? Why, I'll dig that up right away. That's no trouble. Where's my hat?"

"Wait a minute, Pop." Red grinned; and getting up, he took a roll of bills from his coat pocket and held it out to Pop, who stepped back, pop-eyed with amazement. "There you are. One hundred bucks. Pretty nice, eh, Pop?"

Pop calmed down at once and stood plucking at his under lip, looking at Red.

"Where did you get that money?"

"Well, I—I just— This money here, you mean?"

"Come on, Red. Where did you get it?"

"I won it; that's where I got it."

"You won it? Doing what? Red, you didn't have a cent in your pocket tonight."

"I borrowed two bucks to get in a crap game with."

"Who was shooting?"

"Oh, a lot of fellows."

"Name one."

"Well, Tray McKinnel. He was one."

"Red," said Pop, "you're a liar, and you know it. Tray was at the movies with Jewel. Now tell me the truth, or do you want me to get a-hold of my twitch and go to work on you!"

Red sighed deeply. "I plucked a guy."

"Well, I'll be damned."

"All right," said Red fiercely; "maybe that wasn't so smart, but nobody's going to take that old horse away from me if I have to shoot somebody."

"Red, you know me better than that. I'll admit I've pulled some pretty shady tricks in my life, but I never robbed anybody yet. What happened?"

"Well," said Red, gulping, "I run down to the corner to chin with the boys for a while. On the way back—you remember that vacant lot a couple of blocks behind the restaurant? Well, it's black as hell along there, and I stumble over a guy. He's lying half on the sidewalk and half in the lot. I thought somebody had rubbed him out at first, but he was just some drunk, so I frisked him, and he had a hundred bucks on him. I left the guy his change."

"That was a nice trick, Red. Taking a guy's dough and leaving him out there in the rain."

Red lowered his head.

"Yeah, don't sound so good now. I was just worrying myself sick about the old horse."

Pop put on his hat and slicker and started out.

"Where we going?" Red asked apprehensively.

"We'll find this guy and stick his money back in his pocket. Then we'll get one of the cops that are always hanging around that filling-station on the corner."

Red swore softly, but followed Pop out into the rain.

The man was lying just where Red had found him. Pop took the roll of bills and slipped it into one of his coat pockets. The man groaned softly and turned over on his side. "Good night," he said thickly.

"Good night, you!" said Red. "Pop, he aint got no use for that money. We can tell the cops about him and keep the money ourselves. Who'll know the difference?"

"You're crazy. Light a match. Maybe we know this guy. Maybe we can help him."

Red lit a match, and shielding it from the rain, bent down and held it to the drunk's face. The drunk blinked and said: "Who's there? Tell her I'm not here. I've gone away. Alaska or any place."

"Why," said Pop, "it's that young fellow. It's the man with the hollow legs."

"The who?"

"That's what Tim, the bartender, called him. He'd had thirteen straight whiskeys when I was in the bar early this evening."

RED whistled softly. "He's sure got a skinful all right. Well, let's go tell the cops."

"Wait a minute," said Pop. "Let me think. Thing for us to do is to look after him and keep him out of a jam, and maybe he might hand us something."

"Sure thing," said Red. "Maybe there's a reward for him or something. You got sense, Pop."

"Go get a taxi, Red."

"Taxi! That'll be a buck. I'll carry the so-and-so."

"Carry him? Well, you can try it. We'll put him on that extra cot in the tackroom."

"The roof's leaking right over that cot, but he won't know the difference."

Red bent and tried to pick the man up, but he began to struggle violently and finally got to his knees.

"Quiet down, my friend," said Red, "or I'll tap you one. We're going to take you home."

"You're not going to take me home," the man mumbled. "I'm never going home again."

"All right. We're not going to take you home. You come along with us. We'll look after you."

"Sure," said Pop. "You can trust us."

The man got shakily to his feet, then reeled and fell against Red, who supported him.

"You're not cops, are you?"

"Not us."

"Good. I'm not looking for any cops."

"This don't look so good," said Red to Pop.

"Oh, he's just drunk."

They took the man between them; his legs kept buckling, and from time to time he sang a little and waved his arms; but they made pretty good progress. Pop was panting when they got to the house.

"Whew," he said; "this is work!"

"We'll take him back between the houses," said Red, "and cut across the vacant lot to the stable. It won't be long now, Pop."

As they were taking him around the side of the porch, the door opened and Jewel came out, holding a kimono around her.

"What are you two doing? You were talking so loud awhile ago you woke me up. Who's that with you?"

"A drunk we found," said Red. "He's got some money on him. We're going to put him in the stable till morning."

The drunk laughed.

"In the stable," he muttered. "That's where I belong, all right."

Chapter Five

THE morning broke pale and misty. Red rolled over, opened his eyes and groaned.

"Hell," he muttered. "It's morning."

He pulled himself up slowly and sat on the edge of his cot, yawning and stretching. "Well, if I must get up, I must. I'd like to get a job as a night watchman sometime so I could sleep all day."

Suddenly he started. There was a man lying in the extra cot across the room.

"What—" Red began; then he grinned and shrugged. The drunk!

Red put on his shoes, reached down a sweater, and struggled into it, then stood up fully dressed. He opened the door, and a slow smile spread over his tough, weathered face.

"Now, by God," he muttered, "that's something like it. Going to be a nice day. I can smell it."

Glancing out, he saw a little negro bending over a fire. Red went out.

"Lasses," said Red. "This is a real honest-to-God morning. I guess they're up over at the house. Run over and get me a cup of coffee."

Lasses jumped up and started to run across the vacant lot. Red shouted after him on second thought:

"Make it two."

Humming, Red went into the tackroom and glanced down at the drunk, who was lying with his hands under his head staring at the ceiling. Red could tell by the expression in his eyes that he was suffering.

"Hello," said the drunk.

"Hello," said Red. "How you making it?"

"I'd just as soon die. Where are we?"

"You're in Arrento, buddy. The San Basilio race-track. Boy, you sure had a snootful."

"How'd I get here? Never mind. I know. Oh, what a headache! Thanks for looking after me."

Lasses peeked in the doorway. "Heah you are, Mr. Red."

"Bring it in, Lasses."

The drunk got up on one elbow.

"Oh, God!" he groaned. "I'm going to drink this coffee; then I'm going to sleep till tomorrow morning. Is that all right?"

"Okay by me."

Lasses disappeared. Red heard him humming to himself outside the door; then he heard him walk a little way down the barn. Pretty soon Lasses said:

"Howyah, ol' hoss. You sho is a pow'ful mean-looking ol' hoss, but I sho hope you win that Handicap. I'll be folks if you does. Yassuh."

Red grinned and went out. He saw Pop hurrying across the vacant lot toward the barn.

"Morning," called Red.

Pop came up out of breath.

"Morning, Red. Fine morning. It's got a feel to it like some of them spring mornings back around Lexington. By God, I don't feel seventy on a morning like this. Has the man woke up?"

"Yeah. I gave him some coffee. Now he's went back to sleep. Says he wants to sleep all day."

POP pulled reflectively at his under lip. "Slim showed up yet?"

"No. It's still early."

"Them damn' boys! No good any more. All pampered now like that Johnny Antrim, giving me his lip at the restaurant yesterday."

"Some day I'll just turn that little swell-headed monkey up and spank him," said Red. "But he's a good money rider."

Pop nodded grudgingly.

"He sure is. I hate to admit it, but he rides like the old boys used to. Out to win. Aint many of 'em left. All prima donnas now. I'd like to see him up on the old horse in the Handicap."

"Yeah," said Red. "But he'll probably ride Mammon. Van Senckle likes Johnny, for some reason. No, we'll end up with Slim, Pop, and he aint nothing. All he does is shut his eyes and let her rip."

Pretty soon Slim came running across the vacant lot.

"Excuse me, Mr. Benedict, but something happened to my alarm-clock. Am I late?"

"No, son. You're about on time. Take Stoughton Bottle out on the circle beyond the barn and work him easy, about six times around. Then work Johnny easy, four times around. We're going to work Arkansaw six furlongs on the track after while."

"That sounds good," said Slim. "I'm sure anxious to feel that horse really running under me. He'll be the best I ever had my leg over."

When Slim had ridden off, Red came over to Pop.

"Sorry, Pop; but here comes the bad news. I saw that squarehead and another guy pass between them houses a minute ago. What'll we do?"

"Let me think."

While Pop was thinking, Schultz and an apologetic-looking little man appeared around the corner of the barn.

"Yah," said Schultz, with a grin. "Caught you that time."

Red growled and turned away.

"What do you want, Schultz?" Pop demanded.

"I want my horse. I want that big one."

"You'll play hell getting him. I'm going to pay that feed-bill this afternoon. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, *nein,*" said Schultz. "I'm used to that kind of talk. I'll take that horse. I got it all legal and everything, aint I, Mr. Martin?"

The little man shrugged and avoided Pop's eyes. "Yes sir; you have," he said; then he pulled his coat back and apologetically showed his badge.

"What we going to do, Pop?" Red demanded, glaring at the two men.

Pop seemed a little dazed. He glanced about him helplessly. This had never happened before. Why, you just couldn't take a man's best horse away from him!

"The drunk!" said Pop suddenly.

Without a word, Red ran to the tackroom and went in. The man was lying on his side as Red had left him. Red slipped his hand into the man's coat pocket and took out the money. But the man woke up and stared.

"What are you doing?" he demanded.

Red gulped.

"I'm borrowing your dough. We got to pay a feed-bill or lose our best horse."

"My dough? Have I got money left?"

"You've got a hundred bucks, and I'm going to swipe sixty of it."

The man hesitated, then got to his feet.

"All right," he said. "Help yourself. But I want to see the fun."

Red let out a yowl of delight.

"You're okay, pardner. By God, you sure are! I thought for a minute I was going to have to manhandle you a little."

Red went out with the money in his hand. The stranger followed him, looking pretty pale and shaky.

"Good morning, sir," said Pop, forcing a smile. "Have a good sleep?"

"Yes, I did," said the stranger.

Grinning, Red counted out sixty dollars.

"There's your dough, Dutchman," he said. "Satisfied?"

Schultz took the money and laughed.

"You see," he said, turning to the officer. "I told you they'd dig up the money. All right, boys. No hard feelings. Just business. Yah!"

When Schultz and the officer had gone, Pop sank down on the bench and began to mop his forehead. The stranger sat down beside him.

"Whew!" said Pop. "I feel kind of peaked."

Red silently returned the rest of the money to the stranger, who carelessly slipped it into his coat pocket and sighed. Pop took his right hand and wrung it.

"You're a gentleman, my boy," he said. "You don't know what this means to us."

"Maybe I do," said the man. "I'd rather have a good horse than money any day."

"Say," said Pop, "my granddaughter'll have breakfast ready by about nine o'clock, when Red'll be done with his work. You better eat with us. What's your name?"

The stranger hesitated. "Tony Smith," he said. "Thanks. I may be ready for breakfast at nine o'clock."

"Tony?" said Red, scratching his head. "You aint a foreigner, are you?"

Tony laughed.

"I was born right here in California."

"Well," said Red, apologetically, "you look kind of dark, and all the guys I ever knew by the name of Tony was spicks. Excuse me."

They sat in silence for a long time. Lasses, humming a blue tune, began to dance slowly. He was hoping maybe the new white man might notice him and give him a nickel. Down the barn Arkansaw stamped in his stall and whinnied loudly.

Tony got up and stretched.

"You know, fellows," he said, "I've decided to live. I like it here. Can you put me up for a few days?"

"Why, sure," said Pop, winking behind Tony's back at Red. "Glad to have you. First thing, we want to get that money back to you."

"Oh, the money. Well, don't worry about that."

Lasses couldn't stand it any longer. He came over.

"Mistah," he said, "want to see me do my hoss trick? I kin trot or pace. Which you like?" Lasses got down on all fours.

Tony laughed. "Pace. I used to have a roan pacing horse."

Lasses paced for Tony, who sat down to watch him. Pop muttered "Fool darky!" to himself, but didn't interfere. Red walked back to Arkansaw's stall, whistling.

Chapter Six

HEN Red had finished with his work, he went into the tackroom to take off his tattered coat-sweater and put on a fairly presentable blue serge coat he usually wore to breakfast. He found Tony lying on the extra cot with his hands under his head, staring at the ceiling.

"I was wondering where you got to," said Red. "Come on. Chow. Feeling better?"

Tony sat up slowly.

"Yes. I feel lots better."

He got up, hurriedly combed his hair, and followed Red out the door. Red turned and glanced at him.

"You're beginning to look like something," he said. "What you been doing to yourself?"

"Well," said Tony, smiling. "I found a razor in the harness-room, so I helped myself. I hope you don't mind."

When they reached the house, Pop came out on the porch to meet them. He was beaming.

"Howdy, boys. Come right in. Chow's ready." He began to rub his hands gleefully. "Well, Red, what do you say?"

"I say he can run six furlongs in eleven-one whenever we want to cut him loose."

"I was talking to Bob Mayfield. He's classed the old horse in grade C. We'll slip him in the next sprint with that kind and win ourselves a bet. . . . Come in and meet my granddaughter. She's got breakfast ready."

Jewel was pouring the coffee when they came in. She was feeling rather irritable, and had had a few words with Pop over the drunk they had brought home. She had been imagining a sodden bum; she had seen plenty of them around the tracks. But here was a big strong-looking young man, very presentable, rather handsome, in fact. She felt herself flushing.

Pop was a little uneasy.

"Jewel, honey," he said in a soothing voice, "this is the young fellow I was telling you about. Tony, this is my granddaughter, Jewel McMahon."

"How do you do, Miss McMahon?" said Tony, bowing slightly. "I hope I'm not putting you to any trouble."

Jewel turned. His ease of manner and his politeness made her feel all thumbs.

"Hello," she said. "It's no trouble. Just sit down and help yourself."

They all sat down. Pop and Red were famished and sat silently stuffing their mouths full, pointing when they wanted a dish passed. From time to time Jewel looked at Tony out of the corner of her eye. His table-manners were excellent. The silence grew a little strained. Smiling, Tony turned to her.

"Did Pop tell you about the way the big chestnut horse ran this morning?" said Tony easily.

"I haven't heard anything else," said Jewel, smiling slightly. "I'm glad. He's our pet."

"Beautiful animal," said Tony.

Red guffawed. "Beautiful!" he cried. "Now I've heard that old man-eater called everything. But I never heard him called beautiful. I guess I better get him a lavender blanket, eh, Pop?"

Pop colored. He had certain notions of hospitality.

"Why, he is beautiful, Red," said Pop. "There's no better-looking horse than him on the American turf. He looks just like his old daddy, Kentucky Colonel, and that old horse was a regular fashion-plate."

'Kentucky Colonel?" said Tony. "Why, I saw him run in the East when I was going to school. I mean I was on a trip. Yes. You're right. They do look alike."

"You a horseman?" asked Pop.

"I've been around horses most of my life," said Tony. "Not runners, though."

"Oh," said Pop, his face falling.

They ate in silence for a while. Finally Tony turned to the girl.

"Do you like racing, Jewel?"

He said it so easily she didn't notice his familiarity.

"I should say."

"I used to love it," said Tony. "I haven't seen a horse-race in four or five years. My wife—"

They all stared at him. He grinned.

"That slipped out. My former wife, I should say, didn't like it. So—we didn't go."

"You divorced, eh?" asked Red.

"I am."

"That's tough," said Pop. "But that's the way it goes nowadays. Everybody's always getting divorced and then getting married again and then getting divorced. Like Hollywood. Heathenish, I call it."

Jewel looked at Tony with some concern. There was an expression on his face she couldn't understand. He looked a little sullen and a little hurt. Finally he turned to Red:

"Through?"

"Yep." Red tilted his chair back.

"What do we do now?"

"Why," said Red, glancing at Tony, not quite understanding the situation, "I'm through for the morning. I got a few odd jobs to look after, but they can keep. Why?"

"I thought we might go uptown and get a drink. How about you, Pop?"

"Don't mind if I do, but one's my limit."

JEWEL got up and began to clear the table. She had never before seen a man's mood change so quickly. Tony got up and went over to the sink where Jewel was cleaning off the dishes.

"I think we should help Jewel first," he said.

She turned to look at him. He was trying hard to smile, but there was no light in his eyes.

"Put an apron on him, Jewel," said Red. "I'll bet he'd look cuter than Tray McKinnel."

Jewel colored. "Tend to your own business, Red."

Tony glanced at her, noting the flush.

"A boy friend?" he said.

She lowered her eyes.

"Not exactly. He's just a man we know that owns horses. Leave the dishes alone. I do them every morning. Better hurry and get your drink."

He smiled wanly.

"I wish," he said to Jewel, "you'd call me Tony. You were Jewel to me when I came in that front door. I like it here. I like Pop and Red, though maybe they don't think so much of me. I feel more at home here than I've felt since I left the ranch."

"You used to own a ranch?"

"I lived on one. Sure you won't let me help? I like to make myself useful—at least to those who appreciate it."

There was something in his tone she didn't understand.

"You've got troubles on your mind, haven't you?" she said finally.

"Everybody has," said Tony, turning away. "Thanks, anyway. Well, let's go get that drink, fellows."

WHEN the three of them lined up at the bar near the track, the bartender winked at Tony.

"Brother, you look pretty spry for a guy that's practically drunk me out of stock. How do you do it?"

"It's a gift," said Tony. "Three of the same."

They tossed down their drinks and stood at the bar talking. Horsemen began to drift in. Pop grew expansive. He sensed the change in the horsemen's attitude. Old Arkansaw had given them something to think about. Ed Stroud and Tray McKinnel came up to the bar. They spoke to Pop and Red, and glanced questioningly at Tony.

"Why, it's the man with the hollow legs!" said Ed, finally. "How are you?"

Tony stared. Pop laughed.

"It's what the bartender called you last night, Tony, when you were lapping it up."

Tony laughed too. "I see."

"Ed, this is Tony Smith. He's staying with us. Tony, shake hands with Tray McKinnel. He's a Kentuckian, but outside of that, he's all right."

Tony smiled at Ed Stroud and shook hands with Tray, who looked him over carefully, noting his shabby appearance.

"What's the idea, Pop?" Tray demanded. "Taking on a new swipe since the old horse's begun to show a little run?"

"No," said Pop, "just a visitor."

Red laughed. "He was laying out in the rain last night and we took him home."

Tony winced faintly, but smiled. Tray's face had a hostile look. He cleared his throat. "I'll bet Jewel got a bang out of that," he said, "the way she feels about drunks."

Tony's face darkened. "She didn't seem to mind. In fact, she was very nice about it; figuring, I think, that it wasn't any of her business."

Tray flushed. There was an unusual silence in the bar.

"That last remark was a little pointed, wasn't it?" said Tray softly.

"Was it?"

"Listen: you're a stranger around here, and you seem to be friends with Pop and Red, so I'll kind of let it pass. But pardner, I don't stand any smartness from nobody."

"That's all right with me. As for myself, I don't like people who can't 'tend to their own business. So now we understand each other."

There was a short silence. Tray hesitated, then turned away. . . .

That afternoon in the betting-shed, Jewel passed Tony without recognizing him. He had his clothes pressed, had bought a white shirt and a necktie, and was wearing one of Pop's old soft hats.

"Hello," he said. "Aren't you speaking to me?"

"I didn't know it was you."

"I see. How do I look?"

"You look fine. What did you do to that hat of Pop's? I never would have recognized it."

"Not so loud," said Tony with a grin. "Just a simple twist of the wrist."

"I hear Tray McKinnel got a little ugly with you."

"Not very."

"He has quite a reputation and a very quick temper."

"You frighten me."

Jewel laughed. "You seem to be scared to death!"

"Betting?"

"Not for myself. I was betting for one of the horsemen—Mr. Everett."

"Got something good?"

"No. It's just one of his silly ideas. I don't like the horse. You save your money. You may need it. Why don't you come back to the box with me?"

"Do I look all right?"

"You'll pass."

Tony took her arm and gently guided her through the crowd. At the head of the stair just outside the mezzanine, somebody behind them called in a loud, surprised voice: "Tony!"

To Jewel's amazement, Tony neither looked around nor spoke; he left her so suddenly and ran down the stairs into the crowd so quickly that she lost track of him in an instant. She turned. The tall blond man in the brown tweed coat, who had tried to pick her up the day before, was standing just behind her, staring with his mouth slightly open. He came to himself immediately and took off his hat.

"Pardon me," he said. "Was that man a friend of yours?"

"Not exactly. Is he a friend of yours?"

The man hemmed. "I guess not. I must have been mistaken."

"Didn't you call him Tony?"

"I believe I did."

"Well, his name's Tony Smith."

"Oh," said the man. "Must be a different person entirely. Pardon me for detaining you."

Jewel's curiosity was aroused. She smiled her best smile at the man, who thawed visibly.

"Would you mind telling me who he is?" she asked.

The man hesitated. Then his lips tightened.

"I must have been mistaken. Just forget the whole thing. Could I interest you in a drink?"

"No, thanks. But sometime if you want to talk to me about Tony, I might go to the bar with you."

She could see that the man was tempted. Beyond the clubhouse the bugle blew, calling the horses to the post.

"I'll think it over," he said, smiling slightly.

Chapter Seven

THEY had just finished breakfast. Jewel got up and began to clear the dishes away. Tony sat staring at the table for a moment, then took out some makings and began to roll a cigarette in imitation of Pop. Pretty soon he gave up, and lighted a ready-made one.

Then he got up, put on his coat and hat, and turned. "Going to run uptown for a while. Be back soon."

"Get me some ketchup, Tony," called Jewel, "and a loaf of bread. Pay you when you get back."

"Right you are."

When he had gone, Pop turned to Red.

"He's got something preying on his mind, that boy."

"What we going to do about him, Pop?" Red demanded. "He's been here a week now. It's getting like he was one of the family. I don't like it so much myself." Red jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of Jewel.

"What can we do?" said Pop. "We owe him sixty dollars. He never says a word about it, and he gets up every morning at sunrise and helps out. Anyway, I kind of like the guy. He's a gentleman, or I miss my guess."

"He certainly is," said Jewel suddenly. Pop and Red started. "And what do you mean you owe him sixty dollars, Pop?"

Pop grimaced. "You shouldn't always be listening, Jewel."

"You mean you borrowed sixty dollars from him?"

"Who do you think paid the feed-bill?" said Red.

"I might have known," said Jewel angrily. "When you brought him in here that night, I felt pretty sure something was up. Now, aren't you a nice pair! Borrowing money from a man when he's drunk! Probably all he had."

"He had a hundred dollars," said Red.

"I hope you haven't borrowed the other forty."

"We haven't," said Red. "But it's an idea."

"Don't like this fellow too well, Jewel," said Pop, "till we find out something about him."

Jewel hesitated; then she told Red and Pop about her encounter with the man in the brown tweed coat.

"That's funny," said Pop. "Mighty funny."

"I'll say it is," said Red. "Let's find out what we're doing before we do anything. This guy may be taking it on the lam out of some jug. Who knows?"

Pop was getting tired of the discussion. He got up and stretched.

"Let's go over to the barn and play some seven-up, Red," he said.

They started out, but Jewel stopped them.

"Pop," she said, "the first money you get, I want you to pay Tony back his sixty dollars."

"I will, honey, I will," said Pop with an expansive gesture. "Don't you worry. He saved our lives. I won't forget it."

Pop and Red crossed the vacant lot to the barn and, sitting down on some boxes, began to play seven-up for a nickel a corner. Birds were chirping in the pepper trees beside the barn. Beyond the track, high above an adjoining ranch, buzzards were circling in a sky of baby blue.

"Them birds," said Pop, with a shudder. "Them big black ones, I mean. They give me the creeps. How come they're always flying over that grove of live-oaks?"

Red glanced up. "Cattle over there. Them buzzards are always hopeful. Play, Pop."

They played in silence for a while. Finally Tony came up and squatted on his heels beside them.

"Say, Pop," he said, "how about your two horses today?"

"They both got a chance."

"Real good chance?"

"Stoughton Bottle's got the best chance," said Red. "We don't know just how the champ's going to act. Of course, there aint nothing much in with him, and he's in light."

"Well," said Tony, smiling, "I don't know much about race-horses, so you'll have to tell me. I met a friend of mine uptown, and he wants to win a bet. He'll bet a thousand dollars on each horse for himself, and a hundred on each for you, Pop, if you say the word."

Pop dropped his cards, and Tony helped him pick them up. Red took off his cap and scratched his head.

"Why, yes," said Pop, his voice a little unnatural, "tell him to bet them. They both got a chance."

"Sure," said Red, swallowing. "They sure have."

"All right," laughed Tony. "I hope they win."

"He must have some real dough," said Pop softly.

"He used to," said Tony, whistling and looking lazily off across the vacant lots.

Red and Pop exchanged a glance, but said nothing. They went on with their game, but they were both so excited that they hardly knew what they were doing. Then Red got up and disappeared into the tackroom.

A BIG shiny limousine was coming slowly down the road which ran close to the front of the barn. It stopped. A uniformed chauffeur jumped out and opened the door.

"It's Mr. and Mrs. Westermark," said Pop. "What do they want?"

Tony went on with his game, whistling. Pop stood uncertain. Red put his head out of the tackroom door, then pulled it back.

"Hello, Pop," said Lou Westermark, a tall, slender, well-dressed man of forty with a red face, blue eyes with pouches under them, and a disillusioned air.

"Hello, Mr. Westermark," said Pop. "How are you?"

"This is Mrs. Westermark," said Lou.

Pop took off his hat and grinned.

"I'm sure glad to meet you, ma'am."

Mrs. Westermark smiled. She was a handsome woman of about thirty-five. She was dressed expensively in the latest fashion.

"I've heard a lot about you, Pop," she said. "Also about your horse. We came over to see him."

"Arkansaw? Why, sure, ma'am. Red! Get him out."

Red sullenly obeyed. The Westermarks came over under the wooden awning.

"Don't get too close," Red cautioned, snapping the guy ropes onto the Traveler's halter.

Tony went on playing solitaire, glancing up from time to time. Lasses appeared around the corner of the barn and stood with his finger in his mouth.

"Oh, he's simply beautiful," said Mrs. Westermark. "Looks just like Kentucky Colonel."

"Little more white in his face," said Lou. "Nice-looking fellow. I haven't seen him close up for nearly two years. Bad, is he, Pop?"

"Around the barn, he is," said Pop. "Red's the only one can handle him. I can hardly go near him myself. My granddaughter gentled him."

"Oh, is that so?" said Mrs. Westermark, trying to appear interested.

"Yep. She sure did. She's got a hand with a horse. Yes sir; the old boy's a man-eater in the barn. But he's got pretty good track manners if the jockey's got any sense at all. Gets away good, too; got plenty of early foot going to the turn, in case you want to use it. I figure on winning with him today."

Lou stood shaking his head.

"I don't think so, Pop. Maxon and some of the other big bettors sent six thousand dollars to Chicago on that filly of Tom Bakely's."

"Darling Clementine?"

"Yes. Light impost, and Eddie Baugh will give her a whirlwind ride. She can really run six furlongs under a hundred pounds."

"Three-year-old," said Pop contemptuously. "She won't do."

"Anyway," said Lou, "this old horse may break down any minute. He never was sound, even as a two-year-old. He'd be a lot better off if he was just turned out and fed. Don't bet too much on him, Pop."

Pop stuck out his chest.

"A friend of mine's betting one thousand dollars on his nose," he said. "This fellow waits till I tell him to go; then he really chucks it in."

Lou smiled slightly but said nothing.

"Well, I know one thing," said Mrs. Westermark, moving toward Arkansaw, "I'm going to bet my money on you, you lovely thing!" She shook her finger at him.

The Traveler reared, trying to break away from the guy-ropes, and letting out a bellow which filled the space under the wooden awnings with a terrifying, echoing roar, somewhat like a lion at a zoo. Lasses snatched off his cap and was around the end of the barn in two jumps. Mrs. Westermark stepped back hastily and would have fallen if Tony hadn't jumped up quickly and steadied her. She turned to look at him. He took off his hat and bowed.

"I hope you didn't twist your ankle, Mrs. Westermark," he said.

"Why, no," she said, a little bewildered by such manners in a swipe. She looked at Tony closely. "But thank you very much. I might have fallen."

"Not at all," said Tony.

Lou was looking at Tony too; then he glanced quickly at his wife. His face slowly got red. Must she always be making eyes at every good-looking man! Even a swipe!

"Whoa, boy," Red was saying, boiling with rage. "Whoa, son. Steady, boy. That's better. Nobody's going to hurt you. Now, now. Whoa, boy. Steady, now. That's better."

He finally got the stallion quieted.

"I better put him up, I guess, Pop," said Red. "He's all a-quiver."

"All right," said Pop.

POP, Lou and Mrs. Westermark sat down. From time to time she glanced sideways at Tony, who was leaning against the tackroom door, smoking a cigarette.

There was a short silence; then Lou laughed and said:

"Pop, show Ellen how you can roll a cigarette with one hand."

"Oh, she wouldn't be interested." Pop was delighted. "Of course I would."

Lasses inched up to the group, staring. Pop went through his routine elaborately with a straight face, rolling a perfect cigarette. Mrs. Westermark applauded.

"I'm going to practise that," she laughed. "And make all my friends envious. Do you think you could teach me, Pop? I might drop over some afternoon."

Pop roared. "I don't know. I don't know. Ask Tony here. He's been trying to learn the trick for over a week."

Mrs. Westermark turned and addressed Tony.

"Difficult, is it?"

"Impossible," said Tony. "But maybe your hands aren't as clumsy as mine. I'd say they weren't."

Mrs. Westermark had beautiful hands and was very proud of them. She knew that Tony had noticed them. He was no fool, that boy!

There was a short silence. Red came over to Tony and whispered something to him. They sat down and began to play seven-up. Before anyone spoke, Jewel came hurrying across the vacant lot, and not noticing the Westermarks, who were sitting with their backs toward her, she hit Tony lightly on the shoulder and said:

"Tony, where are my groceries?"

He shrugged and made a face. "I forgot."

"I thought so. Well, that's all right, because we're out of coffee, and we haven't a pinch of salt in the house."

Tony got up. "I'll go get them for you. But you'd better write it all down. Excuse me," he said.

Jewel started slightly when Lou Westermark stood up and took off his hat.

"Excuse me, Pop," said Jewel. "I didn't know you had visitors."

"They came to see Arkansaw Traveler. This is Mr. and Mrs. Westermark. People, my granddaughter."

Jewel was a little flustered. The Westermarks!

"How do you do."

Lou inclined his head. "We're really wild over your horse, my dear," said Mrs. Westermark. "We're going to steal him."

"Oh, I hope not," said Jewel. Why did Mrs. Westermark stare at her and at Tony so? Jewel felt herself blushing. She wanted to get away. Women had a way of suspecting other women! Even a high society person like Mrs. Westermark. "I've got to run. Lots to do. Come on, Tony. I'll give you that list."

Mrs. Westermark turned to watch them go.

Pop was beaming. "How do you like my granddaughter?"

"She's very pretty," said Mrs. Westermark without enthusiasm.

"Very," said Lou. "That swipe of yours, Pop: where did you get him? I never saw him around before."

Pop hesitated. "I picked him up here. He's a Californian."

"I thought he was new. Looks a little different class from most of them," said Mrs. Westermark.

LOU cleared his throat. "Pop," he said, "Bob Mayfield told me he'd talked to you the other day about Arkansaw Traveler."

"Why, yes, he did."

"He told me you said you wouldn't sell him."

"That's right. We're going to win the Handicap with him."

Lou laughed.

"There was a time when he could do it, but not now, Pop; not now. You're an old horseman. You've probably forgotten more about horses than I'll ever know. But a man's apt to overestimate the horses in his own stable. You know that. Now, Pop, an old cripple like Arkansaw never wins a race like the Handicap. It just isn't done."

"He's not crippled up, Mr. Westermark. He's sound as a dollar. He worked six furlongs in thirteen, just galloping."

"I know. I saw him, and he may win a few races for you at that distance. I don't say he won't. But the Handicap is a mile and a quarter, and he'll have the best horses in the country knocking at him all the way. It just can't be done, Pop. Look at Kubla Khan, my horse. He's six-to-one in the future book. Every expert in the country picks him to win the Handicap. But I don't feel very confident. It will be a big field. It may rain. Anything's liable to happen."

"Exactly," said Pop. "But that's a chance we've all got to take; it's racing."

"Then you wouldn't be interested in selling him?"

"No sir. I wouldn't."

"We'd give him a wonderful home, Pop," said Mrs. Westermark. "He'd be looked after the rest of his life. Lou wants to put him in the stud. I think the horsemen would breed to him since Kentucky Colonel is dead. He was a wonderful three-year-old even if he wasn't quite sound."

"He's a valuable animal to me," said Pop. "He may win me a few races, not mentioning the Handicap."

"You don't expect to win over three races with him at the meeting, do you, Pop?" Lou interposed. "Forgetting all about the Handicap, which is pretty remote."

"No. Three would about get it."

"Well, that's roughly two thousand dollars. We'll give you five thousand dollars for him, Pop."

Pop hastily took out the makings and began to roll a cigarette. Red, leaning against the door of the tackroom, groaned, then stood holding his breath.

"That's a lot of money for a cripple," said Pop with a smile.

"There are special circumstances," said Lou, "which I think Bob explained to you."

"I know, I know. Well," said Pop, sighing deeply, "I promised Colonel Moffat I'd look after the old fellow till the day I died. I'm sorry, Mr. Westermark. I couldn't sell him."

Lou opened his mouth to speak, but his wife got up to go.

"You might think it over, Pop," said Mrs. Westermark.

"I will. I will," said Pop.

AS post-time for the fifth race approached, Pop could hardly contain himself.

Tony came hurrying through the crowd. Pop hardly knew him. He had bought some cheap slacks, a soft hat, and a new pair of shoes. He looked like anybody. You'd never take him for a bum or a swipe.

"Pop—he bet it."

Pop nodded, then took out a handkerchief and mopped his brow. "Hot today, aint it?"

"Look, Pop. I've got twelve dollars left. Which horse has got the best chance: Stoughton Bottle or the champ?"

"I don't know. Don't bother me with trifles. Bet six on each."

"Right you are, Pop—and good luck!"

"Say, you better help Red."

"Had I? All right. Soon as I bet."

When the horses were led out into the paddock, Pop went over to speak with Red.

"How's he acting?"

"Perfect," said Red. "Look at him. He's fine as frog's hair."

"They bet the dough. A grand for themselves, and a hundred for me."

"Whew!" said Red eloquently. "That's the biggest single chunk Stoughton Bottle's had on him in a long time."

Pop went over and walked beside the old gray gelding, which was as quiet as a carthorse, and spoke to Slim Darrel.

"Boy," he whispered," we got eleven hundred dollars bet on this race. Remember what I told you."

Slim got a little pale. "Yes sir, Mr. Benedict. I got you."

"Rate him, but don't let them steal the race on you with that Canadian horse. They'll try it."

The bugle blew. Pop nodded to the jockey, then turned and walked rapidly toward the grandstand, muttering to himself: "Luck, or whatever you are, I been taking it on the chin for a long time now. What I need is a break. Just one little break." He felt comforted. A man couldn't lose all the time.

It was a two-mile race, and the starting-gate was in front of the grandstand. The jockeys rode the horses up to the three-eighths chute, then leisurely rode them back. There were eight horses in the race, and Stoughton Bottle was in the outside stall. The three inside horses were prancing and backing and slewing around, giving the assistant starters all kinds of trouble, but old Stote stood as quiet as a milk-wagon horse, gazing straight ahead.

"Look at Quebec," said Bill. "He's all lathered up. You don't suppose the boys would take a chance on giving him a prescription, do you?"

"Lord! Not here," said Soapy.

"If they did," said Pop, gritting his teeth, "I hope they get caught. I didn't give my horse no prescription. Mine'll run on their merits, or they won't run at all."

Jewel glanced back at the two men and shrugged, smiling. Pop was impossible! They grinned reassuringly.

"There they go!" shouted the announcer.

The horses leaped away into a perfect start. The Canadian horse, Quebec, immediately took the lead and slowly drew away from the others. Slim took Stoughton Bottle into the rail and trailed the field. Going around the first turn, Quebec was three lengths ahead of the nearest horse, and drawing away.

"Not too far, Slim," muttered Pop. "Don't let that horse get too much lead."

When the horses turned for home on the first time around, Quebec was leading by five open lengths, Cherokee Charley was second, and Willy Holliday third. Stoughton Bottle still trailed, but was moving up slightly; and when the horses passed the judges' stand, Slim began to flick him with the whip.

"Good boy," said Pop. "Good boy."

"Quebec's still leading," came the announcer's voice above the tumult of the crowd; "Cherokee Charley is still second. Willy Holliday is third and moving up fast. And here comes Stoughton Bottle on the outside."

There was a roar from the crowd. People began to stand up in the boxes; there were protests from the people behind them; then everybody stood up.

"He's riding a nice race, that boy," crowed Pop, full of optimism now. "Bring him home, Slim! Bring him home, boy!"

"Turning for home," droned the announcer, "it's Quebec in front by a length; Willy Holliday is second; Stoughton Bottle is third and closing fast."

The announcer's voice speaking rapidly now, was finally drowned out by the frenzied shouts of the crowd.

Pop began to sway from side to side in his excitement. Jewel gripped his arm, and was surprised to hear herself shouting. Bill and Soapy, deaf to all other considerations, were trying to pull Quebec home, yelling and waving their arms.

Quebec was tiring fast, and at the beginning of the last sixteenth tried to bolt toward the outside fence; but his jockey, working furiously, got him straight and held him there. Willy Holliday's rider was whipping furiously, kicking and yelling. But old Stoughton Bottle, striding easily and surely, was running them down. He moved up inch by inch, Slim whipping and coaxing.

Near the finish line Quebec staggered from effort. Willy Holliday quit and tried to bolt. Stoughton Bottle was still running strongly and truly. Another jump, and it would be all over. But Quebec's jockey hit his horse a slashing blow with the whip; he steadied; and the two horses passed the finish line neck and neck: Quebec spent, staggering and heaving, Stoughton Bottle fresh and strong.

"Outrode, by God!" cried Pop.

Jewel looked at him in bewilderment.

"We won, didn't we?"

"No, by God," said Pop, "we didn't. We got outrode."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Soapy, shaking with excitement. "Anyway, Pop, you got a real plater there. He's got plenty, that old gray devil."

"Yes, Pop," said Jewel. "If we didn't win, we got second, and that's two hundred dollars."

"It's a photo finish," said Bill, pointing. "Maybe you did win, Pop."

"No," said Pop sadly. "I seen many a horse-race in my life. Photo or no photo, we got outrode."

THEY waited for the picture to be sent down the little wire which led from the photographer's booth on top of the grandstand to the judge's stand.

"Oh, well," said Pop, "we got a run for our money, anyway."

Presently there was a loud murmur from the crowd, and turning, Pop saw the photo-container sliding down the wire. In a moment the winning numbers were flashed up on the announcement-board. There was a roar from the crowd.

"Second," said Pop philosophically. "I knew it."

Jewel patted his hand. "Too bad, Pop."

"Well, anyway," said Bill, "we collect. But I wouldn't have give ten cents for my bet when that old gray horse started charging in the stretch. Tough luck, Pop."

Pop excused himself and went down to the door of the jockeys' room. He saw Johnny Antrim with a smirk on his tough face talking earnestly to Slim Darrel, telling him in detail how the race should have been ridden. Slim was very pale; and when he saw Pop, he began to cry.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Benedict," he said. "It was all my fault. I thought I had it in the bag."

"Letting a guy like Smoke Thomas outride him," said Johnny. "Aint that something!"

"Never mind now, Slim," said Pop, touched by the boy's tears. "But just remember this: Never stop riding till you cross the wire. Just when you let up, Smoke pulled his horse together again. One more lick would have done it."

"Mighty nice of you, Mr. Benedict," said Slim, getting control of himself, "when you had all that dough up. Honest, I was trying to give you the best ride you ever had. I sure was. I'm all shot now. Look at my hands

shaking. I wish to God I was back in Spokane! I'm sure ashamed of myself."

"Hey!" said Pop. "Get yourself together, boy. We got just as much up on the chestnut horse in the next race." Suddenly Pop began to fume. "Aint it awful! Nothing else could happen; now the boy has to lose his nerve."

"Let me ride him," said Johnny curtly. "I know that old horse."

"They set you down," said Pop.

"Yesterday was my last day." Johnny turned. "Hey, Abe. Come and talk to Mr. Benedict."

Johnny's agent came over, puffing on his cigar.

"You want a real ride, Mr. Benedict? All right. We'll give you one. Don't you worry about nothing. I can fix everything."

Pop pondered. He hated to disappoint Slim. But this was an important race, and Johnny Antrim was a real money rider.

"I hate to do this, Slim," he said.

Slim couldn't get a word out. He wanted the mount; but he was afraid of another fiasco. After all, Arkansaw Traveler was a bad actor and a cripple to boot.

"I don't know," he quavered. "I don't know."

"You aint in no shape to ride a race," said Johnny curtly. "Be yourself. Play square with Mr. Benedict. He's sure been giving you a break. Tell you what I'll do: I'll give you ten dollars for this mount. That's what you'd get on a loser, and that's what it would be with you up! We'll tell the stewards you're sick. You won't get no black-eye over it." Johnny really wanted this mount—not because of the money, but because he had a come-back to make, and also he'd heard that the big guns, including Maxon Lyle, were down heavy on the filly, Darling Clementine. It was a perfect spot for him.

"All right," said Slim.

IN the grandstand there was a loud murmur when the change of jockeys on Arkansaw was announced over the loud-speaker. "Pop's shooting," said Ed Stroud, who had put in with the big guns. "With what?" Tom Baker demanded with a loud laugh. But Lyle didn't think it was funny at all; and when he saw Pop crossing the downstairs betting-shed, he stopped him.

"Hello, Pop."

"Hello." Pop was pretty sure that he knew what was on Lyle's mind. He was delighted. Everybody was surely getting mighty friendly all of a sudden.

"Trying with the old boy, eh?"

"That's right."

"Think he can make it?"

"It's a cinch."

Lyle laughed.

"I wouldn't say that, Pop. But he's got an outside chance. That old boy's got an outside chance in any kind of company after that last work-out. Got outridden in the last, eh?"

"Slim's sick," said Pop with a straight face.

"Sure, sure. Look, Pop. We don't figure you're betting much on the Traveler. In fact the boys told me you was a little low on cash. I'll tell you the truth; we've bet quite a chunk on Darling Clementine, and the way it begins to shape, you're the one we've got to beat. Follow me?"

"I follow you," said Pop. "But you aint going no place. We got eleven hundred dollars bet on the old boy; and if can get him in, we're going to."

Lyle stared. "Where you getting that kind of money, Pop?"

"I still know a few people."

"No deal, then?"

"Not a chance. And Max, Eddie Baugh better keep that filly right where she belongs, or I'll squawk. No bearing out and no bearing in."

Lyle's face was red with annoyance.

"If there's any rough riding in this race, that boy you got will do it; and he'll get the works this time if he does."

"You know he'd just love to beat you, Max."

Lyle turned and walked away. Pop chuckled to himself. Somebody took him by the arm. It was Tony.

"The money's up," he said.

Pop nodded, trying to hide his excitement.

"What did the fellow say on that last race? That was a tough one."

Tony laughed. "He doesn't care. He says he might just as well be entirely broke as the way he is."

"That's the spirit. Who's looking after Stoughton Bottle?"

"The little negro boy. He's walking him. I'm going to help Red after this race. Good luck, Pop."

"Same to you and your friend, Tony."

WHEN Pop came up the aisle toward the box, the bugle was blowing, calling the horses to the post for the sixth race. Tray McKinnel stepped out of the mezzanine entrance to detain him."

"Trying, eh, Pop?"

"We are."

"I bet a chunk on Darling Clem. But the old boy is five to one, and she's three to two. Should I hedge?"

Pop could hardly contain himself. Yesterday he'd been just poor old Pop with a gypsy stable. Now all the big boys were hanging around mighty respectful. Sell Arkansaw? Not a chance in the world!

"I would if I was you. But you better use your own judgment. You know how racing is."

"I'm going to hedge," said Tray, turning.

Pop sat down in the empty box and leisurely rolled a cigarette. By God, it was getting like old times.

The horses were paraded; then they broke ranks and, turning, began to jog around the first turn toward the starting-gate at the head of the back-stretch.

"Aint he a peach?" Pop exclaimed, pointing his program at the Traveler, who was dancing sidewise with his neck arched, and his front feet working like a show-horse's.

"He certainly is," said Jewel.

Pop turned. "I suppose you smart guys are betting on the filly."

"You guessed it, Pop. Sorry. That's where the smart money is."

The crowd was restive. This was the feature race of the day, and over a hundred thousand dollars in bets showed on the tote-board across the track. People began to stand up. All around the box men were staring intently through field-glasses at the far-away starting-gate. "There they go!" shouted some practical joker; people leaped to their feet, then turned to stare in disapproval at the speaker.

"Arkansaw Traveler broke through again," droned the announcer. "He's holding up the start. Wait a minute. He's unseated his rider. Johnny Antrim was thrown against the side of the starting-gate, and then fell. He's up, folks. Not hurt, I guess."

Pop groaned.

"Oh, God, if he just don't get him left."

"Four to one now," said Bill. "The crowd really likes the old horse. Darling Clem's up a little. Five-to-three."

"Arkansaw broke through again," droned the announcer. "He almost unseated Johnny Antrim. They're taking him outside. The Traveler will have to break from outside the gate. Now. Steady. There they go!"

"Off last," Pop groaned. "I guess my luck's really out. Poor old horse! It's his first race in a long time, and it got him all worked up."

"Look at that filly run," cried Bill. "Can't she mizzle!"

Jewel looked with some concern at Pop, and patted his hand. He seemed so crestfallen that she was worried.

"It's Darling Clementine in front by four lengths," called the announcer above the rising tide of tumult from the crowd. "Wings o' the Wind is second and closing fast. Blond Beast is third on the rail, and Arkansaw Traveler is fourth on the far outside."

"He's already passed four of them, Pop," said Jewel soothingly.

"Them four don't count," said Pop. "They're just going for the ride."

The little filly, Darling Clementine, was flying on the rail; and her jockey, Eddie Baugh, was riding her for all she was worth; but the big bay gelding, Wings o' the Wind, was slowly overhauling her, and Blond Beast was moving up inch by inch on the rail. Going into the turn, Clementine seemed to falter, and Wings o' the Wind caught her, and they ran neck and neck for fifty yards; then the filly hit her stride again and gradually pulled away. Wings o' the Wind was used up and began to drop back. Blond Beast passed him, still inching along behind Darling Clementine on the rail.

"It's Blond Beast," said Bill with disgust. "That baby can really run from there, and Eddie Baugh just couldn't shake him off. And him ten to one!" He jammed his hat over his eyes.

Turning for home, Wings o' the Wind, staggering from the pace, bore out just as Johnny Antrim was trying to take the Traveler around him.

"Foul, by God!" said Pop. "Now we *are* done." He sat down with a groan, and stared morosely at the row of backs which blocked his view of the track.

A tremendous, frenzied roar went up from the crowd. Above the tumult Pop caught one word: "Arkansaw!" He was so excited that he didn't know what he was doing. He saw Jewel, pale and distracted: she was trying to pull him to his feet.

"Holy mackerel!" cried Bill Everett. "Look at that old champ run."

Pop began to laugh. That wasn't an old cast-off cripple running out there now; that was the chestnut tornado which had given the wise boys such a drubbing in that race three years ago.

Away out in the middle of the track, clear of all possible interference now, the Arkansaw Traveler was overhauling the leaders effortlessly; Johnny wasn't even whipping him; he was hand-riding him, and talking to him as if he were a baby.

"On the chin-strap," cried Pop. "Why, it's murder. Nothing but murder."

Darling Clementine and Wings o' the Wind seemed to be running backward. When Johnny got up neck and neck with the filly, he touched the old horse once with the whip. Then the crowd really saw something. The Traveler charged like a champion. He drew away effortlessly farther and farther until there were five open lengths between him and Clementine; then Johnny deliberately stood up in the stirrups and looked contemptuously over his shoulder at the badly beaten horses behind him.

"No photo finishes this time," said Pop, quietly and happily.

Turning, Jewel kissed Pop and hugged him. The crowd went wild. Pop shook hands until his arm was limp.

Tony appeared, towing a big, embarrassed-looking, well-dressed man with him.

"Here he is, Pop," cried Tony. "Meet my friend Vance Dunning. Vance, this is Pop and Jewel."

"How do you do?" said the big man, smiling and flushing. "That was the most beautiful race I ever saw in my life. It really was. What a horse!"

Pop laughed.

Tony beamed at Jewel, showing his white teeth.

"This is the man who bet all the money. Old friend of mine. I ran into him up town one night."

"All what money?" Jewel asked.

"Didn't you know? He bet a thousand dollars on Arkansaw Traveler to win." Tony leaned closer. "It was his last thousand. He's had bad luck, poor fellow. Used to be very rich."

Pop glanced at Tony and Jewel.

"Tony," he said, "I thought you was going to help Red."

"I'm on my way, Pop," said Tony with a grin. "Come on, Vance. You can get a close look at the horse now."

When they had gone, Jewel turned to Pop.

"You mustn't order Tony around like that. What are you thinking of?"

"Why not? He's working for us, aint he? Don't you worry, honey. I can pay him his money back now."

"He's not working for us. He helps out, and never gets a thing but his meals."

Pop glanced sidewise at Jewel, then got up.

"You let me handle things. Tony's all right in his place. What do we know about him?"

AS Pop got down to the door of the jockeys' room, he saw Johnny showing off before a crowd of hangers-on, smirking and cutting up.

"Johnny!"

"Yes, Mr. Benedict." Johnny came over. His manner toward Pop had changed. The old boy had a real horse and was important now.

"Shake."

Johnny grinned, then drew Pop aside.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Benedict, but I almost lost that race for you. I could see by the way Eddie and Smoke were acting, something was up. So I got the old horse to cutting up so they'd start me outside the gate and I could stay clear of trouble. Damned if I didn't almost get left. But what a horse, Mr. Benedict, what a horse!"

Chapter Eight

TONY, Jewel and Pop sat eating their dinner. Pop looked ten years younger, and he kept laughing and making jokes.

"I'm stuffed," groaned Tony. "What a meal! Jewel, where did you learn to cook like that?"

"I picked it up as I went along. Tonight I thought Pop would take me out to eat, but he didn't say anything about it. So I thought I'd make the best of it."

Pop slapped his forehead.

"Oh, Lord, honey! And I meant to take you to Pasadena. But everybody kept crowding around me, and then I won all that money! I got so flustered I forgot all about it. Why didn't you say something?"

"Oh, well," said Jewel. She glanced up. Tony was looking at her.

"Why, sure!" cried Tony. "A celebration certainly is in order. I never thought of it."

"I guess all men are alike," said Jewel. "All they think about is themselves."

"Now, honey," said Pop. Tilting back his chair, he took two fifty-dollar bills out of his pocket and held them out to Jewel. "Here, baby. Take it. It's all yours. You do what you like with it. There now. Smile a little. You see? Your old granddad aint a dead one yet. He can still provide."

Jewel looked at Pop for a long moment. She felt like crying. Leaning over the table, she patted his shoulder.

"Really, Pop, I don't care about Pasadena. I'm just as happy right here." She took the money and put it down the front of her dress. "Naturally you'd be all excited about Arkansaw. Everybody said he was through, and they used to always be laughing at us. Oh, I'm glad. But Pop—how much have you got in your pocket?"

Pop grimaced; he knew what was coming.

"Oh, about five hundred dollars. I aint got the purse money yet. Imagine, Jewel, honey, we made right at fifteen hundred dollars today. Things are surely looking up."

"You better leave most of that money with me, Pop. I'll look after it for you. You might get robbed."

Pop groaned, but finally he took a big roll of bills from his pocket and handed it to Jewel.

"I'm saving out fifty and some change," he said. "A man ought to have a little money in his pocket."

Jewel got up to put the money away. Tony said:

"Pop, why don't we all go celebrate some place? I won some money too, and it's burning a hole in my pocket."

"Can't, son. I've got to get uptown. I—I've got a couple of fellows I want to see. Business."

"Pop, have you any objections to me taking Jewel out some place? You can trust me. You know that."

Pop's expression changed.

"I *don't* know it," he said. "I don't know anything about you at all. Tony, I like you. You're a good boy. But with Jewel it's different. Around a race-track, a girl has to be mighty careful." Pop sat staring at the floor, remembering the past. What humiliations! A man with a loose woman in his family was no man at all—had no self-respect. Jewel wasn't anything like Mildred; but she was Mildred's daughter, and the bunch could get to talking about her mighty easy.

Jewel came in and sat down. She looked from Pop to Tony.

"What's the matter?"

"I invited you and Pop to a celebration," said Tony. "But Pop doesn't like the idea."

"I can't go," said Pop. "I got business uptown. You know how it is, Jewel."

"I can go," said Jewel quietly.

Pop squirmed on his chair; then he rose and began to pace up and down.

"Tony," he said finally, "I'll tell you how it is: Things are funny around a race-track. I don't know anything about you, and that's your business. You may be the Prince of Wales. But right here and now, you're a swipe. See what I mean? I just can't have Jewel running around with you. How would it look to you if she went around places with Red?"

"Pop," cried Jewel, "you mustn't talk like that. It's not the same thing at all. I think you're just afraid I'll have a little fun for a change."

Pop winced. But Tony said:

"I see what Pop means, Jewel. He just doesn't want you talked about, and I don't blame him. You're all right, Pop. You've got old-fashioned ideas. I like them!"

Pop sat down and put his hand on Tony's shoulder.

"All kidding aside," he said, "I like you. Maybe we can fix this up. Can you get a car?"

"Yes. I can borrow Vance's."

"Take Jewel some place, then, where nobody will see her. I want Jewel to get out and have some fun; she's a girl in a million. But don't forget. I'm trusting you." Pop's old face underwent a sudden transformation; for a moment he seemed formidable, strong-willed and dangerous.

"Count on me," said Tony.

Pop went out. Tony lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair.

"I hope you didn't mind what Pop said, Tony?"

"No. I didn't mind. He's quite right. You should be proud of him. There aren't many like him any more. He reminds me of my grandfather in some ways."

"He means well."

"He does. Jewel, let's go over to Hollywood. I know a nice little place over there."

Jewel was delighted.

"Hollywood! Oh, that's wonderful. What shall I wear?"

"Let's see. Well, let's do it right. Have you got an evening gown?"

"No, I haven't. But I've got a black dress. . . . It's not exactly formal, but it might do. Wait, I'll get it."

Jewel, shaking with excitement, hurried into the bedroom and returned with the dress, which she held up for Tony to look at.

"Fine," said Tony; then he got up and put on his hat. "I'll be back after you in an hour. We'll paint the town red, Jewel."

Humming, Jewel stacked the dishes, then hurried into her bedroom and began to get ready. She was so excited she hardly knew what she was doing. Hollywood!

TRAY McKINNEL had started in the front door of the restaurant; but when he saw Pop at the bar with his friends, he halted, got back in his car, and drove off.

Jewel had just finished dressing, when Tray knocked at the door. She took a last look at herself in a mirror, patted her hair in place, then hurried over and opened the door. When she saw Tray, she stared at him, startled. She had expected Tony.

Tray took off his hat, closed the door behind him, and whistled.

"Well, now! Shut my mouth! Is it really you, Jewel, honey, or am I seeing things? You surely do look sweet enough to eat tonight." He moved toward her and tried to put his arms around her, but she evaded him.

"Tray! Keep your hands off of me. You'll muss me all up."

"I'll stand for that reason," said Tray. "It sure would be a shame to muss you up. Why, you look like an angel, honey; no fooling. What's the occasion? Stepping out?"

"Yes, I am. You better run along. I'm going in a minute."

"Good Lord! Don't rush me so. Can't I wait till the gentleman comes? Who is he? Got a new boy friend? I guess I'll have to stop neglecting you or I'll get cut out."

Jewel laughed. She felt differently toward Tray now. He wasn't the last word by any means.

"You never were anything but cut out, Tray."

"Now, that's a fine way to talk to me, honey, after the other night when you were out on the porch lallygagging with me."

"You did the lallygagging."

"I didn't hear you screaming any."

Jewel flushed with anger. "Did you expect me to get Pop after you?"

"What could he do to me?"

"Who knows? Oh, let's stop talking so silly. I like you, Tray. You're a nice fellow. But I haven't got any time to—"

There was a knock at the door; then Tony opened it and came in.

"Well, dust my buttons!" said Tray offensively. "What's the matter, Tony, you quit your job with Pop already and taken up carrying dishes for a living? You do look pretty in that black suit."

"Have you been drinking?" Tony demanded.

"A little, my friend, a little."

"Tray, you better go," said Jewel.

"I guess I better. Yes sir. A poor owner aint got a chance with the women any longer; they like the ginneys."

"Please, Tray."

Suddenly Tray got very red in the face. He came up close to Tony.

"Listen, swipe! I didn't like the way you talked to me the other day. I'd like a word with you. Step outside a minute."

"He won't do anything of the kind," said Jewel.

"Let him say so."

"All right," said Tony. "I say so. You've had a drink too many, and if I were you, I'd go on home and stay out of trouble. I'm not going to fight with you, if that's what you want."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't want to get all mussed up. I just got dressed."

Tray roared with laughter.

"Aint he pretty! I got a good notion to slap your face right now just to see what would happen."

Tony glanced quickly around the room; then moving swiftly, he picked up a metal ash-stand.

"I don't want any trouble with you, McKinnel," he said. "But if you slap me, I'm going to bend this right over your head."

"Why don't you use your fists?"

"Because I've got other things to do this evening."

Tray nodded.

"That's what you think. But don't count too much on it. Well, I'll see you later." Tray looked from one to the other; then he shrugged and started out. Over his shoulder he said: "I'm mighty sorry, Jewel. But this guy really puts my back up. You look out for him." He slammed the door.

Jewel's face was red and embarrassed.

"What did he mean?" said Tony. "What was he talking about?"

"Oh," said Jewel, "he'd just had a drink too many." Putting her head down, she began to cry softly.

"Somebody's always spoiling things," she sobbed.

Tony hesitated. Then he cried:

"Look, Jewel."

She turned. Tony leaped up into the air, and imitating a vaudeville adagio dancer, he executed a twinkle. Jewel's mouth dropped open slightly. Was he crazy? For a few steps Tony swung an imaginary partner through the air; then he got down and began to do a Russian dance, throwing his feet out in such a comical way that finally Jewel burst out laughing. Tony fell over. Jewel sat down and held her sides.

"If you could see yourself," she cried.

Tony got up and brushed himself off.

"Well," he said, "feel better?"

"Do it again, Tony," Jewel begged.

"No. It wouldn't be funny the second time. Now powder your nose and let's go. I've got Vance's big roadster, and we're going in style."

JEWEL could hardly control her nervousness when she walked with Tony into the night-club. She had been out very little in her life. She felt ill-dressed and out-of-place, and was sorry that Tony had brought her there.

Tony did not take the first table offered him by the head-waiter. He argued politely. Jewel was impressed by the man's deference. She would have been scared to death of him. She noticed that Tony passed a folded-up bill to the head-waiter, who grew much more deferential, bowing and smiling. He found a very desirable table for them immediately, and seated them with a flourish.

Jewel was glad to get out of her coat; and it pleased her to have the waiter help her and murmur, "Madame." Her dress, she thought, was plain and might pass.

"Like it?" Tony asked.

For a moment she was so nervous and ill-at-ease that she avoided his eyes. Why was she such a fool? Blushing and losing countenance! Tony would think she was a hick.

"Yes—very much."

Tony smiled.

"It's interesting if you've never seen one before. I won't tell you a thing. Just sit tight. Would Pop permit you to have a drink?"

"Of course. I'll take a sidecar."

Tony turned to the waiter.

"Two sidecars." And he specified the brand of brandy.

"HOW do you like it?" said Tony smoothing the arms of his dinner coat.

"Rent it?" said Jewel with an effort. It was so hard to talk to Tony tonight.

"Well, practically. It belongs to Vance Dunning. It's too tight for him and too loose for me, but it will do. I don't know what I'd do without Vance. Nice car of his, don't you think?"

"Nicest car I ever saw."

"Vance had money when he bought it. Was he tickled when Arkansaw won! It saved his life. After he made that last bet, he had about forty dollars in his pockets. Every cent he had."

"Was he very rich?"

"One of the richest families in California."

"Did you use to work for him?"

Tony looked blank. Jewel flushed. Had she said the wrong thing?

"Well, you said something about a ranch—"

"Oh, sure. I used to work for him, in a way. Here we come. Those drinks look nice. Are you ready for anything to eat yet, Jewel?"

"Not yet. I'm still full from dinner."

"Well, we'll dawdle and maybe dance, and then we can eat later."

The waiter put their drinks on the table. Tony grinned, and suddenly Jewel felt at ease with him. The grin did it. She could see him loafing around the barn, pretending to work.

"Dance?" said Tony.

"Yes. But I'm not so good. I'm afraid I don't know the new steps."

Tony laughed as they got up.

"You're a very modest girl, Jewel. I'll bet you can really dance. You look it. Me, now—I just shuffle around. No sense of rhythm. Barbara used to say—in fact, all the girls I ever knew—" Tony hesitated, then broke off. Jewel noticed that his face was suddenly slack; she had seen transformations before. Was Barbara his former wife?

They began to dance. Presently they glanced at each other and smiled. They were both good dancers, and they got along very well together. Although, Jewel considered, Tony *did* shuffle and seemed rather lifeless and indifferent.

At eleven o'clock Tony ordered lobster Newburg, a green salad with oil dressing, some rolls and coffee, and a bottle of wine. Jewel ate ravenously and drank her wine with a relish. Over the dessert, Tony said:

"You like all this, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Jewel. "I often dreamed about going to a place like this. You know. Everything swell and nice. People dressed up and polite, and you know what I mean. Sometimes I get awfully tired of the race-track."

"You wouldn't want to give it up, would you?"

Jewel sat thinking.

"I don't know. I've never seen anything else."

"Take my word for it," said Tony, "it's a swell existence. I've lived almost every way. I like the track best. I'm going to stay with it."

"You mean you're going to be a swipe the rest of your life?"

"I aspire to that," said Tony with a laugh. "I have a sad way of always falling down on the job. But maybe I can learn to take care of race-horses in time. Red's teaching me, and he knows."

"Oh, stop joking," said Jewel. "We all know you're not like that. I'd hate to see you spending the rest of your life as a swipe. I know them, Tony. You don't. They all drink like fish. Most of them you can't trust as far as you can see them. They'll be drunk when you need them the most. They never save their money, and generally when they die, somebody has to bury them."

"That's a perfect description of myself," said Tony. "Except I'm not quite dead."

Jewel flushed. She was a little tight now.

"Tony, you talk like a fool."

"Why shouldn't I? . . . More wine? . . . You know, Jewel, I like you very much. You be careful who you marry. You ought to get a nice husband who will appreciate you. Not like that McKinnel fellow."

"Oh, him! I never give him a thought."

"He thinks you do."

"He takes me to movies. That's all. It's very hard to meet any nice young fellows around the track. You have to be so careful."

"I'll bet you don't need much looking after," said Tony. "There's a certain expression about your eyes. Not now, of course," Tony finished with a laugh.

"Do I look tight now, Tony?"

"A little. Very pleasantly and mildly tight."

"Well, I'm away above my quota. We'd better go. We can talk on the way home."

Just as they were leaving, there was a commotion outside; then a group of laughing, fashionable people crossed the sidewalk from a big limousine and started in.

Jewel saw three magnificently dressed women. One, of about thirty, had dark-red hair and a haughty manner.

Tony started back, then held his hat in front of his face like a gangster who does not want his picture taken.

But the woman with the red hair said:

"No use, Tony. I saw you."

She glanced at Jewel, and smiled slightly. Jewel did not know why she felt insulted.

"Hello, Barb," said Tony. "We're just going."

"Pat said you were hanging around down here some place. You always did have a taste for low company."

Tony glanced at the people with her. They looked uneasy.

"We have that in common, anyway, I see," said Tony. "Well, good night."

The red-haired woman detained him.

"Why do we always have to say nasty things to each other! I really want to see you, Tony. Where are you staying?"

"Not interested. Good night."

Tony brushed past her and took Jewel's arm. Jewel's face was scarlet. She heard those people laughing behind her before the door swung to.

"Damned—insolent—" she heard Tony mumbling under his breath.

"That your wife?" asked Jewel, very curious.

"My ex.," said Tony shortly.

All the way home he drove silently, staring straight ahead. . . .

When he pulled up in front of Pop's house, the lights were burning in the living-room. Tony took Jewel to the door. She glanced in the window.

"Look, Tony," she said.

Pop was asleep in the easy-chair, with his head on his chest and newspapers scattered on the floor all around him. Red was asleep on the floor, snoring peacefully, his clothes sodden and wrinkled, his tattered cap half covering his face.

"Red's been on a bender," said Jewel. "Pop's looking after him. Good night, Tony. Thank you ever so much for a lovely evening."

"Don't mention it. A celebration was in order." Tony made a queer noise in his throat. Jewel turned to look at him. "Jewel," said Tony in a strange voice, "I love you and Pop and Red. I hope some day you'll all like me." He turned, hastily got into his car and drove off.

"Yes," said Jewel to herself, "I know what he means. He loves us all alike. He doesn't really mean anything by that."

She went in and tiptoed to her room. When she had changed into a dressing-gown, she'd make coffee in case Red wanted some later; then she'd wake Pop and persuade him to go to bed.

AS Tony drove slowly down the street, he wondered what to do next. He wasn't sleepy; the few drinks he had taken had had no effect on him; he felt wide-awake and depressed. Noticing the reddish glow of the track bar's sign showing above the buildings down the street, he said to himself:

"I'll just drop in for a little while. Take a drink or two. Just one or two." He was slowing down for the intersection when a sudden thought struck him, and he laughed. "I'd like to see the looks on the faces of these horsemen if I'd drive up in front of the place in this car and in these clothes. I'd better go change. Maybe Vance will be up."

Vance was up. When Tony unlocked the door and came in, he was lying on a couch reading a Racing Form, and sipping a whisky-and-soda.

"Hello, Vance. Glad you're up. I was afraid I might disturb you."

Vance looked up with a puzzled expression.

"Why so formal, Tony? Are you tight? It's me: Vance Dunning."

"After all, it's your place." Tony began to change.

"It's yours, too, if you want to stay here. Tony, have you really lost your mind, as Barb says, or is this some kind of a gag? Sleeping in a stable!"

"That gag was worth about five thousand dollars to you. Say, I forgot. Thanks for the car. You should have seen the girl's eyes!"

"Don't mention it. I was getting ready to sell that old hack for three hundred dollars. You saved it for me. Why don't you start a tipping bureau?"

"There aren't enough suckers like you around, Vance. Imagine betting your last dime like that!"

"I was desperate, as they say in the movies." Vance pulled on his cigarette, then comfortably sipped his drink and, with a smile, turned back to the Racing Form. "This is the life, Tony, all right. But why sleep in a stable?"

Tony had completely changed now except for his necktie. He went to a mirror to tie it.

"I've got my reasons. I'm learning something."

"Same here. Say, Tony, do you know anything about this Turnverein horse? I'm getting so I can read form a little and he looks good to me."

"I'll ask Pop tomorrow. . . . Think I'll stop at the bar on the way home. Thanks for the use of the car, Vance, and the clothes. By the way, how was the old boy when you came away? Ever see him?"

"I saw him about a week before I left. Looks just the same. Great old fellow. I saw your grandmother, too. She's getting fatter all the time, but she doesn't look much older. How old is she, Tony?"

"About eighty. So's the old boy. What a constitution! He'll probably outlive me. Vance, sometimes I wonder how a man like that ever had a grandson like me."

"It's the times. We're all softened up. We're really not worth a good damn, any of us. My mother's father could ride range when he was seventy-five. Look at me. I'm thirty-five, and I look fifty in the morning. I've got a belly and I can't run up a flight of stairs without blowing like a whale."

"I was certainly a great disappointment to my grandfather. I never was very serious, Vance. I'm a lightweight. That's my trouble. Well, I'm going. If Barb looks you up or happens to run into you, don't tell her where I am."

"Oh, they've got you run down now, Tony. Might as well give in." Vance laughed. "It took them long enough. Barb even hired a private detective. That bright boy still doesn't know where you are."

"Why can't Barb let me alone? She's got her final decree."

"When you disappeared like that, she said she felt morally responsible."

"That's swell. That word *morally* is perfect."

Tony laughed and went out. Good old Vance! Used to be one of the hardest-working and most serious-minded business men in Santa Mentina. But they had put him over the jumps once too often!

THE restaurant was still crowded with horsemen and hangers-on. Tony went up to the bar and ordered a straight whisky. Tim, the bartender, grinned at him.

"Well, well! How's my friend with the hollow legs? Are you going to drink me out of stock tonight?"

"No," said Tony, smiling, pleased by the bartender's familiarity. "I'm practically on the wagon. However, fill that up again."

"On the wagon!" said Tim with a laugh. "I want to see you some time when you fall off."

Several of the horsemen nodded to Tony rather vaguely. He was a newcomer. There were funny stories about him. They reserved judgment and kept a little aloof.

The whisky helped. A pleasant glow spread all through Tony. After finishing his second drink, he went over to put a nickel in the piano. As he bent forward, he felt that he was being watched, and turning, his eyes looked directly into the eyes of Tray McKinnel, who was sitting at an out-of-the-way table with a blonde. Tray's gray eyes were narrowed and menacing.

"Now for it," Tony told himself.

"Hello," said McKinnel. "How's my pal?"

The blonde turned to stare; then she looked at Tony with interest.

"Hello, McKinnel."

"He aint very friendly is he, Sadie?"

"I don't know. I never saw the guy before."

"He's a very funny guy. You'd like him, Sadie. He's a nice polite boy, never looking for trouble. Although he's sort of been walking into it lately."

BILL EVERETT and Soapy Sanders had just come in from the alley through the side door, which was close to the mechanical piano. They were a little drunk; but not so much so that they missed Tray's nasty tone of voice. They glanced at Tony.

"Just a nice boy," Tray insisted.

Sadie began to look uneasily at Tray. Sometimes Tray scared her. He was pretty tough.

"Never mind now," she said. "Let the fellow alone. Drink your drink."

Tray got up suddenly. His face was flushed, and his mouth set in a hard line.

Tony saw him coming and turned slightly and kept his right hand low. Tony was not worried. He had boxed ever since he could remember.

"I'm not looking for trouble," said Tony mildly.

"I know. I know," said Tray. "Just step outside a minute. I want to speak to you."

Bill and Soapy exchanged a glance. Soapy winked. Sadie jumped up.

"Stop him," she said in a loud voice. "Somebody'll get hurt. Oh, Tray, why must you always—"

But Tony and Tray had gone out the side door into the alley.

A loud murmur arose from the crowd in the bar. Bill and Soapy stepped over to the door and stood looking out.

"We'll let him handle it," said Soapy, "unless they gang him or something. What's up?"

"Something about Jewel," said Bill. "I heard one of the boys say something about it tonight. Tray's drunk, and he's been talking. Kind of sweet on Jewel, I guess. He's afraid this new guy will beat his time."

"Whew!" said Soapy. "I don't like the sound of this. This may turn into something. Pop's funny that way."

"I know," said Bill. "Remember Bud Brown?"

"Didn't he look natural?" said Soapy with a grin. Bud Brown had been asking for it for years around the tracks; Pop had finally given it to him. "You know, it's a funny thing, but this Kentuckian's something like Bud Brown."

"Now that's a sweet thought," said Bill. . . .

Outside in the alley, Tony was standing with his hands hanging loosely, watching every move Tray made. The light was dim, but Tony could see well enough.

"I don't like you much, you know," Tray was saying. "There's something funny about you. None of the boys like you much. Even Pop aint sold. What's the idea, sonny? Why don't you go back where you come from? You don't belong here. Or maybe there's a little unfinished business back home. Maybe the laws would like to know where you are."

"Maybe."

Tray moved a little closer. In the bar the crowd could not control its curiosity. Several men brushed Bill and Soapy aside, and the crowd poured out into the alley and surrounded the two men.

"Anyway," said Tray, glancing at the crowd with a grin, "I got something I want to give you. Just a little present, you understand."

Shifting his weight quickly, Tray swung viciously with his right fist. Tony lifted his left arm in an orthodox movement of defense, and easily stopped the blow. Bill grinned at Soapy.

"Calm yourself, McKinnel," said Tony, slowly losing his temper. "I haven't done anything to you."

Tray said nothing. He snarled and struck with his right again, then his left. Tony blocked both blows, and gave Tray a push.

"Quit it," he said sharply.

Several men in the crowd snickered. Tray glanced at them savagely; then he rushed Tony, swinging viciously. Tony was thrown off balance, surprised by the violence of the attack, and before he could get set, Tray's right fist landed just above his left ear, staggering him.

"Wow!" said somebody. "Look at that Kentuckian step."

Tony tied Tray up, then, pushing him away suddenly, hit him with a short left uppercut and followed it with a hard overhand right. Tray gasped and backed up. Tony followed him, grabbed him into a clinch; then he pushed him away and hit him with both hands again. Tray fell to his knees and stayed there for a moment, shaking his head.

The horsemen stared at each other. Somebody whistled briefly.

Tony stood waiting. There was a movement in the crowd; men were brushed aside; then two burly motorcycle policemen pushed their way into the circle. One of them glanced at Tray, who was just getting up.

"Come on," the cop shouted savagely. "Break it up. Break it up. Where do you guys think you're at? Break it up, now. No more fighting, or I'll run the whole bunch in."

Ignoring the police, Tray hesitated, then said:

"Tough, eh?"

"No," said Tony. "But I never lead with my right."

The men snickered.

"All right," said the cop, "break it up."

"Yes," said Tray, "you're pretty tough. But I know how to equalize things. I got a little equalizer at home."

"Quiet, Tray," hissed one of his friends. "Don't you see the laws!"

Tray shrugged and went back indoors.

The cop stared at Tony.

"You was doing all right, buddy. Get home and stay out of trouble. Brother, what a night! What a night!"

Bill and Soapy came over to Tony.

"He needed it," said Bill. "He's kind of got the boys scared around here and presumes on it. He's a bad one, though, Tony. You watch him."

RED'S face was pale and haggard; his eyes were bloodshot; but he was whistling as he finished the morning's work. Lasses, tired from having cooled out Stoughton Bottle and Prester John after their workouts, found himself a place in the sun and flopped down in the tall grass. Tony, a little heavy-eyed from lack of sleep, hung up the bridles in the tackroom, then came out and slumped into the deck-chair and sat gazing off vaguely toward the grandstand.

"Well," said Red, sitting down near by, "another day, another dollar. Boy, what a head I got! Did you get swacked last night, Tony? You look kind of dinky."

"No," said Tony, lazily, "I had a few drinks. I didn't get much sleep. Got in late."

"I slept on the floor in the house," said Red with a grin, "and I'm sore all over." Jewel came around the end of the barn. They all sat down. Tony took out a cigarette and lit it, offering Red one. Red refused and got out a corncob pipe.

"There's an article in today's paper about Arkansaw Traveler," said Jewel. "It's nice, and Pop is tickled to death. He said some photographers were coming over to take some pictures, and they wanted me here. Going to give us a write-up."

"Well, well!" said Red. "Maybe they'll want my picture too. I looked after the old horse ever since Pop got him."

They sat talking. After while Red got up and went into the tackroom. He left the door open, and Tony and Jewel saw him putting water on his unruly red hair and trying to brush it flat.

"It's got him already," said Tony. "That's fame for you."

Presently Pop came hurrying across the vacant lot from the house. The side pockets of his coat were stuffed with newspapers.

"Anybody showed up yet?" he called.

"Not yet," said Jewel.

Pop came up to them and sat down. He turned to look at Red, his eyebrows raised in surprise.

"What you done to yourself, Red? You look like a skinned rat."

"He put water on his hair," said Jewel. "He wants to look pretty for the camera."

Red flushed. Pop bent down to laugh.

A car drove slowly along the road in front of the barn. It stopped and a man leaned out.

"Where'll I find Mr. Benedict, folks?"

"Right here. I'm Mr. Benedict."

"This is it, Ed. Come on."

The two men got out of the car and came across the grass toward the barn, one of them carrying a camera. They were young and energetic-looking.

"Howdy, Mr. Benedict," said Ed. "We want some pictures and a little story. Great race the old boy ran. Clem and I just bet five bucks on him in the future book. He's twenty-to-one now. Is this the granddaughter?"

Jewel stood up.

"Yeah," said Pop. "Her name's Jewel McMahon. Aint she pretty?"

"Pop!" said Jewel.

"No modesty now," said Ed with a grin. "You *are* mighty pretty. Mighty pretty. Eh, Clem?"

The photographer was paying no attention. He was staring at Tony.

"Hey," said Ed.

"Yes, yes," said Clem. "Very pretty." He called Ed to one side; they whispered for a minute; then they both stared at Tony.

"Excuse me," said Clem. "Haven't I seen you some place before?"

"Maybe," said Tony, shrugging.

"Excuse me. Isn't your name Bowman?"

"No," said Tony, smiling. "My name's Smith. I work for Mr. Benedict. Groom."

"Oh." Clem looked at Ed; they both shrugged. "Well," said Clem, "let's get on with it. Mr. Benedict, will you give Ed the straight dope? How you got the horse and all that? And how your granddaughter kind of calmed him down or whatever you call it. Ought to make a great story. This Arkansaw Traveler is going to be the dark horse in the Handicap or I don't know straight-up. It's all over the place. Yes sir. You just give Ed the dope, and I'll take some pictures. Miss McMahon, I want you holding the horse."

"How about me?" said Red.

Clem stared at him.

"You the groom? Oh, we'll have to have your help, I guess. All set, Mr. Benedict."

"I mean, don't I get my picture took?" Red demanded.

Clem struggled with a smile.

"Oh, you'll be in it. Don't worry." He hesitated for a moment; then he turned to Tony. "How about you, Smith? Maybe you can help us out."

Red broke in vehemently.

"Naw. We don't need him. I'm the only one who looks after the champ. I made him what he is, and he wouldn't be nothing if I wasn't around."

"Shut your big mouth, Red," said Pop, suddenly irritated. "They don't want your ugly mug in the paper. They want Jewel's."

Red looked so hurt that Jewel said:

"Why, Pop! Of course they want Arkansaw's handler in the picture."

Pop turned his back and began to talk to Ed, who was taking notes.

LEISURELY Tony sat down in the deck-chair and watched what was going on. Funny, that photographer had recognized him! Well, it didn't matter now, anyway. Barb knew where he was and it would soon be all over the place. He saw Red lead the huge, powerful-looking chestnut horse out of his stall and bring him out into the sunlight. The photographer backed off, and Tony could see that he was afraid of the horse. Tony didn't blame him. The Traveler was the picture of equine ferocity; he dilated his nostrils, rolled his eyes, and kept throwing up his head and stamping; finally he let out a tremendous bellow; and Ed, who was talking to Pop, turned, startled. But when Jewel went over to the horse, he quieted down at once and brushed her face with his soft muzzle.

Red stood near by, sulking. Jewel turned to him.

"You better help me, Red. He might get scared." She smiled at Clem. "He's a man-eater, you know. Very hard to handle."

"Oh," said Clem, "is that so? Very interesting. Yes, you better help her. We'll want you in the picture, anyway."

Red moved into the group with alacrity, grinning.

Tony smiled to himself. A pretty girl, Jewel; and a smart one. . . .

Presently an argument developed.

"Well," Clem was saying, "we could use that bench over there. You could sit in front of the horse, or else you could put one foot on it. Make a nice picture."

"But why?" Jewel insisted. "I think that's silly. Anyway, you've got enough pictures."

"But Miss McMahon, we want something with a boot to it. A horse is a horse. But a pretty girl is something everybody wants to look at, even women. Now if you could just sit there and cross your legs, or else put one foot up on the bench to give the picture a little boot. Get the idea?"

"I get it," said Jewel. "No, thanks."

Tony lowered his head and shook with silent laughter. Jewel felt outraged, and it seemed very funny to him. Finally Clem shrugged and gave up. Red led the Traveler proudly back to his stall and slapped him on the rump.

Pop talked on and on.

"Yeah, yeah," said Ed finally. "I got enough. Thank you, Mr. Benedict."

When the two newspaper men were settled in their car, Ed said:

"Whew! That old bore gave me enough dope to fill a book. I couldn't stop him. What a life!"

"Yeah," said Clem, sourly; "and that little blonde twist—nifty number, at that! Look, Ed, if that big swipe in the tweed coat isn't a ringer for Tony Bowman, I'll eat him."

Ed was driving down the road very fast now, but he jammed on his brakes so suddenly that Clem almost went through the windshield.

"By God," Ed cried. "I got so befuddled listening to the old guy talk, I forgot all about that! We'll go back to the village and sort of feel around. Maybe we'll get hold of something. Bowman disappeared at least three months ago, and nobody's seen him since."

"Hell," said Clem. "That's him, all right."

"I'll phone the boss."

Chapter Nine

AFTER lunch Red went into the tackroom to take a nap, and Tony and Pop pulled their chairs out under a pepper tree and sat smoking. It was warm and sunny and very clear. Pop reread for the tenth time the newspaper story about the Arkansaw Traveler. "Cast-off Startles Race Fans With Smashing Victory." Then he sighed and put the paper away.

"Tony," he said. "I want to talk to you."

Tony roused himself. "All right, Pop."

"I hear there was a little trouble uptown last night." Pop watched Tony's face carefully.

"Oh, not much."

"You must've done a bit of fighting in your time, Tony. I always heard Tray was pretty tough."

"I've boxed ever since I was a kid," said Tony, glancing warily at Pop. "He doesn't know how to fight."

"Bill Everett said you only hit him a few times, and he went down shaking his head."

"He ran into a couple."

"You aint much for tooting your own horn, are you, Tony? Most of the guys around here would be yelling their heads off." Pop hesitated, then asked casually: "Little disagreement?"

"Yes. He was tight. Got very offensive."

"You hardly know the fellow, Tony. What could you two disagree about?"

"Well, he took a dislike to me the first time he saw me. Remember? The first morning after I got here. He got nasty in the bar. You were there."

"Yeah; I remember. Didn't have nothing to do with Jewel, did it?"

Their eyes met. Pop's were hard and inquiring.

"Of course not. No connection whatever."

Pop sighed and stared at the grass.

"I'm getting old, Tony. I feel pretty good and all that; I see and hear all right, and I get around like a man half my age. But I been living a long time. . . . Look—I get pretty worried about Jewel sometimes. I aint going to be here much longer to look after her, and she'd just be lost if anything happened to me. I don't talk about it much. Jewel would kid me if I did. But I think about it a good deal. She's a real responsibility to me. That's why I'm asking you these questions. I don't want her name bandied around no race-tracks." Pop looked up quickly; his eyes snapped. "And if it is, I'll put a stop to it one way or another."

Tony sensed Pop's ruthlessness in such a matter. He saw the menace in those dark old-young eyes.

"Oh, I don't think you need worry about that, Pop," said Tony. "Jewel's a fine girl. Everybody knows it."

"Where did you two go last night?"

"I took her to a very nice place in Hollywood."

"Anybody see you?"

Tony hesitated. He didn't know just what to say. He hated to lie to Pop.

"At the café, you mean? No. All strangers."

"Hollywood was all right, Tony. Good idea. Jewel needs to get out. She's a young girl. She ought to have more fun. But I don't know. . . . Look, Tony: We like you; but there's a lot of funny stories going around. You know how it is around a race-track. Or maybe you don't. . . . Tony, you got any ideas in regard to Jewel?"

"How do you mean?"

"How come you wanted to take her out?"

"I see. Well, because I like her. I wanted her to have a good time."

"Did you say you were a divorced man?"

"Yes."

Pop lowered his head and sat stroking his face, thinking. Finally he said:

"We don't know much about you. I don't know if I ought to let you stay around here or not, considering everything. What's the idea?"

"I like it here. I want to learn to look after race-horses and train them. . . . Pop, I made a mess of my life. I'm trying to get it straightened out. I'm trying to find out what I'm intended to be. . . . But don't worry about Jewel. I haven't any wrong ideas, if that's what's worrying you."

"All right," said Pop. "I'll take your word for it."

There was a pause. An airplane flew over them, droning high up, flashing silver in the sun; it disappeared in the direction of Pasadena. Pop looked up, then pointed to the buzzards circling above the grove of live-oaks.

"Them birds. Black as hell and damned ugly-looking. I wish they wasn't always flying around like that. Red says they're always hopeful. But he aint seventy years old."

Turning, Tony saw a swanky gray roadster coming along the road toward the barn. It stopped and a woman got out.

"Mrs. Westermark," said Pop. "If she thinks she's going to talk me out of the old horse, she's crazy. These rich people! They think they can get anything they want."

Mrs. Westermark, looking very handsome and sleek in a brick-colored pull-over sweater and brown jodhpurs, came toward them across the grass, swinging a riding-crop and smiling.

Tony and Pop got up.

"Taking it easy, I see," she said with one of her dazzling professional smiles. She turned and glanced at Arkansaw Traveler, who had his head out of the half-door, sniffing the air. "Hello, Beautiful. Still as naughty as ever?"

Pop glanced at Tony; his eyes saying: "Aint she silly?" Then he offered Mrs. Westermark the deck-chair.

"Excuse me," said Tony, standing with his hat in his hand. "I suppose you want to talk to Mr. Benedict."

"We can talk with you here. Nothing secret. Sit down, both of you. What did you say your name was? Did you say you were working for Pop?"

Tony looked at her solemnly. "Yes, I work for Mr. Benedict. Groom. My name's Tony Smith."

Pop looked on uncomprehendingly, wondering why Mrs. Westermark should be taking such an interest in a swipe; she had plenty of her own.

"How's Mr. Westermark?" Pop asked.

"He's fine. He had to go up to San Francisco on business. I drove him to the airport."

"Coming back for the Saturday races, aint he?"

"He'll be back tomorrow."

TONY felt her eyes on his face. He crossed his legs, lit a cigarette, glanced at her. She looked away. Tony thought: "Am I imagining things? Or is she giving me an opening? That would be very funny. Why, Barb fairly worships her—from a distance of course. Thinks she's the smartest woman in America, or words to that effect. This is good!"

Pop kept glancing at Mrs. Westermark, wondering when she'd open up on him. Finally she said:

"Pop, I told you I was coming over here to take a lesson in how to roll a cigarette cowboy-style with one hand."

"Well, now," said Pop. "I don't know." He was a little flustered, and began to search frantically through his pockets for his makings. Finally he pulled out the tobacco, but couldn't find any cigarette papers. "Just a minute," he said. "Excuse me. I'll be right back." He hurried off toward the tackroom.

Mrs. Westermark turned to Tony.

"Have you been with Pop long?"

"Not very long. I'm learning the business."

"Oh. I thought you didn't look like an ordinary groom. You should really be with a large stable. You'd get more experience that way. If you'd like to go East, go see my head trainer, Bob Carter. He's always taking men on."

"Thank you," said Tony. "Very kind of you."

POP came hurrying back. Sitting down and laughing, he quickly went through his routine, and flushed with pleasure when Mrs. Westermark cried in astonishment at his expertness.

"Looks simple," said Pop. "But it aint." He pulled his chair up close to Mrs. Westermark's and began to show her how it was done.

Tony looked on in silence. From time to time Mrs. Westermark glanced up at him, smiling slightly. But she made no progress at all with her cigarette-rolling. Finally she cried:

"Oh, it's simply impossible. It can't be done. And it looks so easy—"

Two men appeared suddenly around the corner of the barn, walking very fast. One was Tray McKinnel; the other was a stranger, a tough-looking little fat man in a derby hat.

"There he is," said Tray, pointing. "That guy with the curly hair."

Tony and Pop both jumped up. Mrs. Westermark sat staring in bewilderment.

"Well," said the little man, "I finally found you, Mr. Bowman."

"My name's Smith," said Tony.

Tray laughed. "Your name's mud," he said. "They caught up with you now. I always figured they would."

"Excuse me, Mr. Bowman," said the little man. "No use kidding me. Your wife knows you're here. Several people do."

"Say," cried Pop, "what is this? You, Tray! What's the idea bringing a law after Tony? That's a little out of your line, aint it?"

Tray flushed. "Sure it is," he said. "But I was just thinking about you and Jewel. I always did say the guy was a phony. I wasn't going to stand around and see him put nothing over on you, Pop."

"I'll 'tend to my own business without any of your help," cried Pop. "Getting a law after a guy! Now that's really nice!" He turned to the little man. "What's Tony done?"

"Done? Nothing. I'm Murkan of the Murkan Agency. Private detective. Mr. Bowman's wife's looking for him, that's all."

Pop laughed. Tray stood looking on with his mouth slightly open.

"I thought you was an honest-to-God dick!" he said. "I thought you wanted this guy."

"I don't tell everybody my business," said Murkan with a shrug. "Mr. Bowman, your wife wants to talk to you. She's at the Sierra Madre apartments, waiting."

Tony hesitated. He glanced at Mrs. Westermark. She was smiling at him. He shrugged.

"All right," he said. "I'll go see her right away."

"I'm going too," said Mrs. Westermark, getting up. "May I drive you up town, Mr. Bowman?"

"Yes, thanks."

Tony turned to Pop. "I'll be back later."

Pop was still a little surprised by the turn of events; he stood plucking at his under lip.

"Many thanks for your lesson," said Mrs. Westermark. "But I'm afraid it's hopeless."

"Oh, that's all right," said Pop with an expansive gesture. "Come back again. Better luck next time."

On the way uptown, Mrs. Westermark said:

"You never had me fooled. Not after the first five minutes, anyway."

"I'm afraid I look a little slack for a swipe. Or something."

"Are you serious about the horse business, or were you just hiding?"

"No. I'm serious. I want to learn. I like it."

"Your wife?"

"We're divorced."

They rode in silence for a few minutes. Finally Mrs. Westermark said:

"Where is this place?"

Tony told her, but said: "It's out of your way. I'll get out right here."

"It's no trouble. I've nothing to do."

Much to Tony's amusement, Barbara was sitting in her car, which was parked in front of the apartment house. Mrs. Westermark drew up beside Barbara's car and stopped. Tony got out quickly.

"Good-by, Mrs. Westermark," he said. "Thank you so much."

"No trouble at all. I hope you'll be able to iron out all your difficulties."

"Thank you."

She drove off. Tony turned. Barbara was staring at him in bewilderment.

"Hello," said Tony.

"Who was that woman?"

"Mrs. Westermark."

"What? Mrs. Loui:— Of course. She has a stable of horses. I thought I recognized— What are you doing with her?" Barbara was more than slightly incoherent. Tony burst out laughing.

"Oh, I get around."

"You seem to!"

Barbara turned and spoke briefly to Sam, her negro chauffeur, who was grinning at Tony; then she said:

"We'll go up to Vance's. He's up there now. Taking a bath or something. So I waited here."

"How are you, Barbara? You're looking fine."

"I'll survive, I guess."

They went into the apartment-house, and up in the automatic elevator in silence. Just as Tony was going to put his key in the lock, Vance, dressed to go out, opened the door from within.

"Ah," he said, "I thought I'd get away before you got here, Tony."

"Don't let us run you away from your own place," said Tony.

"Don't worry about that. Anyway, I've got business. I haven't had lunch yet, and I can get a race program at the restaurant in a few minutes. Now you children run in and play, but don't play too rough. You don't have to worry about me for the rest of the afternoon."

Vance winked broadly.

"Please!" said Barbara with mock modesty. "After all, we're not married any more."

"Does that really matter so much?" said Vance, solemnly; then he laughed. "Good-by. See you later. Let me know how the conference comes out. I like you both pretty well, and I'm sort of neutral."

WHEN Vance had gone, Tony and Barbara went into the apartment and shut the door.

"What a place!" said Barbara with a shudder. "How does he stand it?"

"Oh," said Tony indifferently, sitting down on the lounge and stretching out his long legs, "it's not so bad. I sleep in a stable."

"So I hear." Barbara stared at Tony for a long time; then she sat down across from him. "What's the matter, Tony—are you losing all the sense you ever had, or is it that girl?"

"You would say that. And on the other hand, I never did have much sense. Anyway, what do you care? You're rid of me. Why don't you stay where you belong? Why come running after me?"

"I felt sort of responsible when you disappeared like that."

"Morally responsible?"

"All right, Tony. Rub it in. But I do feel responsible. We had such a marvelous time together, even if we did finally break up. We always were pals. Good Lord, I didn't know what you might have done. You kept getting so terribly drunk, then you just vanished. They even dragged the lake for you."

Tony laughed. "Now that was a brilliant idea."

"Laugh. But you don't seem to realize what awful shape you were in."

"I realize it now. I was at the end of my rope when I got here. But Arrento tranquilizes me. I like it; I like the horses, always did. I like the life, and I'm going to stick to it."

"You can't do that, Tony. Why, you'll disgrace everybody. Why—"

"What was that last remark?"

Barbara flushed slightly.

"All right. Let it go. I'm not proud of myself. I made a mistake. Everybody makes mistakes. And you, Tony! What a great comfort you were! Why, you didn't know I was around. For over a year you hardly spoke half a dozen words a day to me. I'm human. I like to be admired. I—"

"None better."

Barbara flared up.

"Well, you can go to hell. I don't have to make excuses to you. If you don't like—" She stopped herself with an effort, realizing how inappropriate this outburst was. "All right, Tony. Let's forget it. It's over and done with."

"That's what I say."

THERE was a long pause. Barbara got up and stood looking out the window at the little California town spread out below her in the sunshine. Finally Tony spoke.

"I can't figure out what you're doing here, Barb. What do you want, anyway?"

She turned and sat down. "I tell you, I feel responsible. I don't want to see you wreck your life. Everybody's talking. They all blame me."

"Everybody! You mean a couple of dozen stuffed shirts who don't amount to a damn. Everybody! And as for wrecking my life, as you call it, it was wrecked a long time ago. I'm just getting it straightened out."

"Being chambermaid to a horse, and sleeping in a stable! That's too funny. I don't believe it. You're either crazy, or you're after that girl. You can't fool me. She thinks you're wonderful. I can tell. A woman always can."

"She thinks I'm a lunatic. She's got a boy friend."

"One of those leather-necked horsemen, probably, with straw in his hair. No wonder she prefers you."

Tony mixed two whisky-and-sodas and gave Barbara one. They drank. Finally Barbara spoke.

"Seriously, Tony, what are you going to do with yourself?"

"Follow the horses. I was always happy around horses. I used to love the ranch, till the old boy ordered me off. You know, Barbara, I'm thirty years old. It's time I stopped kidding myself. All my life, almost even since I can remember, I've been up against one thing: I never could fit in. At school I was a wild and woolly Californian to those desiccated Easterners. They didn't like me, and I didn't like them. They thought I wasn't quite nice. That Santa Mentina bunch were just like the Easterners, only not quite so bad. I struck them as too crude and too simple, and somehow very funny. They were always laughing at me. . . . I went in business with my cousin. I couldn't stand those Rotarians; they couldn't stand me. I couldn't make a romance out of gouging out nickels. They thought I was no good. Then I went into politics. That delighted the old boy. He got behind me and I held office before I was twenty-eight years old. I was the wonder boy. And the same thing happened. In a week I was an outsider. I was shushed every time I opened my mouth. The newspapers made fun of me. And so on. See what I mean? I was always on the outside looking in. I never really belonged."

"Well," said Barbara, staring at Tony, "I never knew you had that in you. I didn't know you could be serious long enough even to think of such things. Oh, Tony, it's just your imagination. Don't you see?"

"It isn't my imagination. Because now I'm happy."

"I knew it was that girl."

Tony gritted his teeth. "The girl has nothing to do with it. I've found my level, that's all. I am common, and that's the truth of it. I like horses and racing, and living from hand to mouth, and loafing most of the day, and doing as I please without wondering if the Beresfords will think it's proper! And that's that. Now I'll have another drink."

"Mix me a stiff one."

Tony mixed the drinks, and they sat sipping them in silence. After a while, Barbara said:

"I'm not going to marry Tod."

"Why not?"

"I just don't want to."

"He's got plenty of money."

"So have I. Tony, do you need money? I'll give you some if you do."

Tony was touched. He leaned forward and patted Barbara on the shoulder.

"Thanks. That's one thing I always liked about you. You never gave a damn about money."

Barbara looked at Tony for a moment; then she smiled.

"Remember when we lost all our money at Caliente, and they wouldn't take your check?"

"And I couldn't find anybody to borrow from? Remember the look on the manager's face when I told him I'd wash dishes for him?"

Barbara laughed.

"I was never so embarrassed in my life. Tony, you fool!"

They sat looking at each other guardedly.

"Tony," said Barbara, "don't make up your mind about anything yet. You stay with the horses if you like, but let me see you from time to time. I'm lonesome. Really, I am. I'm not just—"

There was a knock at the door. They heard vague noises in the hallway. They glanced at each other; then Barbara shrugged, and Tony walked over and opened the door a little. The hall was filled with reporters.

"Now wait a minute," said Tony, holding up his hands in protest.

"Excuse me, Mr. Bowman. We're looking for a story. Can you help us out?"

"Open the door, Eddie. Give it a shove. I want to get this picture—"

Barbara came and stood looking out.

"It's his wife," said somebody.

"His ex-wife. It's Barbara Tomlinson. Open that door wider. I want to get—"

Flash-bulbs flared in the hallway. Tony turned to Barbara and shrugged.

The reporters began questioning him.

"Excuse me, Mr. Bowman. What are your plans?"

"I haven't any plans."

"How come you did the run-out?"

"I wanted a vacation."

"Any statement at this time?"

"None, except I never felt better in my life."

"Excuse me. Are you and your—your— Is this a reconciliation?"

"Not exactly. Just a friendly meeting. All right, boys. That's all. More in our next."

Tony tried to close the door. But there were protests. A couple of reporters kept him from closing the door while a few more pictures were taken. Then the reporters dashed off down the hallway, jostling and elbowing.

"We're famous," said Tony.

"Pictures in the paper and everything," said Barbara. "I'm compromised."

"It's not the first time."

Barbara shrugged and sat down, picking up her drink.

"Will you take me to dinner tonight, Tony?"

He hesitated. "I guess so."

"You're just dying to, aren't you?"

"It might be fun. Just once. But I can't stay out late," he said with a laugh. "I have to get up at daybreak."

IT was after nine o'clock before Tony could get away from Barbara. They had had dinner at the Arroyo Seco and stayed a while to dance. Barbara seemed so happy and so full of fun that Tony didn't have the heart to leave her abruptly. After all, Barbara was a very good-looking woman and full of zest. But gradually he began to understand that Barbara was deliberately showing herself at her best. He grew wary; soon he left.

Tony took a taxi to the main corner of Arrento; then he got out and walked the rest of the way. It was a fine cool night. Tony caught an aromatic whiff from the stables: a mixture of horses, saddle leather, liniment and fresh straw. He felt a sudden glow. This was the life for him. He knew it. It was something stronger than reason, and nobody was going to talk him out of it.

He took the path through the vacant lot. There was a lantern burning in the tackroom. He saw Red bent over a letter, forming each word with his lips as he read.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," said Red, glancing up. "See Pop yet?"

"No. I thought I'd wait till morning. I'm tired. I want to sleep."

"He's waiting for you. You better go talk to him."

Tony hesitated. "Anything the matter?"

Red laughed. "Look, Mr. Bowman," he said, "why don't you quit kidding us? You don't need to hide out no more. They caught up with you. What's the idea?"

"I like it here, that's all."

Red turned back to his letter. "You go talk to Pop. It aint none of my business."

"All right," said Tony.

"And say: if I don't see you any more, why, so long. I think you're a pretty good guy, Mr. Bowman. I like you."

Tony began to understand. "Thanks, Red. I like you, too. Well, good-by."

Tony turned and started back toward the house through the tall grass of the vacant lot. Red called after him:

"Hear the latest?"

"No."

"Pop's going to run the old horse in the San Basilio Handicap on Saturday. Can you beat it? It's just a prep for Kubla Khan. Seven furlongs. But Pop's going after him."

"I hope you win."

"I hope so too. But we couldn't get no jockey but Slim Darrel. Johnny's going to ride Mammon for Harry Van Senckle. I'm already so worked up I can't hold this letter still."

Red seemed to be talking out of a remote past. Tony felt pretty sure now that Pop was going to ask him to leave. His heart sank.

AT Tony's knock, Pop's door was opened immediately. Pop was in his shirt sleeves, with one suspender hanging down.

"Hello, Mr. Bowman," said Pop, smiling slightly. "Come in and have a seat."

"Hello, Pop," said Tony, sitting down and stretching out his legs. "I wish I was still Tony."

Pop shrugged and handed Tony an evening paper, then he sat down and began to roll a cigarette. Tony winced slightly. There on the front page was an asinine picture of himself smirking and making some silly gesture; Barbara had her right hand on his shoulder and was smiling straight into the camera like a movie actress. Above the picture was a caption: *"Reconciliation?"* Tony shook his head and glanced down at the article.

> A. T. (Tony) Bowman, whose disappearance three months ago startled fashionable Santa Mentina, was discovered at noon today at the Arrento apartment of his friend Vance Dunning, also of Santa Mentina. He would make no statement except to say that he had needed a vacation. His former wife, Barbara Tomlinson Bowman, was with him. They denied that they had been reconciled, and claimed that their meeting was merely a friendly one. Bowman, scion of a family famous in early California history, entered politics at an early age and held in succession several responsible offices. At the age of twenty-eight he was already known as the "wonder boy." He made the front pages at that time by his campaign against the new Oriental Exclusion Act, and was defeated for re-election as a result. There is a rumor that he will buy a stable of runners and. . . .

"I see," said Tony, tossing the paper to the floor.

"I knew there was a nigger in the woodpile," said Pop, smiling slightly, and drawing on his cigarette. "You never looked like no swipe to me, nor no bum either, if we did find you laying out in the rain dead drunk."

"What's on your mind, Pop?"

Pop stroked his face.

"Well, Mr. Bowman, you can't stay here, that's all. I like you. Red likes you. Everybody likes you but Tray McKinnel. But it just aint in the cards. You can see that, can't you?"

"I guess so."

"Don't look so sad about it. Good God, Mr. Bowman, what would a guy like you be doing laying around a stable? And there's another angle: Jewel."

"I see what you mean."

"You're a decent guy, Mr. Bowman. I know that. But you couldn't make people believe you was just staying around here on account of the horses."

There was a pause. Tony glanced around him at the poverty-stricken little room. Staring at the floor, he sat remembering his first breakfast here and how sweet and pretty Jewel had looked in her house-dress, and how nice they had all been to him.

"Well," he said, finally, "thanks for everything you did for me, Pop. I had a good time here while it lasted."

"Don't thank me. I ought to thank you. If it hadn't been for that sixty dollars you loaned us that morning, we'd've had a sweet time holding that squarehead off. You sure saved our bacon."

"I hear you're going to run him Saturday against Kubla Khan."

"Yes. I don't know if we can beat that kind in a sprint, but they got to kidding me uptown, and I lost my temper. It don't matter one way or another. It'll just mean another race under his belt, and he needs them before the big Handicap."

"Well, I'll be there to see him run."

"He'll give you a run for your money. They're underrating that old horse around here."

"Well, I guess I'd better be going. Where's Jewel?"

"She's uptown with Tray. They went to a movie." Pop hesitated. "He's trying to marry Jewel. I don't know if I like that or not."

"Do you know much about him?"

"A good deal. I been around with him for years. He's a right good horseman. Not tops, but he knows a thing or two."

"I'm prejudiced, I guess. I don't like him."

"Well, it's up to Jewel. If she wants to marry him, why, that's her business. I'd sure like to see her married. I could breathe a lot easier. A girl is a big responsibility, especially around a race-track."

"You're right. Or any place else."

"Tray never struck me as the marrying kind. He's thirty some, and never been hitched yet. But Jewel said he got to talking about it at dinner tonight. He was here to dinner. I was uptown."

Tony said nothing. He stood staring at the floor. He had never been so reluctant to leave any place in his life. Before he could speak, the door opened, and Jewel came in, followed by Tray McKinnel.

They both stopped short at the sight of Tony. Finally, Tray forced a smile.

"Hello, Mr. Bowman," he said.

"Hello," said Tony.

"You sure put it over on us," said Tray.

Tony ignored him.

"Hello, Jewel," he said.

Jewel lowered her eyes. She seemed agitated.

"Hello, Tony."

"I'm glad I'm still Tony to you. Everybody's been calling me Mister."

"You'll always be Tony to me," said Jewel.

Pop and Tray glanced at her. Tony sensed the tension in the room. He walked to the door, which Tray had left open. Jewel's attitude surprised him. Did he really mean something to her?

"Well, I'll be going." He shook hands with Pop and pointedly ignored Tray, who had made a half-hearted move toward him; then he turned to Jewel. "Good-by, Jewel. I guess I can't be a swipe, after all. Too many difficulties."

"I'll go out on the porch with you," said Jewel; "I want to talk to you a minute."

POP shrugged, turned away. Tray's face hardened, but he said nothing. Tony and Jewel stepped out onto the porch, and she closed the door after them. Tony, wanting to get away now, shook hands with her briefly.

"I'll never forget how kind you were to me," said Jewel. "That night in Hollywood was the best time I ever had in my life."

Tony forced a laugh. "We did have fun, didn't we?"

"Are you going to get married again?"

"No. She was just worried about me. She was paying a detective to try and find me."

"Pop thinks you'd better go. He thinks people might talk."

"He's right. Jewel, are you going to marry Tray McKinnel?"

There was a pause. "I might. He asked me today. I was sure surprised."

"Why should you be?"

"Well, I just can't imagine Tray married."

"Think it over. Give yourself plenty of time."

Jewel laughed a little nervously.

"Oh," she said, "it isn't much use thinking things over. You never get any place. Some day I may just run off with Tray and get married. He's very good-looking, don't you think?"

"I suppose so. Well, Jewel, I'm going to run along. It's been nice, knowing you."

"Tony," she said quickly, "won't I see you any more? Are you going away?"

"I don't know. I haven't made up my mind."

"But you'll be around for a few days, won't you? I could see you in the grandstand."

"Jewel, I don't think Pop wants me to see you any more."

"Well, then," said Jewel, "kiss me good-by."

Her arms were around his neck before he knew what had happened. Her mouth, sweet and cool, lightly touched his lips. She drew away quickly.

"Are you crying, Jewel?" he demanded, a little shaken.

"No," she said. "Not yet."

She turned and was gone. Tony heard the door slam shut. He started down the street in a daze, shuffling along, not looking where he was going.

"I don't know," thought Tony. "I don't know at all. I wish Barbara had never found me. Then I'd know what I was doing."

He found Vance lying on the lounge, studying the Racing Form.

"I'm canned," Tony said, sitting down heavily.

Vance glanced at him. "You looked like you'd seen a ghost. What's up?"

"You tell me."

"Barbara's been putting on the pressure. I can tell from that drawn look."

"What's happened between Barbara and Tod?"

"Don't ask me. He's got it bad; that's all I know. Too bad, maybe. Barbara gets bored very easily."

"That's probably it. She's bored. At least I never bored her."

Vance laughed.

"The circle's drawing in. I know the signs. You'd better ship for China."

"Vance, I'll sleep on the couch tonight. I'm too tired to go look for a place."

"Help yourself. No trouble getting you a place. There's an empty apartment across the hall if you're not satisfied here."

Tony slumped down in his chair and put his hat over his face. In a few moments he was asleep. Vance glanced at him, shook his head, then went back to his Racing Form.

Chapter Ten

TONY was late. But he was in no hurry. He got out of the taxi leisurely and tipped both the driver and the doorman with some of Vance's money (he had not only borrowed Vance's evening clothes, but a hundred dollars as well); then he strolled up the winding palm-bordered walk which led from the street to the hotel lobby, enjoying the cool night air, and pulling contentedly on a cigarette.

Tony had had about three drinks too many. He felt fine. All afternoon he had been dreading this party, but now he wondered why. Barbara was going home; a few of her friends were giving a little party for her. Tomorrow he could settle down, minus Barbara's disturbing presence, and really make up his mind what he intended to do with himself.

He crossed the lobby to the supper-room and asked the head-waiter where Mr. Chadsman's party was sitting. But Barbara had seen him. He saw her coming, hurrying across the crowded room. He grudgingly admitted to himself that she looked wonderful. Her dark-red hair, carefully waved, shone under the lights; her pretty mouth was curved in a pleasant smile; her eyes were bright; and her slender figure was encased in a tight black low-cut evening gown, which made her look slimmer than she actually was, and younger. Why, she hardly looked a day older than Jewel.

"We'd given you up, Tony," she said with a laugh. "I see you haven't changed a bit. Vance said you'd either gone to the wrong hotel or didn't know the day of the week."

"Vance!"

"Surprise!" cried Barbara. "Vance has been here for half an hour. Oh, don't look so amazed. He borrowed some clothes some place. He didn't want you to know he was coming. That was my idea. I thought you'd be pleased."

"Say," said Tony, "who's giving this party?"

"Well, nobody would give me a party, so I'm giving myself one."

"But you told me—"

"Oh, don't be such an idiot! I was afraid you wouldn't come if you knew I was giving the party. Come on. We can't stand here."

Tony shrugged, and guided Barbara in between the tables. On a far-away stage an orchestra struck up. People began to drift out onto the little dance-floor.

"Imagine Vance!" he said. "That rat. I didn't know he could be so two-faced."

"Oh, you'll learn," said Barbara with a laugh. "I'll admit I had to work on him a little. But you know me!"

"Yes," said Tony. "Quite well. You have a way with you, as the fellow says."

BARBARA pouted. "Now don't get nasty. I'm leaving in the morning. You won't see me any more. I may go to Honolulu next week. Sis wants to go."

"How is that drunken sister of yours? Still a two-quart girl?"

"Oh, Tony. Try to be nice. And as a matter of fact, you've been drinking yourself. Now don't insult anybody. I know you! That's one reason I wanted Vance along. You'll listen to him."

Barbara's table was behind a potted palm on a little balcony overlooking the supper-room and the dance-floor. Tony saw Vance first. He was sitting twisted around on his chair, waiting for Barbara to come back. His face was an almost apoplectic red above his white shirtfront. Tony glanced at the others, wondering what they made of the whole business. There was Pat Chadsman (who had lately got into horses) and his handsome blonde wife, looking very smart in white satin. And there was an Eloise, a pretty little brunette with an innocent face and big dark eyes, which she could roll very effectively; she was twice divorced, and already had a third victim in tow: Bob Garland, a young man with a lot of money who hardly ever opened his mouth and seemed embarrassed if you addressed him.

"Well," Tony told himself, "the worst is over. Barbara knows a thing or two, evidently. This isn't a bad bunch at all."

"Hello, Tony," said Vance with a grin.

"Hello, you rat!"

"Oh, it's all in fun. Sit down."

"I think you know everybody, don't you, Tony?" said Barbara.

"Yes," said Tony, nodding and smiling. "How are you, Garland? Haven't seen you for a long time?"

"I'm f-fine, thanks," said Garland, flushing. "How—how are you?"

Tony shook hands with Pat Chadsman, who smiled at him ironically.

They all sat down.

"Well," said Chadsman, "so you've returned to civilization."

"Not permanently."

"What is all this nonsense, anyway? One day in the grandstand, Barbara, I called to him and he ran off as if the devil were after him. It was very embarrassing."

Tony smiled.

"I was trying to run away from my past."

"Now, that's a nice remark," said Barbara. She felt the eyes of the other women on her.

"That little girl tried to give me the third degree," laughed Chadsman. "She offered to let me take her to the bar for a drink if I'd tell her about you."

Tony studied Chadsman's face.

"You're not joking? She really offered to drink with you?"

"Of course she did. I gather she was somewhat hot after you, my boy. Some people have all the luck."

"Now that's enough, Pat," said his wife. "A joke's a joke."

Tony stared at the table, thinking about Jewel. That quick, cold kiss; the sobs she had been unable to control. . . . But the whole thing was impossible and ridiculous! Just a girlish crush, if anything.

"She's a very nice girl," said Tony, finally. "She's the sort of girl you don't see any more, and her grandfather's an old-fashioned parent. No nonsense!"

Barbara laughed.

"Tony thinks every girl is nice unless she actually gets blind drunk and offensive, or throws herself wildly at his head. He's rather naïve; don't you think, Vance?"

"Just dumb."

"All right," said Tony, a little sharply. "Let's change the subject. I know what I think, and that's that."

Eloise and Mrs. Chadsman exchanged a glance. Eloise turned to Garland.

"What was that horse you wanted to ask about, Bob? Bob wants to do some betting, but we don't know anything about it, really. Rod Baker told us to ask Pat."

"Ask Tony," said Vance. "He knows everything. I've won over four thousand dollars on his tips. He's an expert."

The waiter arrived with caviar canapes and some salad. They began to eat.

"Pat," said Barbara, finally, "how do you like racing? Is it fun? You've been in long enough now to know whether you're going to like it or not."

"It's damned expensive, and I don't think I've got the right man handling my horses. But it's a really wonderful sport."

"And it keeps him out of trouble," said his wife, shrugging.

Barbara played with her salad, glanced at Tony, who was eating and staring moodily at the table; then she said:

"I'm tired of everything. Since I've been here, I've been thinking. You know, I might buy a few horses. It might be fun."

Tony looked up, startled.

"Oh, Lord," said Chadsman. "Don't rush into it, and don't let anybody around the track get the faintest notion you're thinking of buying in. Every agent and cheap-john in the place will be after you, all with a lot of old rogues and cripples to sell. It's no game for a woman."

"Look at Mrs. Westermark."

"But she's got her husband, and also she's got Bob Carter, one of the best trainers in the business."

"I may have a husband some day," said Barbara with a look at Tony. "Who knows?"

There was a pause. Glances were exchanged. Tony looked at Barbara with interest.

"You're joking, Barb. Why, you always hated horse-racing. I couldn't get you to go near a track."

"Well, I don't care. I'd like to try it. I need some excitement. I'm beginning to think I'd like it."

"But I thought you were going north tomorrow," said Tony finally.

"I am," said Barbara hurriedly. "But I may postpone that trip to Honolulu." She glanced at Tony. The orchestra started up. "Tony," she cried, "let's dance. Listen! 'Pennies from Heaven'—my favorite."

Tony got up. They started for the dance-floor, but the head-waiter interposed.

"There's a gentleman that would like to join the party, Mrs. Bowman. He was a little vague about it, so I thought I'd better speak to you."

"A gentleman? My party's all here."

"I see. Then you don't want—"

COMING toward them, Tony saw Tod Crandall, his face flushed and set in harsh lines. Crandall was a broad-shouldered man, about forty, with blue-black hair and a handsome, strongly masculine face, which was rather coarse. He had divorced his wife for Barbara, and people said he was going steadily to the dogs, though Tony had never noticed any change in him. He never had been worth much.

"It's all right," said Tony to the head-waiter. "Thanks."

"Hello, Tod," said Barbara. "I didn't know you'd come."

"Evidently."

"Now, don't take that tone."

Tony looked from one to the other.

"Maybe I'd better go. This begins to look awkward."

"Very awkward," said Crandall.

"Now, I warn you, Tod," said Barbara. "Don't take that tone with me."

"I'll speak any way I please."

Tony flushed. What a situation!

"Oh, no, you won't. I'll have you put out of this hotel. The head-waiter already spoke to me about you."

"I'm staying at this hotel."

"All the better."

Tod hesitated. Suddenly he glanced fiercely at Tony.

"What's he doing here? What do you want with him? One man never did hold your attention."

Tony laughed. "This is very funny."

"I'm glad you think so. But naturally a feather-brain like you would!"

"That was a very offensive remark," said Tony, calmly, "and if I hear any more like it, I'm going to hit you right on the nose."

"Maybe that will quiet you," said Barbara.

Tod said nothing, and stood staring at the floor.

"I'm going," said Tony, making a sudden resolution. "Tell everybody good-by for me. Take Tod back to the table. They'll understand."

"You can't do that, Tony," cried Barbara. "It will look awful. Tod, do something. Stop him! Tony, you can't do that."

Tony was moving swiftly away from them. People, walking past, had begun to stare at Barbara. She bit her lip in annoyance, then called:

"Tony, I'm not going tomorrow. I've changed my mind."

Tony shrugged and disappeared into the lobby.

Chapter Eleven

AN intense, surging excitement filled the huge holiday crowd, which jammed the grandstand, the clubhouse, the ramp, and overflowed into the center-field. It was nearly time for the feature race and everybody was on edge. The eastern champion, Kubla Khan, favorite to win the hundred-thousand-dollar Handicap, was making his first start of the meeting, and he was an overwhelming favorite, at two-to-five. The other horses in the race, with the exception of the Harry Van Senckle entry, Mammon and Molto Presto, were long prices. Lyle's Kioga and Tom Bakely's High and Handsome, both good ones with big Eastern reputations, were going begging at ten-to-one, and even Arkansaw Traveler, which had startled the public by his easy win-over, stood at six-to-one.

Vance Dunning had managed to get hold of a four-chair box, and Barbara, Bob Garland, and Eloise were sitting with him. Finally Tony came over and leaned on the railing of the box.

"He's still six-to-one, Vance," he said. "I'm going to bet him. I don't care what you do."

Vance shrugged.

"Tony," he said, "I'm going to bet against you today. I don't like your hunch today. It's too much a matter of sentiment with you."

"Yes," said Barbara. "Tony's little sweetie owns Arkansaw Traveler."

Tony's face darkened, but he said nothing.

Down the track a bugler blew first-call, summoning the horses to the post for the sixth race. Tony turned and hurried off toward the betting-shed. Garland and Vance both called after him, but he paid no attention.

After a protracted struggle, Tony got his money up: fifty dollars to win on Arkansaw; then he began to push his way out of the crowded mezzanine. Near the entrance there was a bad jam and some one collided heavily with him. He turned to look. It was Jewel, shaken by the impact, her hat on one side and a dangerous light in her blue eyes.

"I'm sorry," said Tony mechanically.

"Oh, Tony," cried Jewel, "it's you! I thought you'd gone."

She stared at him for a moment, with her mouth slightly open, as if he were a ghost. Then she flushed and looked

away. Tony was very much agitated. He didn't know what to do or say.

"Did you get your money up yet?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Get behind me, then; I'll get you through this mob."

Tony slowly worked his way out of the crowd and into the sunshine of the open grandstand. He felt the palms of Jewel's hands pressed lightly against his back.

"Well," he said, "here we are."

"Thanks, Tony. You take your life in your hands when you go in there. Did you bet on the old horse?"

"I certainly did."

"Oh, I hope he wins. But Tray says he hasn't a chance."

"You haven't got married yet, have you?"

"Not yet. But I'm seriously considering it. Tray could help Pop a lot. Pop's getting old."

"Yes," said Tony. "That's right. I guess McKinnel's a good horseman. Well, I won't keep you."

He did not understand the expression on her face. They stood looking at each other for a moment; then he saw Tray coming toward them down the aisle.

"Here comes the boy friend," he said. "I'll be going. Good luck."

He nodded at Tray, who came up, smiling grimly, and took Jewel by the arm.

"Pop was wondering what had happened to you, Jewel, honey," said Tray.

"Tony helped me through the crowd," said Jewel, then she turned and waved.

Tony hurried back to Vance's box, tramping angrily and bumping into people.

"I don't like that guy," he told himself, "and I'll bet my last dollar he'll treat Jewel like a dog if she marries him."

He was hurrying past the box heedlessly when Vance noticed him. "Hey," called Vance. "Here we are. What are you mumbling about?"

Tony flushed with embarrassment.

"I was standing up looking at the horses," said Barbara, "and who should I see down the way but Tony and his little girl friend. Thanks for the glasses, Eloise. They came in very handy. Why, when she looks at Tony her eyes get as big as saucers. Of course it's just a sisterly feeling."

"There they go!" shouted the announcer.

"A perfect start," cried Tony, dancing up and down. "Come on, old boy. Don't let them crowd you back. That's it. That's it. He's clear. He's all right. Oh, boy!"

"Quiet, please," said Barbara with a laugh.

Garland stared at Tony in bewilderment; then he said:

"W-what's happening? W-why are they all yelling so? The h-horses have just started!"

BUT he was drowned out by a tremendous tumult which shook the grandstand. Kubla Kahn, the favorite, had broken clear of the field and was now effortlessly running away from them, opening up length after length of daylight. Four abreast the leaders of the field struggled behind Kubla Kahn, the jockeys desperately whipping and kicking, trying to keep the champion from making a runaway race of it. Through the glasses, Tony could see Arkansaw on the far outside, lying sixth, and running easily with long, loping, distance-destroying strides, the jockey urging him slightly from time to time. Tony shook his head sadly.

"They overmatched him this time," he said aloud.

"It's Kubla Kahn at the half by seven lengths," shouted the announcer: "Molto Presto is second by a head; Mammon is third by a head; Kioga is fourth; High and Handsome fifth."

"Who's winning? Who's winning?" cried Barbara, but no one answered her.

"It's Kubla Kahn by seven lengths," blared the announcer through the loud-speaker; "he's running away with it. They're bunched behind him now; I can't make them out. Turning for home, it's Kubla Kahn easy. Mammon is drawing clear for second. . . . And here comes Arkansaw Traveler on the outside. . . . In the stretch it's Kubla Kahn by seven. Kioga is dropping back and now Arkansaw is third and closing fast in the middle of the track. . . ."

Tony took off his hat and waved it wildly in the air. Garland felt so agitated that he had to sit down.

"He can't make it," cried Tony. "He can't make it. But look at that old boy try."

Little Slim Darrel was whipping the Traveler now, and the old horse was running like a deer, eating up the distance. The announcer was drowned out by the ear-splitting shouts from the grandstand. Urged on by the frantic little jockey, Arkansaw sped past Mammon without effort and was beginning to overhaul the free-running Eastern champion.

It was then that it happened. Nobody noticed it at first except Kubla Kahn's jockey, Eddie Baugh, who threw a despairing glance back over his shoulder at the huge chestnut horse. Then the crowd noticed it. Kubla Kahn was wobbling; his legs were failing him. A hundred feet from the wire he stumbled. Eddie Baugh knew it was all up, and hearing the thundering hoofs of the big chestnut close behind him now, and fearing a bad spill at the wire, he took Kubla Kahn to the outside, where he wobbled helplessly for a moment, then stopped.

Arkansaw Traveler crossed the finish line the winner, in a deathly silence.

Mammon was second, Molto Presto third.

THERE was no doubt that Pop had changed a good deal since the Traveler's smashing victory over the best handicap horses at the track. It did no good to remind him that he'd have run second if Kubla Kahn hadn't broken down. He'd merely smile and say "If!" in an unbearably superior way.

The jockeys were very respectful now, even clowns like Johnny Antrim and Smoke Thomas. All except Soapy Sanders and Bill Everett. They had been friends of Pop's for years and they had an uneasy feeling that this prosperity wouldn't last; that Pop would find himself surrounded by fair-weather friends, and when the break came, as they were sure it would, things would be worse than ever. Besides, they were worried about Jewel. She had been seen around with Tray McKinnel more than was good for her reputation.

"Yeah," said Bill, "he's figuring on marrying him a nice girl and a stake-horse all in one. And him with that yellow-haired trollop in the village, sneaking over to see her when he leaves Pop's house. I know. I know."

Soapy said nothing. He and Bill walked silently down the street and went into the side entrance of the restaurant.

The bar was crowded with trainers, swipes, jockeys, agents and hangers-on. Pop was sitting at one of the big tables, surrounded by some of his new friends, all of them drinking at his expense and listening to him talk.

Ed Stroud sidled over to them and smiled in a very friendly way. He paid for the drinks, over a very feeble protest from Soapy; then he said:

"You boys hear the latest?"

"No," said Bill, a little apprehensively. "What now?"

"Ward Sprague just got in from New Orleans for the Handicap. Only brought one horse with him. Left all the rest in New Orleans. They say he's going to win the big race since Kubla Kahn's out of it."

Soapy grinned.

"Well, well. That's Sprague for you. Just a business proposition with him. But that's a right nice horse he's got. He run second to Kubla Kahn three times in stakes last summer. What's that horse's name again?"

"Marco Polo," said Bill.

There was an argument of some kind going on at Pop's table.

Ed, Bill and Soapy turned to listen.

"That's all right," Pop shouted. "I don't care who he beat. He never beat no horse like Arkansaw. Wait till I get him out there on that track in the Handicap. I'll show you how good that overrated plater is."

Pop began to take money out of his pocket; his face was a dangerous red, and his hands were shaking.

"There's dough says we beat Marco Polo in, and I got plenty more says the same thing. I'll even give you odds. Two-to-one. There's my money, and money talks."

A quiet-looking man in a blue serge suit stepped up to the table. His face was sunburnt, and he looked strong and rugged.

"Money don't seem to be doing all the talking here at that," he said with a slight smile. "I was standing away over in the corner and I heard every word you said. I guess you're Pop Benedict. My name's Charley Payson.

I brought Mr. Sprague's horse up from Louisiana. We think he's got a right good chance. How much was you figuring you'd like to bet at two-to-one? Now, I mean real money. My boss don't fool around with them peanut bets. Maybe you was just talking."

There was a dead silence. Pop had been called.

"Why," said Pop, grandly, "make it light on yourself."

"Well," said Payson, taking a roll from his pocket, "I got a thousand dollars right here. I'll hand it over to the bartender right now, if you'll hand him two thousand. Or maybe you was just kidding, after all, about that two-to-one stuff!"

Pop got up and walked to the bar, swaggering a little. While they all watched with bated breath, he counted out two thousand dollars. The bartender's eyes popped, but he got out a big envelope, put the money into it and wrote the conditions of the bet on the flap.

"Now," said Payson, "let's have a drink. I'm buying."

Pop saw Bill and Soapy, and he grinned at them somewhat feebly. He had already begun to repent of his hastiness. His face sagged a little.

"Whisky," he said.

"You know," said Payson, fingering his glass, "I didn't really think you'd cover me, Benedict. We heard that the old horse was a cripple."

"You heard wrong, and you'll find out different when we tangle."

"Okay," said Payson mildly. "No hard feelings. Time will tell. I'm a stranger here," he added. "It's my first trip to California. What does a man do around here for excitement?"

"There aint much," said Pop. "Unless you want to go over to Hollywood. That's an hour or so away."

"I'm not much for bright lights. Neither is my boss. My idea of pastime is gambling. Light, you know, just friendly. You suppose we could organize ourselves a little poker game?"

"Don't see why not," said Pop, brightening. "Say, Ed, how about poker?"

"I'm your man," said Ed eagerly, glad to be asked. "Chuck Powell's over in the restaurant. He's been spoiling for a poker game, just so it aint too steep."

Payson laughed.

"It won't be steep. Benedict, here, took about all my roll on that bet."

The players disappeared into a back room.

"I'm going back and see what's going on," said Bill. "Doggone it! That old man's in his dotage."

"You stay put," said Soapy. "You know what a bunch of poker-players thinks of a kibitzer."

"Let's go talk to Jewel."

SOAPY agreed reluctantly. They started out, but Johnny Antrim stopped them at the side door.

"Where's Pop?" he demanded.

"In the back room playing poker. Why?"

"I don't like to bother him if that's what he's doing. But—"

"Anything the matter?"

"No. Except I got some dope for him. Listen. Mr. Westermark's going to try to buy the Traveler. Since Kubla Khan broke down he needs another horse for the Handicap. He's going to try to win it with Alexander the Great but he wants a horse that can kill the tough ones off and let Alexander come from behind. He's willing to pay good dough, too."

"Why, that's fine," said Bill.

"Listen," said Johnny, "don't you say you got anything from me or I'll be in Dutch. Here's something else, and you can bank on this dope cause I got it in the right place. Mr. Westermark figures Tray McKinnel's got a big 'in' with the Benedicts. So Bob Carter's slipping him dough right along ever since the race. He's figuring maybe Mr. McKinnel's say-so might help swing the deal since everybody's been saying Miss McMahon is his dame."

"Not so loud," said Soapy, looking about him uneasily. "That last kind of talk aint so good, Johnny. They do say Tray and Jewel are going to get married. See what I mean?"

"Sure, sure," said Johnny, swallowing. "That's what I'm talking about. Anyway, there's the dope."

When Johnny had gone, Bill said:

"Soapy, you lug, we got to do something—if it's only putting our foot in it."

Chapter Twelve

BARBARA'S bags, ostentatiously strapped up and locked, were piled in the little entrance hall of Tony's apartment. After a protracted wrangle the previous evening, she had stayed all night, and Tony had slept in Vance Dunning's apartment. She was sitting on the lounge with her hat on and a cigarette burning up in her right hand. Tony, his curly hair all mussed and his collar unfastened, was pacing up and down.

"I don't know what to do with him," said Barbara, wearily, "and I don't know what to do with you. It's a mess."

"I've told you a thousand times that you don't have to do anything with me. I'm all right."

"All right! Look at the state you're in."

"I'll look after myself. If you hadn't started hunting for me and got me plastered all over the newspapers, everything would've been all right. And as for Tod, you can push him off the dock for all I care. Or you can marry him. It's practically the same thing."

"Now is that a nice thing to say?"

Tony stopped and stood gazing down at Barbara. She really wasn't looking very well. He relented.

"No, it wasn't; and I didn't mean it. I'm just feeling irritable, that's all."

"No wonder. You've practically drunk that whole bottle of whiskey. Why you aren't tight I don't know!"

"You're right," said Tony. Making a sudden resolution, he picked up the whisky bottle and going to the bathroom emptied it down the washstand. "I'm off for good. It's time I stopped being such a jelly-fish."

"Bravo, Tony," cried Barbara. "That's the stuff. You're such a sweet person when you're on the wagon."

The sarcasm of "sweet person" grated on Tony. He turned away and sat down across from Barbara. There was a long silence.

"Well," said Barbara, "I think I'll go. Sis is angry with me as it is. She's dying to go to Honolulu. I might as well humor her. I haven't got anything else to do and nowhere else to go."

Tony looked at her with some concern. They'd had such swell times together before things went haywire.

"I'm sorry, Barbara, but it's no use."

"I see. When you say scat, you mean scat."

"It wasn't my doing."

"Well, I did the best I could for you, Tony. I even thought about buying some horses. Do you think that would work?"

"No," said Tony. "It wouldn't work."

Barbara got up. "Will you write to me?"

Tony got up also. "Why, certainly."

Barbara moved toward him suddenly, and putting her arms around him, held up her face to be kissed. He kissed her briefly.

"Still friends?"

"Sure," said Tony. "I'll always be your friend. I'm all through the worst of it now. I don't blame you any more."

"All right," said Barbara. "Call down for Sam, will you?"

Tony called the manager's office and had the manager send for Barbara's chauffeur.

"I'll go down with you," said Tony, hurriedly, fearing a scene. "I can at least see you off."

They went down silently in the little automatic elevator. He held the door for her. Beyond the lobby, in the sunshine of a hot California winter afternoon, she saw Sam standing beside her car, reading a newspaper.

"Good-by," she said, smiling and offering her hand. "Nice afternoon to ride. Sure you don't want to jump up to Santa Mentina for a day or so? You could fly back."

"No, Barbara."

Sam opened the car door for her. Barbara was just getting ready to tell Sam to go ahead when three people appeared around the corner of the apartment-building: Bill Everett, Soapy Sanders and Jewel McMahon. They were hurrying, and seemed excited.

"Mr. Bowman!" called Everett, seeing Tony. "You're just the man we— Oh, excuse me. I didn't mean to—"

Tony looked at Jewel. Their eyes held. Jewel flushed and glanced at Barbara, whose face had hardened.

"Good-by, Tony," Barbara said harshly. "Go on Sam."

Sam turned to grin at Tony, then he drove off and swung out into the main highway. Barbara spoke through the tube:

"Turn down the next street, Sam. Take me back to the hotel. I've changed my mind."

Sam nodded with an expressionless face. Nothing ever surprised him any more.

"I hope we didn't interrupt you, Tony," said Jewel, still flushing slightly. "We want to see you."

"I'm glad you do," said Tony, smiling. He turned to Bill and Soapy. "How are you, fellows? Anything the matter?'

"We want you to help us," said Bill Everett. "Jewel, she—"

"Let her do the talking, Bill," said Soapy.

"Sure, sure."

"Come upstairs," said Tony. "We can sit down and talk comfortably. I'll be glad to do anything I can, whatever it is."

"I knew you would, Tony," said Jewel. Then after a moment's hesitation: "Did your wife leave?"

"Yes. She was starting back to Santa Mentina."

When they were all seated in Tony's apartment, Jewel said:

"We're really in an awful jam, Tony. Pop's got us in a real mess. Poor Pop! He had such a hard time the last few years that this success of his went to his head. Last night he lost every cent he had, playing poker."

"Not every cent, Jewel," said Soapy. Turning to Tony, he explained about the bet.

"All right," said Jewel. "But the money is as good as lost as far as we're concerned right now. We can't get at it. You see, Tony, I wasn't home for dinner last night or the whole thing wouldn't have happened. It's really all my fault. When I know Pop's got money on him, I make him give me most of it—and he simply has no sense when it comes to money. First he made that foolish bet; then he got into a poker game and lost the rest of his money, all except a few dollars. I'd saved up about two hundred and that's every cent we've got. Well, during the night I had to get the doctor for him. He had a very bad heart attack, and I thought he was going to die. He's better now, but he can't get out of bed for two weeks. And he really isn't himself at all, is he, boys?"

"He sure aint," said Soapy. "All the snap is out of him."

"All he thought about," said Bill, "was winning that big race with the old horse. Now since things are the way they are he just don't take no interest in nothing."

"Why, what happened to Arkansaw Traveler?" said Tony.

"Nothing happened to Arkansaw," said Jewel. "Pop's going to sell him to Lou Westermark."

"What! Why for heaven's sake?"

"He says he's got to. Tray's been at him for two or three days to sell. They've even got Red talked into it. Mr. Westermark promised Red he could handle Arkansas exclusively in Mr. Westermark's string. That was Tray's idea, too. And it really decided things. Tray's going to take Pop's other two horses and run them for him."

"Looks like a field day for McKinnel," said Tony, setting his jaw.

"Yes," said Jewel, "doesn't it! But Mr. Westermark's being very fair about it. He offered Pop ten thousand dollars for Arkansas and twenty-five per cent of all he wins at the San Basilio meeting."

"That means," said Bill Everett, "if the old horse wins the Handicap, Pop'll get around twenty-five thousand dollars, besides the ten. There's a catch to that too, but let that go for the time being. Jewel's ag'in' it."

Tony hesitated. "But why does he have to sell? And why are you against the idea, Jewel?"

JEWEL only smiled faintly. Soapy added: "And since we're on the subject, McKinnel's getting money from Westermark's trainer to swing the deal."

"Nice fellow," said Tony.

"Well, anyway," said Jewel. "I'm glad all this happened. I almost married Tray."

"God forbid!" cried Soapy fervently. "Ten like him aint worth your little finger, Jewel."

"I still don't understand," said Tony.

"Well," said Jewel, "in the first place, Tony, we haven't even got enough money to start Arkansaw in the Handicap. He's nominated, but it costs about a thousand more to start. All Pop's friends have kind of disappeared. Bill and Soapy haven't got any money, and Tray won't help out, naturally. He's on the other side of the fence."

"I see."

"And furthermore," said Jewel, "I want to see Arkansaw win for Pop. He's dreamed about winning a race like this for forty years, and he's not going to be here much longer."

"What do you want me to do, Jewel? If it's just the starting fee—I'll get that for you."

"But Tony—"

"You can pay me back when the race is over."

"Maybe."

"I'll take a chance. In the second place, I think we all better go over and have a talk with Pop. Maybe we can make him see the light. If the worst comes to the worst, I can take charge of the stable. Red knows as much as the average trainer, and you two fellows can help me out. I don't know anything."

"That's the talk," said Bill, a wide grin spreading over his fat face. "Eh, Soapy?"

"I'm going to keep my fingers crossed," said Soapy. "This is a big deal, and several boys aint going to let it fall without a kickback."

"Yes, Tony," said Jewel. "You'd better look out."

"I wouldn't mind having a few people hate me," said Tony, carelessly. "Generally people are just indifferent to me."

WHEN they arrived, the front door was standing open because of the heat, and they saw Pop sitting in his easy-chair, a pillow at his back, looking very old and defeated. Tray, Bob Carter, the Westermark head trainer and Lou Westermark were grouped around him, and Carter was talking decisively, striking the palm of his left hand with his right fist. They saw Red pacing up and down in the dining-room, a worried look on his tough face.

"Hello, Tony," said Pop, looking up suddenly and smiling wanly, "what you doing here?"

"I want to see you right away—a little business matter."

"Mr. Benedict's busy," said Tray sharply. "We'll be through in a minute. You wait."

"I can't wait."

Westermark looked up, very much irritated. He recognized Tony as the "swipe" his wife had been making eyes at.

"Oh, I think you'll find time to wait," he said, sharply. "Go on, Bob."

"Tony wants to see you, Pop," Jewel put in. "It's about Arkansaw. It's very important."

There was a sudden silence. Red came in from the dining-room and stood staring.

"About Arkansaw?" Pop demanded. "What about him?"

"Somebody told me you were thinking about selling him," said Tony. "That's not true, is it?"

Pop nodded wearily. "Yep. It's true. He's practically sold now. Why?"

"I don't think you ought to sell him, Pop. He's going to win that Handicap."

"He's old," said Pop, "like me. He won't last. Can't. Young fellow, I made a fool of myself and lost all my money. I aint long for this world. My racing days are over. I'm going to look after Jewel. She's going to have money in the bank when I kick the bucket. Now that's that, Tony. What you doing here, anyway? Didn't I tell you—"

"I went after him," said Jewel. "I thought we could use a friend or two."

"Now wait a minute," said Tray, getting up, his face hard and menacing. "Listen, Bowman, take a tip from me: You 'tend to your own business. Go back where you belong with that bunch of pantie-waists you run around with and you'll live longer."

"You shut up," said Tony. "I'm looking after Jewel's interests. She asked me to. And as for living longer, if you don't quiet down, you're not going to die of old age yourself."

"Wait a minute, damn it!" shouted Pop. "Is this my house or aint it? Just because I got one foot in the grave is no reason a couple of young bucks like you can run over me. Now quit yelling, you two. I'll do the yelling here. Come on, Tony: Get it off your chest. Then we'll continue. I didn't even know you were still hanging

around. I thought that wife of yours'd have you back home by now."

Tray gave a contemptuous snort and turned his back.

"I'll make it short," said Tony. "Listen, Pop: I'm willing to pay the Traveler's starting fee for you. So just forget all about that. Let him run in your colors. Why not? If he wins, you'll have some real money for Jewel. And he's almost certain to get part of the purse. If anything happens, you've taken a chance and lost. You like to take chances, don't you, Pop? You've taken them all your life."

"Well, I'm damned!" said Pop. "No, Tony. I've taken my last chance. Mr. Westermark's going to give me ten thousand cash right now, and if the old horse wins the Handicap, I'll get around twenty-five thousand more. And Jewel's nest will be feathered and that'll be that."

"The only trouble is," said Tony, "that the Traveler will never win the Handicap if he races for Mr. Westermark. He'll just be used to kill off the others so Alexander the Great can win. Is that right, Everett?"

"That's what I heard on good authority."

"Huh?" said Pop.

Tray's face was white.

"Why, you— Bill Everett, who's been talking to you? Just let me get my hands on—"

"You see, Pop?" cried Jewel. "It's a steal. You'll never get anything but the ten thousand. Arkansaw'll be gone. *We* can win with him. Tony will take care of everything. Won't you, Tony?"

"I will."

The color began to come back into Pop's worn old face. Westermark picked up his hat and got to his feet, his face pale with rage. He turned to Bob.

"I'll fix my own deals after this."

"But wait," said Carter. "We aint all through yet. How about offering him five thousand more?"

Westermark shrugged, and turning, went out the door.

"And besides," said Jewel, "our friend Tray has been taking money from Bob Carter to swing the deal."

"It's a lie, Pop," said Tray. "Are you going to believe that outsider or me? He's put Jewel up to all this."

Pop ignored him.

"By God," he cried suddenly, "I never did want to sell the old horse. It would have killed me. I was a fool. And you, Red," he shouted, turning, "you talked me into it. Aint you ashamed of yourself!"

To the astonishment of everybody, Red began to cry.

"Pop," said Tray icily, "I don't suppose you want me to take those two horses for you now."

"No," said Pop, "I don't, you two-faced rattlesnake! You just be glad I'm old and kind of quiet now and aint had a gun in my hand for ten years. Hanging around Jewel, and trying to knife me in the back!"

"You believe everything you hear, don't you? All right, Pop. I aint mad at you. I'm just sorry for you; and you too Jewel. I was a good friend of yours, and you may need me yet."

"I doubt it," said Jewel.

Tray started out.

"I'd like a word with you sometime, Bowman."

"Any time."

Tray nodded and went out. Jewel shut the door, then she took Soapy by the hand and began to dance. Pop burst out laughing.

"I hope my old pump holds out till the big day. Then them big birds won't worry me no more."

Jewel stopped dancing and looked closely at Pop.

"What big birds, Pop?"

"Them big black devils; they been getting closer lately."

Chapter Thirteen

TONY knocked loudly on Vance's door. Vance opened at once.

"I was just getting ready to cuss somebody," said Vance. "I didn't know it was you. You never knocked like that before. What's the matter? Fire?"

"No," said Tony walking quickly into the apartment and sitting down. "I want to see you."

Vance stared at him, then he sat down and said:

"Well, well! What've you been drinking now? Ethyl? Your motor certainly is hitting on all twelve."

"It should be," cried Tony, then he explained briefly to Vance what had happened.

"You don't say. Now that's really something to write home about. Do you think he's got a chance?"

"Everybody thinks so. Of course Marco Polo is going to make a big difference in the race, but they say he can't quite run that far. A mile and a quarter is a tough race the way it will be run in the Handicap."

"How about Arkansaw Traveler?"

"He ran very well in the Kentucky Derby as a three-year-old. That's a mile and a quarter race, and Pop says that he was catching them at the finish and that he was interfered with, or he'd've won."

"Wow!" said Vance. "Things are looking up for us, Tony, my boy. We'll bet plenty on this one."

AT a knock on the door, Vance went over and opened it. Tony started back and stood staring.

"Pete! What are you doing here?"

"Looking for Mr. Dunning," cried Pete, a stocky little Mexican of forty in a shabby chauffeur's uniform. "My God! Tony, is it really you?" His eyes bulged, and he stood with his mouth open. Suddenly he flung himself into the room, and grabbing Tony, hugged him till Tony pushed him away.

"Pete, quit it. You smell like a barber-shop. What on earth are you doing here?"

Tony's grandfather appeared in the doorway.

"We're looking for you," he said. "You were out. We saw Dunning's name, so we—"

Tony's knees felt weak. He stared for a long moment at his grandfather, noting his red, aquiline face, his coarse white hair, his steely gray eyes, his erect carriage, his spare, seemingly age-proof frame, his arrogant presence. Why, the old boy was eighty and more, and yet he seemed as dominating as ever.

"Well, I'm certainly glad to see you, Grandfather," he said. "Is Grandmother with you?"

"Hello, Dunning," said his grandfather, nodding. "No, she's not, Tony. Maria's not well. Been failing lately. . . . I want to see you, Tony. You're right across the way, aint you?"

"Yes. We'll go right over. See you later, Vance."

Tony went across the hall and unlocked his door. His grandfather followed him into the apartment, and sitting down on the lounge, took out a cigar and lit it.

"Your wife wrote me where you were staying. I saw all the stuff in the newspapers. You always manage to get in the newspapers, don't you?"

"That was Barbara's doing. She had a detective looking for me."

"Everybody up north said you'd jumped in the lake. But that didn't worry me. I knew you didn't have that kind of stuff in you."

"I'm sorry to hear Grandmother's not feeling well."

"She's failing, and she's been worrying about you a lot. You ready to go home yet?"

"Ready to go home? What do you mean?"

"Well, you're shut of that woman now, and good riddance. I never left the ranch when all that stuff was in the papers. When I walk around, I like to look men in the face."

"You shouldn't feel that way. Such things are a commonplace nowadays."

"All right. Let's forget it. When we got your wife's letter, I read it to Maria, and she said she wanted you back home again."

Tony had lived most of his life with his grandparents. His father had died of influenza in an army camp during the war, and his mother had remarried a year later and hadn't wanted to bother with him. Tony's grandfather had never forgiven her for that; and when she died, he had not even gone to the funeral, but left that duty to Maria and Tony.

"Well," said Tony, writhing, "I'm not exactly ready to go home."

"Your grandmother wants you. She won't be here much longer. What's the matter? Got another woman on the string?" Tony's grandfather's eyes were hard and inquisitorial. "Much as I hate to think about it, everything's going to be yours some day, Tony. You might as well take holt. Since you got shut of that woman now, maybe you'll amount to something."

Tony sat shaking his head.

"All right," said his grandfather. "Maria said you'd be glad to come back. You understand, Tony, it was pretty hard for me to come here and ask you to come back. You could hang for all I care. It was only on account of Maria."

Tony noticed that his grandfather's face had slackened, and suddenly realized how very old he really was.

"I want to go back, Grandfather," he said, finally. "But not just yet. I've got something very important—" Tony broke off. He felt sure that the race would only seem like a trivial excuse for further dawdling.

"Important? What is it?"

Tony told his grandfather the whole story, hesitating, trying to make it all sound as important as it seemed to him. His grandfather sat without a change of expression, staring off across the room past Tony and pulling at his cigar.

When Tony had finished, the old man said:

"Racing horses don't seem to me to be much of a thing to do in times like these with the whole damn' world falling about our ears."

"It's not that," said Tony. "I'm trying to get myself straightened out. I tried to do something. I went into business. I went into politics. I don't fit in."

The old man nodded slowly.

"A man has got to find his own way. . . . But—this McKinnel fellow. He sounds dangerous. I used to know a lot of Kentuckians in the old days. Good fellows if you knew them well, but tougher than boots, and death on outsiders. You're an outsider."

"I know."

"Some of these horsemen aint caught up to modern times yet or I'm very much mistaken. You look out. You may get shot."

"I've thought about that."

"Now you wouldn't want to get shot, would you, Tony, just over a little thing like a horse-race? You could back out of the whole business. You still got time. It's no fun getting shot. I'm still carrying lead, and I know. And he might shoot you in the right place. You're young yet. Why don't you back out and come home with me? I'll give you the money to pay the entry fee. Then you can wash your hands of it. You'll be safe then, and these people that were so nice to you, they'll still have their horse in the race. What do you say?"

"I'm sorry, Grandfather," sighed Tony. "But I can't see it that way."

Tony's grandfather astonished him by chuckling. Then he got up, flung open the door, and shouted:

"Pete! Pete!"

The little Mexican thrust his head in the door and grinned.

"Yes sir, Mr. Bowman."

"Take my grip over to that hotel we passed on the way in. Get me a room. Get yourself one too—without a bath. You never take a bath, anyway, and damned if I'm going to pay extra when I don't have to."

Pete's grin widened. He could see that both the old man and Tony were in a good humor. This delighted him. When he had gone, Tony said:

"You going to stay, Grandfather?"

"Yes. I think I will. I aint seen a real horse-race since the quarter-mile days."

IT was nearly dark when Tony started for the stable. He passed the restaurant, noticing the crowd of horsemen in the bar and nodding to a couple of jockeys, standing in front; then he turned down the side street which led to Pop's, and walked along whistling.

At the end of the vacant lot, which extended from the rear of the restaurant to the next side street, a man stepped out from behind a tree and stopped Tony. It was Tray McKinnel.

"I saw you crossing the highway," he said. "I just want a word with you."

"Make it fast," said Tony. "I'm in a hurry."

It was dark under the tree. Tony sensed, rather than saw, a vague movement of Tray's right hand. He felt something hard against his side.

"Don't faint on me," said Tray, noticing Tony's start. "That's a gun. Forty-five. And it might go off."

Tony was astonished to discover that he wasn't at all afraid.

"What do you want?"

"Nothing much. Just you stay away from Pop's. Just disappear. I'm figuring that deal is still a good thing. They aint got but two hundred dollars. I know. You're the one that put up the whole job. You're getting in my golden hair, sonny. Understand?"

"You can't scare me. I whipped you once; I'll do it again."

Tray laughed. "You're too big for me. You've took boxing lessons. I won't mess around *that* way any more. Just you disappear. Go back where you belong. That's all I'm asking. Otherwise your family is going to mourn for you."

"When does this happen—now?"

"Not now. But soon. A forty-five tears you right open. Don't make no funny motions. This is hair-trigger. Well, good night. Give it a little thought."

Tray turned and walked casually down the street toward the lights of the restaurant. Tony watched him for a moment; then, setting his jaw, he started once more for the stable. "Oh, no, McKinnel," he said, half aloud, "it's not as easy as all that. Personally, I think you're bluffing. But time will tell."

WITH sudden resolution, he was starting back toward the bar, when from the direction of the stable he heard a woman's voice calling. Jewel!

Turning, Tony started on the run for the stable. He saw a lantern burning in the tackroom, but there was nobody about. The stable had a curiously deserted air, and suddenly he realized that Arkansaw's stall door was open and the horse was gone. The Traveler hadn't run that afternoon. There was no reason why he should be missing from his stall.

He heard Jewel's voice again. It came from behind the barn.

"Red! *Red!*" she was calling.

Tony hurried around to her.

"Jewel! What's the matter?"

"Oh, Tony," cried Jewel, running over to him. "I'm so glad you came. Arkansaw is gone."

"Gone?"

"We had a late supper. When Red came back, Arkansaw's stall door was open and he was gone. Red's running around like a wild man. What are we going to do?"

They saw a white figure coming toward them across the vacant lot. It was Pop in his dressing-gown, puffing and blowing.

"Did you find him? Did you find him?"

Jewel calmed herself immediately.

"Not yet, Pop. You shouldn't be out here. Sit down, Pop. You know what the doctor said."

Pop fell down wearily into the deck-chair.

"I don't know. I don't know," he said. "Maybe I should've sold the old horse. My God, I'm tired."

"You stay with Pop, Jewel," said Tony. "I'll go and see where Red is."

Jewel squeezed Tony's hand.

"I feel so much safer when you're around, Tony."

Tony smiled to himself. The sweet kid! If she only knew what he'd been thinking a while back. He hurried off across the field behind the stable. He thought he saw somebody moving around over there. When he got closer, he saw that it was Red, walking up and down at the edge of the grove, wringing his hands and crying.

"He's gone, Tony," he wailed. "He's gone. Somebody let him out, or else they stole him."

"He might've opened the door himself. Pull yourself together, Red. We'll find him."

"I don't know where to look. It's dark as the inside of your hat now. We better notify the police."

"Wasn't anybody at the stable? Where was Lasses?"

"Lasses wasn't around. I told Jewel she ought to bring me my dinner. I hate to leave the stable a second with this big race coming up and the town full of cheap skates and chiselers. I'd've had Lasses stay, but he's never around when you want him."

There was a pause. They both stood staring, not knowing what to do. In the silence they heard the unmistakable sound of a horse snorting in the middle of the grove.

"That's *him,*" cried Red. "I'd know that old boy's snort any place. Let's go get him. Eating grass out there, I'll bet, the old sinner."

"Wait a minute," said Tony. "Somebody's leading him, I can hear a man walking."

They waited. Presently a horse and a man loomed up at the edge of the grove.

"Hey, you," shouted Red. "What's that horse you got there?"

"That you, Red?" came Lasses' high-pitched drawling voice. "I don't know whut this ol' hoss is. I was coming thoo the grove and damn' if I didn't run smack up on him. Like to scare me blue."

"Keep coming," said Red. "Don't hesitate. Just keep coming."

"Good Lord!" said Tony, half to himself, wondering what had kept the little negro from being killed, running up on that old man-eater like that.

Red's voice was shaking now: "Just keep coming, Lasses. Keep coming. Don't hurry."

Lasses laughed.

"Whut's the matter you, Red? You sound lak you wor'd about something—" There was a sudden silence. Lasses piped: "This your hoss, Mr. Red?"

"Keep coming, Lasses. You're doing fine." Red turned to Tony. "I'm scared to run up to him now. God knows what he might do to that darky."

The little negro squealed.

"Come get him, Red! Come get him! Lordy, Lordy! It's that big ol' chestnut devil. I never knew. I—"

Red moved forward slowly and methodically and caught hold of Arkansaw's halter. The little negro screamed and started across the field as fast as he could run, stumbling and squealing.

The Traveler let out a tremendous bellow; then he reared into the air, lifting Red clear of the ground. Red hung on and talked soothingly to the horse. Gradually he quieted down. Red started for the stable with him.

"Stay quite a ways behind, Tony," said Red. "Don't walk with me. He don't like it. Poor ol' boy. Nice ol' boy. Out eating grass, eh, you ol' villain!"

When they came around the end of the barn, Lasses drew back into the shadows and got a post between himself and Arkansaw. Pop laughed; he'd forgot all about being tired now.

"Lasses didn't know what he had hold of," said Pop. "That's a good one."

"I want to get him on the guys and look him over," said Red. "I hope he didn't hurt himself none. That would be just too bad. Bring both them lanterns here, Tony."

Tony brought the lanterns and placed them on a bench. Red tied Arkansaw up, then bent down to examine his legs. Jewel came over and stood beside Tony. Finally Red straightened up.

"Well?" Pop demanded.

"Got a little cut on his off front leg. Nothing much. It won't bother him."

"Good," said Pop. Then he turned away. "Well, I'm going in. Getting a little chilly. I'm going to read my newspaper and go to bed. You come, too, Jewel."

"In a minute, Pop."

LASSES disappeared. Red took the lanterns and went into the tackroom, shutting the door. They heard him singing a few bars of "The Old Fall River Line"; then silence settled down over the stable. Tony and Jewel sat down on a bench in the dark. Tony pointed to the moon which was casting a pale glow over the roof of the grandstand.

"Nice night."

"Beautiful," said Jewel. "Remember the night you took me to Hollywood?"

"Yes. We had fun."

"I did. You didn't. You were pretty glum."

Tony put his arm around Jewel, and she slipped down and put her head on his shoulder.

"Things are different now, aren't they, Tony?"

"Yes."

"I thought so."

"Are you glad?"

"Of course I'm glad. Why did you think I ran after you?"

"To save the horse."

"That too. All the same, if I hadn't been pretty sure—well, you know what I mean."

"Oh, you were pretty sure, were you?"

"Yes," said Jewel defiantly.

"What made you so sure?"

"The way you looked at me that day in the grandstand when I told you I was going to marry Tray."

"I didn't feel a thing. It was the sun in my eyes."

"Oh, yes!" She turned suddenly and put her arms around Tony's neck. He kissed her and she clung to him. "I love you, Tony. Do you love me a little bit?"

"Very little."

"No, say it. Quit clowning."

"I do."

Red put his head out of the tackroom door.

"Jewel," he said, "I think I heard Pop calling you."

"Thanks, Red," said Jewel, without moving.

"You better go. It's getting late."

"I'll go pretty soon. Good night, Red."

Red grunted and went back into the tackroom, but he left the door open.

Jewel laughed.

"You see what kind of a man you are! Red doesn't trust you."

"He's quite right. You better go home."

"Oh, you big bluff." Jewel kissed him. Tony's arm tightened. Presently she got up. "Tony," she asked, "has Tray been bothering you?"

"Not much."

"He worries me. He's been drinking a lot lately. He surely hates you."

"Why wouldn't he? He's no fool."

THEY walked silently across the vacant lot toward Pop's house hand in hand. Tony stopped at the porch. The lights in the living-room were lit and they could see Pop nodding over his paper.

"Good night, darling," said Jewel.

Tony hesitated, then told her about his grandfather.

"Oh," said Jewel, "he scares me just to hear about him. Are you going back to the ranch?"

"I've been thinking about it. Would you like to live on a ranch, Jewel?"

She began to cry.

"What on earth is the matter?"

"I didn't know you— I didn't know—" Jewel stammered. "You've got so much money, and your wife was so beautiful, and I didn't know you—"

Tony felt a sudden pang.

"Oh, you sweet kid," he said. "Wipe your eyes. Pop will be after me with a shotgun."

"I even considered that," said Jewel.

Tony laughed so loudly that Pop got up and opened the door.

"Jewel," he said. "Come on in now."

On his way back to the stable, Tony noticed that the lantern was burning in the tackroom. He vaguely wondered why Red had lit it again, but he dismissed it from his mind and walked along, staring at nothing and thinking about Jewel.

When he got near the stable he saw two men standing under the wooden awning. One was Red; the other was a stranger, a fat little man in a derby hat.

"Tony," Red called. "Guy wants to see you."

Red went back into the tackroom and shut the door.

"Sit down," said Tony. "What do you want?"

The man said:

"My name's Murkan. Don't you remember me?"

"No. It's pretty dark. I can't see you very well."

"Your wife hired me to find you. Remember? I was here one day. That Southerner brought me over."

"I remember. What does Barbara want now?"

"She wanted me to give you some information. She's afraid you're being taken in."

"I see. Where is Mrs. Bowman?"

"At the Arroyo Seco."

Tony laughed. "All right. Go ahead."

"It's about these people here. Mrs. Bowman got an idea these people were a little shady, so she put me to work right away. Did you know, Mr. Bowman, that Pop Benedict is a murderer?"

"A what?"

"He killed a man in St. Louis. Of course he was let off. Self-defense. The other man had the gun. It was a fight."

"Any man might get mixed up like that."

"Maybe. But this fight was over his daughter. The girl's mother. She was no good. Mixed up with a lot of men."

Tony smiled to himself, thinking about Barbara.

"Mrs. Bowman thought I ought to know all about this: is that right?"

"Yes, she did. Finally Pop's daughter ran off with a carnival barker. An Englishman. He's Jewel McMahon's father, or so they say."

"Some doubt about that even, eh?"

"Yes. A good deal of doubt about it. Nobody even knows whether Pop's daughter married this McMahon guy or not."

"Is that all?"

"Not quite. No. There's been a good deal of talk going on about Jewel McMahon and that Southerner that brought me over here. In fact he led me to believe that—"

"All right," said Tony. "I've heard enough. Now run along."

"All right, Mr. Bowman. No hard feelings."

Chapter Fourteen

T ten o'clock of the night before the Handicap, Tony was sitting on a bench under the wooden awning patiently trying to read a newspaper by lantern light. The training grind was over, and everybody, including Tony, was worn out. Pop and Jewel had gone to bed at nine o'clock; Pop's house was dark. Lasses had been asleep in his stall at the far end of the barn for over two hours. Red had got drunk that afternoon and was now sleeping it off.

Tony gave up trying to read. He felt very uneasy, and picking up a twitch from where it was lying on a bench, he began to turn it about in his nervous hands. A storm had been hanging over the Sierra Madres all afternoon, and the atmosphere was full of tension. Pop and Red had been delighted by the cloudy weather. Arkansaw, they said, though a good fast-track horse, was an ace mudder and would walk in over a sloppy track. Pop had gone contentedly to bed.

Thunder rolled across the mountains, nearer now. The wind rose; the leaves on the big trees along the road began to rustle; a few drops of rain fell. Then there was a loud detonation of thunder over the mountains, and the rain came down with a hissing crash. Tony sat and watched the rain fall past the wooden awning.

Presently he heard footsteps on the tamped earth at the far end of the barn, and he decided that Lasses had probably been awakened by the storm. He glanced up. The lantern light glinted on a gun-barrel. Tray McKinnel was standing looking down at him, his face obscured. His clothes were soaking wet. Tony caught a reek of alcohol.

"Well?" said Tony, sitting perfectly still.

"I see you couldn't take a hint," said Tray with a sneer. "You got to admit I give you plenty of time. But I'm through fooling with you. Now you git."

"Now, wait a minute," said Tony, trying to make up his mind what to do. Tray was drunk and dangerous.

"I'm done waiting. Just get up and go. That's all I'm asking. Don't say nothing to nobody. Disappear. I'm figuring to take over your job right now."

"You're drunk."

"Tolerably so. See what I got in my hand? That's my little equalizer. I figure it ought to cool you off somewhat so you won't go punching a man in the head. All right, Bowman. Now git. I aint got all night to fool with you, and I mean business."

"Keep that gun down. It might go off. They hang people in this State."

"Do tell. Get moving, Bowman. I'm aching to see the last of you."

Tony's mind was in confusion, but he acted instinctly. With a quick movement of his arm, he knocked the lantern over with the twitch and it fell with a crash, going out immediately. Tony violently threw himself to one side. The barn was in total darkness. There was a slight pause; then the darkness was splintered by a ragged flare of light; and the report of the gun was deafening under the wooden awning. Tony heard the horses plunging and snorting. Down the barn, Arkansaw's hoofs crashed against the walls of his stall. Tony leaped forward at the place where Tray had been standing, and swung his right fist viciously twice, but missed. The third time he landed. The impact was so solid that fingers of pain flashed up Tony's right arm, and he knew that he had broken his hand. Tray went down with a thud. The gun roared again, and Tony felt the wings of death brushing him. In the momentary flare of the gun, Tony saw Tray lying on the tamped earth under the awning. His eyes were blank; the gun was slipping from his lax fingers.

Tony was elated.

"I got him! I got him!" he cried, wild with excitement. Bending down, he found the gun, pulled it away from Tray and slipped it into his pocket.

A light went on in the tackroom. The door opened, and Red stumbled out, holding the lantern high.

"Wha—" he began; then he saw Tray lying on the floor vaguely shaking his head.

Tony was bent over holding his right fist in his left hand, trying to ease the pain.

"He get you, Tony?" Red demanded.

"No. I broke my hand on him."

Beyond the circle of the lantern light Tony saw Lasses' white eyeballs shining. The little negro was huddled down, whimpering.

Tray struggled to get to his feet, but fell back. Down the street a siren began to scream, coming closer and closer. Lights went on in Pop's house.

"It's the laws," said Red. "Them motor-cops that hang around the corner. You aint going to turn Tray in, are you?"

Tony looked at Red blankly. "Why not?"

"We don't do things like that."

"Oh."

Tray struggled to his feet.

"Don't turn me in, Bowman," he mumbled. "I might get a mean stretch for this. I got to see that race tomorrow."

Tony stared at him for a long time.

"You win. You win," said Tray. "I'm licked. I got mine. It was the whisky done it."

Two cops parked their motorcycles at the curb and hurried across the grass to the stable. Their wet raincoats glistened in the lantern light.

"What's going on here?"

Tony said nothing, and Tray glanced at him with a slight smile.

Red yawned. "Prowlers," he said. "Somebody messing with the horses."

One of the cops swore with feeling.

"What are you apes trying to do, kill somebody? Now, cut out all this damn' foolishness. Why, it sounded like the battle of Bull Run. You guys realize you're in the city limits? I ought to run the whole bunch of you in. Who's got the gun?"

Nobody said anything.

"Hand over that gun. I'll bet there aint a permit in the bunch. All right. What do I have to do, frisk you guys?"

"Wait a minute," said Tony. "Do you know who's in that stall down there?"

"No, and I don't care."

"The Arkansaw Traveler!"

"Arkansaw!" cried both cops at once.

"Yes. You see, we've got to be careful with the big race coming up."

"I'll say you do. Say, what's a horse like him doing in a dump like this? Why aint he over in the regular stables at the track?"

"Mr. Benedict got in late. No stables left."

"Well, I'm damned," said the cop. "The Traveler, eh? Say, can we see him?"

"Sure," said Red. "I'll get him."

Just as the cops were leaving, Jewel came hurrying through the rain with Pop's raincoat around her.

"Why, what's the matter, boys?" she demanded, looking from Tony to Tray.

"Nothing," said Tony. "Somebody was prowling around here, and Tray took a shot at them."

Tony could see that she didn't believe him, but she said nothing.

LATER, after Tony had taken Jewel back and returned he and Tray and Red sat under the awning watching the rain falling heavily down through the circle of light cast by the lantern.

Tray offered Tony a cigarette, and he took it. They lit up. Finally the Kentuckian said:

"I didn't really mean to hurt you, Bowman; just scare you off. But you jumped the gun on me."

"It's all right," said Tony. "No harm done, except I think I broke my hand."

Tray rubbed his jaw, but said nothing. There was a long pause.

Red yawned; then laughed.

"Well, Tray," he said, "I guess you got to admit now this guy's all right."

Tray nodded slowly and silently.

TONY was so preoccupied that he didn't know which horse had won the fifth race, and didn't care. All about him people were capering and shouting with joy in spite of the cold wind and the leaden sky and the drizzle which had succeeded the cloudburst of the night before. The track was a sea of mud. Nobody could tell what would happen in the Handicap. Why, the best horse in the world couldn't be expected to run a true race in such going.

"And it all looked so simple," thought Tony. Things had worked out beautifully. Tray was no longer openly hostile. Pop, though a handful, had finally agreed not to come to the track but stay home and rest. Barbara had disappeared; at least he hadn't seen her for a week, and he had heard from Vance that she and Tod had been talking about getting married and going to Honolulu on their honeymoon. And to cap it all, Tony's grandfather was comfortably ensconced in Vance's box and was smoking a big black cigar and trying to keep calm.

Turning, Tony went up to Bill Everett's box to see Jewel before going out to the paddock. She looked pretty in her new clothes, but she was rather pale and her face looked drawn. Tony smiled easily to reassure her.

"Won't be long now," he said.

She leaned forward and whispered: "I could scream."

"This track's bad," said Tony, "but he likes mud."

"Bill Everett and Soapy are down betting," said Jewel. "They're betting every cent they've got. They think Arkansaw will walk in in the mud. Oh, I hope he wins. Pop will just die if he doesn't."

"Oh, no, he won't. He's lost plenty of races before.

"But not like this. This is the dream of every horseman. Tony, didn't you think Pop was pretty meek about staying home?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's not exactly himself since he's been sick."

"I'll bet anything he ends up here."

"Maybe he'd feel better if he did see it. Don't worry, honey. I've got to go."

Jewel took hold of Tony's arm and looked into his eyes.

"Win or lose, it doesn't make any difference about us, does it, Tony?"

He laughed at her. "Don't be a dope. Of course not. . . . Look, Jewel!"

Pop was coming down the aisle. He grinned sheepishly and shook his head.

"Oh, Pop!" exclaimed Jewel. "I should've stayed with you."

"I tried to hide," said Pop, sitting down in the box, "but this place is so jam-packed, a man can't find a place to sit down. So here I am. I just couldn't miss this, Jewel; I just couldn't."

"Well, bundle up good and don't get excited."

"Good luck, Tony," said Pop. "I think you'll do it. You got luck written all over you. That rain was the best thing that ever happened."

When Tony got down near the paddock he saw Red running around, wringing his hands.

"Where you been?" he cried. "We're in a nice fix, we are! Come here."

Red pulled Tony into the saddling-barn and pointed. Slim Darrel was leaning against a post, crying.

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's lost his nerve. He aint big time. He's a bush jockey. This Handicap has got him scared."

Tony walked over to Slim and began to shake him gently.

"Come on, boy. Pull yourself together. You've got to ride the Traveler."

"I can't, Mr. Bowman. Honest, I can't. I'm sick as a dog, and something's wrong with my eyes and I'm kind of dizzy. I'd get dumped sure and trampled on. I aint fit to ride today." He began to sob.

"How do you like that?" Red shouted.

Tony tried to reason with Slim, but pretty soon he saw that it was no use. Tony's stomach was turning over and over, but he pretended to be calm. He stood for a moment looking out at the crowded paddock. It was raining hard now, but the people, waiting to see the champions paraded, didn't seem to care. Tony's mind was a blank; he didn't have an idea in his head, and when a little man began to pull at him, he shook him off roughly without looking around.

"Mr. Bowman! Mr. Bowman!"

Finally Tony turned. "It's me. Oh, I forgot. You don't know me. I'm Johnny's agent. He got in a row and lost his mount. Can you use him?"

"What?"

Red began to dance a jig.

"Johnny got in a row with Mr. Van Senckle. He was supposed to ride Presto today and they handed him Mammon. Johnny groused a little. So he got canned. Can you use him?"

"Johnny Antrim!" Red crowed. "Luck's with us today, Tony. He's the best money rider at the track."

"I can use him," said Tony.

The little man made a violent motion, then he said:

"Okay. Leave it to me. I'll fix everything. The ten per cent goes, eh?"

"Certainly," said Tony.

Johnny came up with a smirk on his tough face.

"Okay, Mr. Bowman?"

"Okay. Go change."

"Come on, baby," said Johnny to Slim Darrel. "I figured it might work out this way. Quit crying, you sap. I'll give you a couple hundred if we win."

Red stood staring at Tony. Finally he said:

"Boy, if you aint lucky! If you fell in a sewer you'd come out in a new suit, smoking a fifty-cent cigar."

In a moment, Johnny came back at a run, wearing Pop's colors. They were parading the horses now. When Red came out leading Arkansaw Traveler with little Johnny Antrim on his back, there was a cheer from the mob crowding round the paddock fence. The change of jockeys was just being announced over the loud-speaker system in the grandstand. In ten minutes the Traveler dropped from four-to-one to two-to-one, then six-to-five.

Down by the clubhouse the bugler sounded first call, summoning the horses to post for the annual San Basilio Handicap. Waves of excitement flowed over the grandstand. The ramp was packed from the fence to the betting-shed in spite of the pouring rain. The crowd had broken all records.

Tony went up into the grandstand and stood by himself. The Handicap was set at a mile and a quarter, and the horses started at the lower end of the three-eighths chute. Tony could just barely make them out through his glasses. The rain was slanting across the centerfield and Tony saw it dimpling the puddles in the track.

Of a sudden there was an ear-splitting yell from the grandstand.

"There they go!" blared the loud-speaker.

STRAINING his eyes, Tony tried to peer through his glasses. But all he saw was a cloud of horses advancing slowly down the track. Mud was flying, and before the horses had gone an eighth of a mile the jockeys were unrecognizable.

"It's Molto Presto!" shouted somebody. "He's going to make a runaway race of it."

Molto Presto was drawing clear of the huge field, and as they thundered past the judges' stand he was three lengths in front and running easily and strongly. Tony groaned. He saw the Traveler on the far outside, struggling in the midst of what looked like a cavalry charge. There were eighteen starters, and Arkansaw wasn't better than eleventh and seemed to be making little headway. Johnny was already whipping and kicking.

"At the first turn," blared the loud-speaker, "it's Molto Presto by three lengths; Marco Polo is second by a length; Mammon is third by a length; and Alexander the Great and High and Handsome are running neck and neck for fourth. Arkansaw Traveler is on the outside far back."

Tony groaned. Two men turned to look at him, but he did not even notice them. It was raining harder now, and as the horses turned into the back-stretch, they looked like blurred shadows, nodding along slowly and heavily.

"He's still out there," shouted somebody. "Come on, Presto. I got my dough on you. Where is that favorite, I'd like to know! Where is that wonder horse! I knew he wouldn't get nothing. Just newspaper talk. They couldn't tout me onto him."

FINALLY Tony lowered his glasses. Arkansaw wasn't getting any place. Suddenly suspicion flashed across his mind. Suppose the whole thing was a put-up job—suppose some of the big gamblers had got to Johnny Antrim.

"Maybe I was a fool to let that little chiseler ride for us," he muttered.

The two men turned again to look at him.

"At the half it's still Molto Presto," droned the announcer above the rising tumult. "Marco Polo is closing rapidly and is a close second; Alexander the Great has moved to third place; High and Handsome is fourth on the outside—"

Tony glanced down the aisle. Vance and his grandfather were standing up in the box. Vance was shouting and gesticulating, but Grandfather was calmly smoking a cigar.

"Where's your Molto Presto now, smart guy," a man said impudently. "Look at him dropping back. Here comes that New Orleans horse. Boys, it's all over. Look at him eat up that mud."

Tony's stomach was turning over. He wanted to curse loudly; to do something violent.

"At the far turn," shouted the announcer, "it's Marco Polo by a length and a half; Molto Presto is dropping back and is now fourth; Alexander the Great and High and Handsome are running neck and neck for third and gaining on the leader. . . . And here comes Arkansaw Traveler! He got through a hole, folks, and here he comes!"

Tony jumped into the air and began to wave his hat; then he calmed himself. He didn't want his grandfather to see him acting like a lunatic. Turning, his mouth dropped slightly open. His grandfather also had his hat off, and was waving it.

"Hey," said somebody, "there aint room for that kind of stuff, buddy."

"Well, move over, then," said Tony belligerently.

"Okay. Okay."

There was no use trying to hear the announcer now. The horses were turning for home, and the grandstand was a bedlam. Well-dressed women screamed hoarsely, and tried to pull their horses home with violent movements of their arms, backs and shoulders.

Tony put his glasses to his eyes, but his hands shook so that he could see nothing. It was pouring down rain. Through a gray mist he could see five horses plodding down the home-stretch, ridden by five little figures plastered with mud. Nobody could tell one horse from another.

"Arkansaw—" said the announcer, above the tumult. "—outside. . . . Marco Polo rail—driving finish."

The five horses plodded neck and neck, nodding like mechanical toys. Little by little the shouting died down. Nobody knew what was happening. Behind the five horses the rest of the field trailed miserably, lost in the sea of mud.

Tony tried his glasses again. He saw the muddy jockeys whipping and kicking the muddy horses. Suddenly he recognized Arkansaw. He was on the outside. He was running strong. He was going to win! Breathlessly Tony waited. A moment later—

"He won!" yelled Tony. "He *won!*"

There was a wild tumult which gradually died down.

"Who won?" somebody asked, bewildered.

"What a horse-race! What a horse-race!"

"Arkansaw won," said Tony. "He was the horse on the outside."

"No, he didn't," said a man, pointing. "Look!"

Tony glanced at the announcement board. "PHOTO FINISH" was up in electric lights.

The crowd waited impatiently, clutching their tickets. Before there was time for a picture to be developed, another sign was flashed on: "FOUL CLAIM."

Tony groaned; then he turned and walked slowly over to Vance's box.

"Too bad," said Vance. "They're going to take it away from you, Tony."

"Anyway," said Tony's grandfather, "that was a real horse-race. That old horse has got the right kind of heart in him. That's my kind."

Tony smiled at his grandfather.

"You can't always win, Tony," said the old man. "But you can always put up a battle."

Tony shrugged. Poor comfort, that!

"Hold your tickets, folks," said the announcer. "A foul has been claimed against Johnny Antrim on Arkansaw Traveler."

Tony could hardly stand the suspense. He wondered what Jewel and Pop were doing and he thought for a moment that he ought to go and see; then he told himself: "It would take me five minutes to get to them through this crowd. It will all be over by that time."

Turning, he saw Johnny Antrim and two other jockeys up in the judges' stand with their caps off, talking to the judges. In a little while the photo slid down its wire from the roof of the grandstand. A judge took it out of its container and spread it out on a table.

It was almost dark now, and the rain was falling harder and harder.

"I wish they'd hurry," said Vance, ready to yell.

After a long pause the winning numbers were flashed up.

Tony let out a shout and leaped into the air. *"We won!"*

"Quiet, folks," said the announcer. "The claim against Arkansaw Traveler has not been allowed. This game old champion has been declared the winner of the San Basilio Handicap, the richest racing event of this track. Marco Polo is second; Alexander the Great third; and High and Handsome fourth."

Tony didn't even hear the tremendous ovation. He was shaking hands with his grandfather, who said:

"This is the most fun I've had in thirty years. Good boy, Tony."

SOMEBODY took Tony by the arm. He turned. It was Soapy Sanders. Tony was smiling, but his expression changed when he saw Soapy's face.

"What's the matter?"

"Pop," said Soapy, choking. "The old boy—he's gone."

"What!"

"Just like *that* he went. It was too much for him."

"Did he know Arkansaw had won?"

"Yes. Thank God for that. There was a doctor a couple of boxes away. He's looking after things, but it's all over."

"Jewel?"

"She's hard hit. You better come, Tony."

Tony stared at the muddy track so long that Soapy took him by the arm.

"Come on."

"All right," said Tony, thinking: "I'm all she's got now. I've got to be a man. I can't let her down."

THE END.

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